

Emotive Effort and Corporate Reputation in Hospitality Sector in Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Chinda, C. N.¹, Akintokunbo, Y. Oluwatosin², & Akintokunbo, O. Odunayo³

¹Department of Human Resource Management,
Faculty of Management Sciences

²Research Director, Kingsbishop Nigeria Limited,

³Department of Management,
Faculty of Management Sciences,
Rivers State University,
Port Harcourt, Nigeria

currydith@yahoo.com, tosakintokunbo@yahoo.co.uk,
odunayo_akintokunbo@yahoo.com

Abstract

The study investigated the association between emotive effort, and corporate reputation in hospitality sector in Port Harcourt. It adopted a cross sectional survey design. The population consists of three hundred and eighty (380) staff of hospitality firms. The sample size of the study was one hundred and ninety one (191) determined using the Krejcie and Morgan table which was subjected to a face and content validity test by the researchers and experts from the academia. While the reliability test, was established using Cronbach alpha model score of 0.858, indicating the authenticity of the instrument used. Two hypothetical questions were developed for this study. Hence, the method of analysis was Pearson moment Correlation Coefficient. The study concludes that there is a weak and positive relationship, between emotive effort and corporate reputation in hospitality sector. Therefore, it was recommended that hospitality sector should consider educating workers on the benefits of demonstrating the required emotion during inter personal transactions, as this would foster wealth, add more attribute to the company's brand and service, but as well retain potential customers who might be exposed to aggressive competitors.

Keywords: *Emotive effort, corporate reputation, brand name and service quality.*

Introduction

The business world today has moved from merely satisfying customers to establishing ways to leap forward and making achieving unalloyed customer loyalty in the face of a very fierce competitive environment. Corporate reputation is the collective assessment of a company's attractiveness to a specific group of stakeholders relative to a reference group of companies with which the company competes for resources (Fombrun, 2012).

Tan, (2007) in his study titled *does the Reputation Matter?* This work on corporate reputation and earnings quality, affirms the empirical evidence that corporate reputation is positively correlated with superior earnings quality. His findings showed that corporate reputation not only helps to orchestrate superior earnings quality but also helps in producing superior total sales in Chinese public companies. According to Tan, the price tag which organizations put on their products and services has long been theoretically associated with their reputation. That is, organizations that have higher reputation put higher price tags on their products than would lower reputed organizations. This suggests that reputation works as a signal for quality. The financial reward from such higher pricing is thus seen as a reward for maintaining the good

reputation. It is however empirically challenging to apportion financial value to reputation. The definition of emotional labour as demonstrated by (Hochschild, 1983), is the management of feelings to create publicly observable, facial or bodily display compliant with social requirement. Furthermore, it is important to present a robust discuss on the difference between emotional labour and emotional intelligence as they pose to have little confusion in the appropriateness and interchangeability of usage. Emotional intelligence was described formally by Salovey et al (1990). They defined it as the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions. In other words, emotional intelligence is the ability to manage information while emotional labour is the ability to manage feelings. However, our area of study interest is Emotional labour as it applies to corporate Reputation.

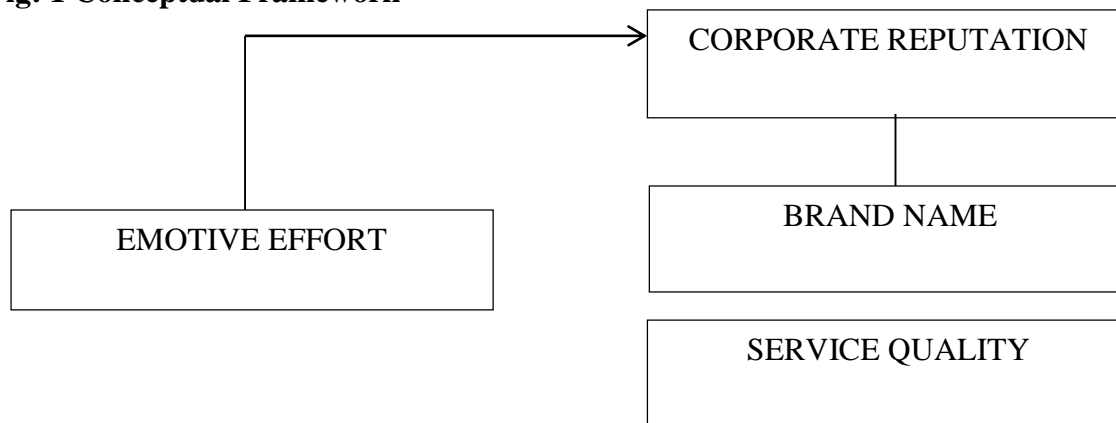
Research suggests that building long term relationship with the customers is imperative for Managers, the customers, both existing and potential are heavily exposed to various advertising messages from competing firms through all sorts of media communication, hence, service providers are propelled to modify their service(s) through the management of feelings as well as switching their service(s) to the competing firm by offering added and sometimes customized incentives; among the incentives offered are price reduction, attractive package, fast and consistent service delivery, flexible and quality service in order to gain competitive advantage. Certainly, there are service providers who would feel threatened that their customer base could be affected by the more persuasive offer from competitors, thus amongst the listed, would include service with a smile. One of the most important values of good corporate reputation is that competitors cannot easily copy or replicate it from those firms that have earned it. A good corporate reputation can only be worked for and cultivated. Earning it is therefore a unique competitive advantage, a valuable asset that has the unfortunate potential to depreciate if actions are not consistently taken and followed up to entrench and sustain it.

While envious firms cannot take it from those that have earned it, they can however engage in aggressive de-marketing activities and other competitive efforts that aim at drowning any reputation the competing organization has earned for itself over time, hence organizations that have this precious tangible asset should jealously guard it. There is severe and massive competition in the globalized business world; industries that are not innovative on service delivery in terms of application of technologies, machines, adequate management of manpower, internationally and locally informed of the improved way of doing things more professional as regards their area or field of operation (either in production of goods or services) in today's globalized and competitive environment, are faced with the option of organizational demise. Therefore, in order to gain more profit, firms who wish to survive and to be successful on the long run, get more market share, and to be differentiated from its competitors, must do something substantially different, one of such ways to increase market share for businesses is the appropriation of emotional display to be a brand or service.

At this point, businesses can gain competitive advantage through their brand name. Not many studies have however looked in this direction. This study seeks to contribute more knowledge on how corporate reputation of an industry could, as a strategic effort increase sales, profit and thus improve performance level and have high competitive advantage through the management of emotional labour. Organisation today strife not only to gain a strong notion in the mind of its clients or customers as regard the brand and market share, but also to stand out in the quality of product(s) or service(s) they render. The process of achieving this has brought about competition in the sector and thus propelled industries into introducing all sorts of strategies to stand out; this has in turn posed a major problem. Consequently, as we know when you have a

good reputation, you have a confidence level that cannot be easily swayed. It is against this backdrop that this study aims at contributing to the process of strategically solving the problem by investigating the influence of emotive effort on corporate reputation in hospitality sector in Port Harcourt.

Fig: 1 Conceptual Framework



Source: (Desk Research, 2017).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of emotive effort on corporate reputation of Three (3) and Four (4) Star Hotels in the hospitality sector in Port Harcourt. Consequently, the research questions are demonstrated as follow.

1. To what degree does emotive effort relate with brand name in hospitality sector in Port Harcourt?
2. To what extent does emotive effort relate with service quality in hospitality sector in Port Harcourt?

Literature Review

Reputations are very vital to managers and the business world at large especially when it has to do with growth, expansion, large profit earning and customer retainership index. Scholars have argued that it is not feasible to talk of corporate reputation among diverse set of stakeholders, because each stakeholder may have different concerns and ways of interpreting the focal firm's behaviour. An empirical research by (Hochschild, 1983), opines that emotive effort is a bad or ill mood that could come up in an occasion when an individual perceives his feeling is obviously struggling with his true person.

Emotive Effort

Kruml & Geddes (2000) claimed that this dimension taps into the domain of deep acting. Deep acting involves attempts to actually experience the emotions one is required to display. Emotive effort dimension of emotional labour captures the efforts employees need to exert when engaging in deep acting. Employees need to actively strive to invoke thoughts, images, memories, or past experience to conjure up the appropriate emotional state and therefore emotional expression, which is arousing or being able to arouse intense feeling: 'animal experimentation is an emotive subject the issue has proved highly emotive' (Oxford dictionary), (Emotive effort) associate positively with job satisfaction and negatively with emotional exhaustion. Workers learn to reveal or cover up their emotions and such exposure or inhibition of feelings is said to be recognized as emotive display (Rosenberg, 1990). Employees working in the service sector tend to administer their feelings continuously and persistently and that is what is revealed or known as the emotive toil or the management of

feelings in general (Hochschild, 1983). Employees are expected to display constructive and buoyant expressions they are restrained and inhibited to show destructive and disapproving emotive expressions. Consequently, it is inferred that expression of emotions by a worker is not simply a personal act but it is a public encounter which is commanded and managed by the regulation and instruction of employer. Workers undergo episodic and sporadic meetings in order to be trained at how and when to grin and beam genuinely and honestly and how to revolutionize annoyance and resentment into communal compassion and consideration (Yanay & Shahar, 1998). Such rehearsals and trainings encourage and facilitate workers to become skilled at holding back and censoring their heartfelt emotions and to exhibit organizationally aspired passion and sentiments. (Hochschild, 1983) portrayed emotive effort as the administration and supervision of sentiment in order to produce or craft an expression which is generated with the aim of getting a stipend and thus, emotional labour holds a trade appeal and worth.

Corporate Reputation

Corporate reputation has been defined by many scholars in various ways (Caruana, 1997). The meaning of reputation remains a matter of debate amongst many scholars (Devine and Halpern, 2001). Compared to other concepts in the corporate marketing landscape, corporate reputation is often seen as a general view of the company (Bick, Jacobson & Abratt, 2003). It is seen as a comprehensive concept that comprises all aspects of corporate marketing including: corporate image, corporate identity, corporate branding, corporate personality, corporate associations and corporate communications. It is the integration of all these concepts that makes up corporate reputation. Corporate reputation is sometimes viewed as the external stakeholders' perceptions about an organization (Davies and Miles 1998; Hatch and Schultz 1997). It refers to the impressions that external constituencies have about an organization. It asks the question what stakeholders actually think of the organization (Brown et al, 2006). Consequently, the measures of corporate reputation are brand name and service quality. Scholars have different views on the term "brand". However, there are researchers who have being able to give a distinguish explanation of brand name in a more detailed way.

BRAND NAME: the information on brand came through an ancient organ trademark meaning injury, also through the roots gallivanted. Brand name is perceived as the most seen information by consumers (De Chernatony, 2010), it the basis for brand awareness and communication (Keller, Heckler & Houston, 1998), it can help to increase brand awareness and create desired brand image for a new product. Brand is defined as perceptible sign of the organization and its products to the human senses, through which the customer is able to differentiate an organization and its products from others (Babčanová, 2010). A brand is a distinguishing name or symbol (such as logo, trademark, or package design) intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers, and to differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors. A brand thus signals to the customer the source of the product, and protects both the customer and the producer from competitors who would attempt to provide products that appear to be identical (Aaker, 1991). Also it can be defined as a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or combination of these which is used to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors (Kotler & al., 2005). Alternatively, brand can be defined as an identifiable product augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant unique added values which match their needs most closely. Furthermore, its success results from being able to sustain these added values in the face of competition (Chernatony and McDonald, 1992). Certain brands (e.g., Coca-Cola, Nike) are considered to possess high brand equity resulting in higher market shares and prices than competing products (Badenhausen, 1996). A key reason for their strength is the existence of

favourable, strong, and unique associations about them in consumers' memories (Keller, 1993). Many of the brand associations that make brands distinctive and strong are of this non-functional type; that is, they go beyond the perceived quality of the brand on functional product and service criteria and deal instead with intangible properties of the brand e.g., Toyota is prestigious (Batra and Homer, 2004). Brand is the important part of the product. Thus, value of brand should always be improved upon by the firms (Knapp, 2000). Brand is described as perceptible sign of the organization and its products to the human senses, through which the customer is able to differentiate an organization and its products from others (Babčanová, 2010).

SERVICE QUALITY: Service quality refers to the difference between customer's expectations for service performance prior to the service encounter and their perceptions of the service received (Patrick A. et. al, 1996). Service quality theory (Oliver, 1980), predicts that clients will judge that quality is low, if performance does not meet their expectations and quality increases as performance exceeds expectations. Duly, customer's expectations serve as the foundation on which service quality is evaluated by customer. Furthermore, as service quality increases, satisfaction with the service and intentions to reuse the service increases. In other words, the higher the customer's satisfaction, the higher the patronage. Quality has become a major demand and part of daily life style. It has received high attention by many firms and customers. While customers keep looking at and expressing their desires for quality products or services, firms consider quality as a key strategy to develop products and services in order to gain competitive advantage. Service quality is antecedent to customer's satisfaction (Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml 1994, Caruana, 2002). Parasuramn, Zeithaml & Berry (1985) pointed out that consumer's perception of service quality is the gap between the expectation of universal level service provider's service performance and the real performance perception of a specific enterprise. This refers to the divergence between customer's anticipation for service performance, and the feeling of disappointment if their expectations of the quality of service are below standard and performance does not meet their expectations, or their joy when their perception of quality increases and performance exceeds expectations. Suitably the guest anticipation, function as the base on which service quality are evaluated by customer. Hou Xingqi (2008), suggests that service quality is customer's subjective cognition, not objective evaluation, it is the evaluation on service providers after comparing the gap between the desired service quality in advance and the actual service quality consumers receive. Service quality is the result of the comparison that customers make between their expectations about a service and the perception of the way the service has been performed.

Emotive effort and Corporate Reputation

Hochschild portrayed emotive effort as the administration and supervision of sentiment in order to produce or craft an expression which is generated with the aim of getting a stipend and thus, emotional labour holds a trade appeal and worth.

However, this is not the same with corporate reputation. Reputation is not something which can just be bought with money. We posit that reputations are distinctions and accolades that are earned with concentrated, deliberate and strategic investment of hard work, diligence and time. Corporate reputation is a collective assessment of a company's attractiveness to a specific group of stakeholders relative to a reference group of companies with which the company competes for resources (Fombrun, 2012). Unlike emotive effort, the individual is the sole focus. But in corporate reputation, the view, perception and decision are done aggregately as a group. The organisation evaluates both themselves and the customers. They consider the internal and external position of the company in the mind of its customers for the purpose of improvement and sales. Moreover, as stated above the hypotheses are therefore:

H01: There is no significant relationship between emotive effort and brand name in hospitality sector in Port Harcourt.

H02: There is no significant relationship between emotive effort and service quality in hospitality sector in Port Harcourt.

Methodology

The research design reveals the method and plans used to collect data vital towards the investigation of the research problem. For the purpose of this study, the survey method was adopted using cross sectional survey design. This is because all the entire population cannot be studied, so a survey was considered to be more appropriate. Research conducted by (Watson et al, 1984) on cross sectional and longitudinal studies indicated that both positive and negative effect of emotional labour are relatively independent, stable, related to different behaviours, and partially inherited.

The population of the study consists of three hundred and eighty (380) staff member as drawn by the research assistant, from seven (7) hotels in Port Harcourt rated as three (3) and four (4) star. However, the size of 191 is determined by employing Krejcie and Morgan table. Considering the respondent having equal rights to be chosen we found simple random sampling to be more suitable for the study. The breakdown is, General Managers 30%, Administrative Managers 32%, Supervisors 32%, and Junior staff 68%. Additionally, the useable copies of questionnaires which were retrieved for the study, was 162 which is 72% feedback level.

In order to ensure quality measurement of variables, the questionnaire designed for this study was subjected to a face and content validity. The reliability test is concerned with the question of whether the results of the study are repeatable (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Thus the test was computed using the Cronbach alpha model of internal consistency based on the average inter-item correlation, to compute the reliability. While structured questionnaire was used to generate the information required for the study.

The data was analysed using regression analysis; this is similar to the extent that they both establish a mathematical relationship between a dependent variable and one for correlation or more independent for regression variable. Meanwhile, the Pearson product moment correlation was used to test the hypothesis. Pearson moment correlation is a parametric technique with 2 interval variables each of which is evenly distributed.

Data analysis and results

For this segment, the data analysis and discussion of findings are the major focus areas describing the relationships of the variable under study for emotive effort and brand name, and emotive effort and service quality.

Response Rate

One hundred and ninety one (191) copies of questionnaires were distributed to workers in the selected hotels. The outcome of the distributed questionnaires as presented in the table below indicated that 191 copies of questionnaires were administered representing 100% of the respondent. 170 copies of questionnaire representing 80% was returned, while uncompleted copies of questionnaire were 5 representing 0.5% of the respondent. The total response was 170 representing 80%. Completed but unusable copies of the questionnaire were 3 representing 0.3%. Completed and useable copies of questionnaire which were found useful for the analysis were 162 representing 72% of the total distributed questionnaires. 99 persons or 61.1% of the respondents were males, while 63 respondents

were females representing 38.9%. This shows that that there are more males than females among the respondents. This can be taken as an indication of more male workers than female workers in the hotel industry.

Hypothesis one

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between emotive effort and brand name of hospitality sector in Port Harcourt. In testing this hypothesis, data on emotive effort and brand name of hospitality sector were related and result obtained.

The table below presents a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.247. This demonstrates a very weak positive relationship between emotive effort and brand name. The correlation is statistically significant ($r = 0.247$, $p < 0.01$). This correlation has provided answers to research question one and given a direction to hypothesis one. Therefore, the decision is to reject the null hypothesis (**H₀₁**) and accept the alternate which suggests that there is a significant relationship between emotive effort and brand name in hospitality sector in Port Harcourt.

Table: 1 Emotive Effort and Brand Name
Correlation of relationship between emotive effort and brand name

		EMOTIVE EFFORT	BRAND NAME
EMOTIVE EFFORT	Pearson Correlation	1	.247**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	162	162
BRAND NAME	Pearson Correlation	.247**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	162	162

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: (Field Survey, 2017).

Hypothesis two

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between emotive effort and service quality of hospitality sector in Port Harcourt.

In testing this hypothesis, data on emotive effort and service quality of hospitality sector were related and result obtained.

The table below presents a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.205. This indicates a weak positive relationship between emotive effort and service quality. The correlation is statistically significant ($r = 0.205$, $p < 0.01$). This correlation has provided answers to research question two and given a direction to hypothesis two. Therefore, the decision is to reject the null hypothesis (**H₀₂**) and accept the alternate which indicates that there is a significant relationship between emotive effort and service quality in hospitality sector in Port Harcourt.

Table: 2 Emotive Effort and Service Quality
Correlation of relationship between emotive effort and service quality

		EMOTIVE EFFORT	SERVICE QUALITY
EMOTIVE EFFORT	Pearson Correlation	1	.205**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009
	N	162	162
SERVICE QUALITY	Pearson Correlation	.205**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	
	N	162	162

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: (Field Survey, 2017).

Discussion of Findings

The discussion of the findings follows the relationship between the predictor variable (Emotive Effort) and the measures of the criterion variable (Corporate Reputation).

Emotive Effort and Brand Name

From the interpretation of the findings, the study demonstrates a very weak positive relationship between emotive effort and brand name. The correlation is statistically significant ($r = 0.247$, $p < 0.01$). This correlation has provided answers to research question three and given a direction to hypothesis one. Therefore, the decision was to reject the null hypothesis (**H₀₁**) and accept the alternate which suggests that there is a significant relationship between emotive effort and brand name in hospitality sector in Port Harcourt. This implies that emotive effort is vital to brand name of hotel firms, in Port Harcourt. In line with this reasoning, Stanislavski (1965), suggested deep acting strategy as trained imagination, which focuses on invoking thoughts, images and memories to induce the desired emotion. e.g., thinking of funny experience in order to feel happy. He further illustrates, that the technique is comparable to the way that actors are trained in a method of acting. Moreover, the findings, in line with the opinion of Kruml and Geddes (2000), which reveals that practicing deep acting, emotion is actively induced, suppressed, or shaped.

Emotive Effort and Service Quality

This indicates a weak positive relationship between emotive effort and service quality. The correlation is statistically significant ($r = 0.205$, $p < 0.01$). This correlation has provided answers to research question two and given a direction to hypothesis two. Therefore, the decision is to reject the null hypothesis (**H₀₂**) and accept the alternate which indicates that there is a significant relationship between emotive effort and service quality of hospitality sector in Port Harcourt. Furthermore, this show that emotive effort is a contributor to service of hotels, in Port Harcourt. Also this finding is in corroboration with previous study of Kruml & Geddes (2000), who argued that the asseveration of Hochschild is incorrect because she described genuinely expressed emotions of service employees as passive deep acting or genuine acting. Consequently, the findings are in corroboration with previous study of Paules (1991), which opines that by encouraging employees to engage in genuine or deep acting, companies hope to enhance the authenticity of the service norms and express emotions incongruous with the role they are expected to play.

Conclusion

Deriving from the findings, the study concludes on the following dimension and measures of the study variables. For emotive effort and brand name based on the findings of this study, we therefore conclude that there is a significant relationship between emotive effort and brand name of hospitality sector in Port Harcourt. This implies that emotive effort is vital to brand name of hotel firms, in Port Harcourt. Consequently, emotive effort and service quality the findings furthermore conclude that that there is a significant relationship between emotive effort and service quality of hospitality sector in Port Harcourt. Furthermore, this show that emotive effort is a contributor to service quality of hotels firms, in Port Harcourt. Subsequently, this is more reason why hotels in Port Harcourt, do not function very well, because they pay little or no attention, towards emotional labour. So many of them are involved in activities that tend to suggest that what matters after all is not really the job, but what comes into the pocket. However, they find out that sooner or later, that it takes a dexterous emotional labour to sustain good customer relationships that will be needed for job creation and expansion of more companies to foster wealth.

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