

Emotional Intelligence and Employees' Commitment in Champion Brewery, Plc, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria: The Empathy Perspective

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DOI: 10.56201/ijssmr.v10.no6.2024.pg130.141

Abstract

This study was conducted to assess the influence of emotional intelligence on employees' commitment in Champion Brewery plc, uyo, in which empathy perspective was considered. For this study, survey research design was adopted. Population of the study was 90 employees who were the core staff of the organization. The entire population was used as the sample size for the study. Source of data was primary data which was gotten from the questionnaire. Instrument for the study was a structured questionnaire which was a modified Likert scale. Simple Linear regression statistical tool was employed in analyzing the data. Findings showed that empathy had a high correlation value of $R = 0.668$ with an Unstandardized Coefficient Beta $\beta=0.782$. From the findings, it was concluded that empathy has a positive significant influence on employees' commitment in Champion Brewery, Plc, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. As recommendation, management of champion brewery plc, uyo, need to clear the barriers that interfere with empathy such as anxiety which is usually caused by time pressure and lack of insight of others emotions. This may further enhance the commitment of their employees.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Empathy, Employees' Commitment, Champion Brewery

Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) has become a very important topic in management and education in the last decade, especially in regard to how it affects today's employees, managers and leaders. In recent times, employers have incorporated emotional intelligence tests in their interviews, perhaps on the assumption that, those high in emotional intelligence would make better employees, leaders and co-workers (Cherry, 2018). It is also assumed that high emotional intelligence can help one navigate the social complexities of the workplace, lead and motivate others and excel in one's career. In fact, when it comes to gauging important job candidates, many companies now rate emotional intelligence as important as technical abilities and employ emotional quotient (EQ) testing before hiring. According to Scuderi (2014) in any human endeavour which includes working in organisation, people or employees that are believed to be highly intelligent may not succeed or perform better than those who are believed to be less intelligent. The difference between the effectiveness and efficiency in performances may be hinged on abilities, which according to Scuderi (2014) may be as a result of employee's emotions.

Emotions, according to Salovey *et al.* (2007) are organised responses crossing the physiological, cognitive, motivational and exponential sub-systems of the brain. Goleman (2005) defined emotions as guiding forces that help humans in facing predicaments and tasks that one's intelligence alone cannot handle. The author went further to state that, for better or worse, intelligence can come to nothing when emotion holds sway; that is, when employee's emotional states such as anger, anxiety, depression, sorrow, excitement among others control or determine the employee's job performance. In other words, employees need to act based on their emotional intelligence. This will guide their actions, inactions and reactions to situations and people. Cherry (2020) viewed emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive, control and evaluate emotions. Goleman (2005) described emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive, appraise and express emotions accurately and adaptively and the ability to regulate emotions in oneself and in others. Goleman (1998) categorised emotional intelligence as encompassing empathy, self-awareness, self-regulation, amongst others.

Empathy refers to considering other people's feelings especially when making decisions (Goleman, 2005). It refers to being able to understand how other people are feeling. It also means a skill of sensing other people's emotions. It allows for understanding beyond someone's apparent behaviour by putting oneself in another's shoes and taking active interest in their concerns and well-being. It further means the ability of a person to get an insight or recognise the emotions of others. Empathy can be seen as the ability to experience and relate to the thoughts, emotions or experience of others. It is more than simple sympathy, which is being able to understand and support others with compassion or sensitivity. It means putting oneself in others' situation so as to decipher how others are feeling about a particular situation. It also has to do with insightfulness regarding other employees complain, considering their feelings in order to offer help as the need arises. Empathy can be described as the ability to understand how other people are feeling and recognise, on an intimate level, how one would feel if one were in their position. It does not mean one sympathise with, validate or accept their behaviour, just that one can see things from their perspectives and feel what they feel. Business educators who are equipped with empathy skill would be concerned or bothered about the needs and challenges of students and colleagues, and how to help them reach their goals. These employees would appreciate the weaknesses of others

and take necessary steps to help them overcome their weaknesses and limitations. These employees would also pay attention to others while narrating their ordeals to them without trying to change the subject. These employees would be sensitive to the plights or ordeals of others and would be ever ready to devise steps or strategies to bring them out of tight corners.

Firms in the manufacturing sector in Nigeria is faced with increased production cost, upsurge in energy cost, deficient and inadequate public infrastructure, and increased cost of imports, especially with the fall of the value of naira (Ojo and Ololade, 2014). Another factor facing the manufacturing companies is increased turnover of skilled employees (Umoh, Amah and Wokocha, 2014). Hence, the issue on how firms could get the best performance from its employees has become challenging to most organisations.

Preliminary review of the study on the subject matter revealed that several studies conducted in America, Europe, and in some parts of Asia have shown that empathy as a part of emotional intelligence leads to job performance. However, despite these great successes recorded in these parts of the world on the usefulness of this crucial aspect of emotional intelligence, there is very little evidence to show that such studies have been carried out in Nigeria, especially in manufacturing firms.

Furthermore, it is also been observed that some employee could not regulate or control their emotions or negative impulses. This is very common especially when dealing with some difficult, stubborn, dull and recalcitrant customer or clients as well as with some unfriendly, egoistic, high-handed and domineering co-workers and leaders. It could be the case, may be as a result of lack of self-regulation competencies which is part of emotional intelligence. Unfortunately, this may pose adverse or negative influence on their job performance. As such, this study sought to bridge the gap in the literature by examining the influence of empathy on employees' commitment in Champion Brewery, Plc, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

Concept of Empathy

According to Albrecht, (2006), empathy is the capacity to be attached to someone, which creates the foundation for useful interaction and cooperation. Albrecht notes that it goes farther the conventional connotation of empathy as having a feeling for someone else, or "sympathizing" with them. According to Hanson (2007), Empathy is feeling and discerning how it is for another individual. Empathy makes someone to sense and infer what's happening with another individual. Empathy is an emotion where individuals try to discern the minds of others and try and see matters from a different position that will explain the activities of each other (Stein and Book, 2001). Bookbinder in his paper named three key features of empathy. These include 1) Empathic accuracy: the ability to feel what the other person is going through from their internal experience. 2) Empathic compassion: the ability to be open to another's experience with compassion and tolerance and 3) Empathic interactions: the process of interacting in an empathic way. He emphasised the importance of empathic acknowledgements and the benefits to the talker and the listener, which he says improves relationships.

Goleman and Boyatzis (2008) in the Harvard Business review posited that there are things leaders do that specifically exhibit empathy and get attuned to others' moods that affect their mind chemistry and that of their followers. It has as well been observed by researchers that leader-

follower dynamic isn't always a case of two or more independent brains extending consciously or unconsciously to each other. On the contrary, the persons mind gets in a sense fused into a united system. Goleman and Boyatzis cited an experiment of how important and powerful cue can be; they stated that some subjects received negative feedback that was accompanied by positive cues – such as smiling and nodding, while another group received positive feedback with negative cues – such as frowning or narrowed eyes. The results were that those who received positive feedback actually felt worse about themselves than those who received negative feedback. This shows that the delivery was more important than the actual feedback because people who feel better perform more effectively, any disconnect between words and expression can send the wrong signal and cause possible serious misinterpretation.

Concept of Employee Commitment

Committed individuals adhere to the aims of their commitment. As is the case in individual life, many individuals have conflicting commitments in work life, for instance those towards profession, career colleagues, departments, and the organization in entirety. There are dissimilar forces that can compel a person to a particular line of action. Individuals may also do something because they prefer it (affective bonding), because they perceive obliged (normative conformity) and/or since humans have good motives for their commitment (rational choice) (Allen and Meyer 1990).

Employees may see continuous commitment from the angle of energy they have put into an organisation in the past and may resolve to garner the benefits of their past commitment. This does not guarantee that the employee will want to put in more energy in the future. Mcgee and Ford (1987) point out that continuance commitment is involved with sunk costs. A sunk cost is a phrase loaned from accountancy and means unrecoverable costs used previously for considerations of decisions relating to future investments. This suggests that just as shareholders can invest or withdraw their investments; employees can do the same with commitment if they choose to withdraw or not to put in their substantial efforts. Other factors that contribute to continuance commitment are tenure, education, and age. Some employees may be tied to their organizations for reasons such as low educational level which may be to their disadvantage in terms of transferable knowledge or skills and also older employees with a long tenure may also have the same constraint (Meyer and Allen 1990).

Allen and Meyer (1990); Randall and Cote (1991) sought to differentiate normative commitment from affective and continuance commitment. Normative commitment exhibits indebtedness by an employee to remain in the employment of the organisation. Allen and Meyer, (1990) posit that people with an eminent degree of normative commitment feel that they should maintain offering their services to the company. O'Reilly and Chatman, (1986) observed that when there is compatibility between company's values and employees' values, the employee tend to exhibit a higher level of organisational commitment. This finding is in harmony with that of Mayer and Schoorman, (1992) who found that when employees accept the company's values, they exhibit increased organisational commitment. Randall and Cote (1991) posit that normative commitment exists when the employee feels indebted towards the firm which has invested in them. They further indicated that, employees feel that when an organisation has invested a lot of time and money in training and developing them, they have a moral obligation to continue to provide their services to the company. An example is when an organisation has paid for the employees' education while

they were continuing their studies to better or upgrade their qualifications; they feel indebted to compensate the organisation by remaining in the organization to provide their services. Jaros et al, (1993), stated that normative commitment is found to be similar to moral commitment. Normative commitment is a feeling of obligation or responsibility towards the organisation. Normative commitment is different from continuance commitment because it is not dependent on the investment of the employees in the organisation in form of time and effort rather it is the investment that the organisation has made on the employee.

Becker *et al*, (1995) opined that the three aspects of organisational commitment are not reciprocally exclusive, an employee or individual can exhibit any one, or a mixture of all the three dimensions of commitment. These three variables of organisational commitment are different from each other based on their purpose and outcomes. The three-component model of organisational commitment developed by Meyer and Allen (1997) is one of the most extensively researched in organisational commitment. Harun and Hasrul (2006) stated that Allen and Meyer's organisational measures are not culturally sensitive; they can be applied in international contexts.

Empathy and Employee Commitment

According to existing literature, for an organisation to have committed employees, the leaders or managers will have to exhibit social intelligence skills in addition to other behaviour. Managers and leaders should practice genuine empathy, being considerate about their team and co-workers; understand accurately their feelings, thoughts and intentions (Eketu and Edeh, 2015). Empathy is an experimental way of grasping another's emotional states. It is a "perceptual" activity that operates alongside logical inquiry (Halpem, 2003). Workers in the manufacturing sector will have to exercise their skills of objective reasoning to investigate empathic intuitions; absence of this may hinder trust amongst workers. Another aspect that leaders and managers need to work on is to clear the barriers that interfere with empathy such as anxiety which is usually caused by time pressure, lack of insight of others emotions and not being able to tolerate such emotions (Halpem, 2003).

Empathy is a critical component of social intelligence," it is the ability to see the world from another person's perspective, the capacity to tune into what another individual may be thinking and feeling about a situation" irrespective of how the individuals opinion might differ from their own perception (Stein and Book, 2001). It is also the process of how we interact with other minds and mostly coincide with other emotions such as caring for others (Coplan and Goldie, 2011). In other to foster mindset development and advance learning, employees will have to promote an atmosphere of inquiry and openness, patience, and encouragement, which are all components of empathy (Kouzes and Posner, 2013).

Theoretical Review

The underpinning theory for this study is the Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Intelligence theory propounded in 1982. Howard Gardner is known for his theory of multiple intelligences in which he proposed that people possess intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence among other types of intelligences. Gardner described intrapersonal intelligence as the ability to access and understands feelings and emotions and uses this knowledge to guide and understand behaviour (Gardner, 1998). He described interpersonal intelligence as the ability to read and understand other people's moods, temperament, and motives. Using this knowledge to guide communication and decisions is also part of interpersonal intelligence (Hetherington and Parke, 2003).

Emotional intelligence is a set of competencies, which direct and control one's feelings towards work and performance at work. These set of competencies are the ability of the individual to control and manage his or her moods and impulses on the job. Knowing one's emotions and feelings as they occur, and tuning one's self to the changed situation, requires the emotional competency, emotional maturity and emotional sensitivity that are demanded on the job. In a work situation, performance of the employees depends on working with group of people with different ideas, suggestions, and opinions.

Effective use of emotional intelligence gives better team harmony. (Ashforth *et al*,1995) Leaders, in particular, need high emotional intelligence, because they represent the organization to the customers, they interact with the highest number of people within and outside the organization and they set the tone for employee morale. Leaders with high emotional intelligence are able to understand their employee's needs and provide them with constructive feedback. Success in sales requires emotional intelligence ability to understand the customer and provide service to customers. (Bridget Murray, 1998). Emotional intelligence in the organization supports in identification of employees' emotional intelligence level and its impact on employee performance on the job. This would act as an indicator for promotion of employees in the organization.

Empirical Review

Tarilate and Okolai, (2021) examined the relationship between Empathy and Employee Commitment in the health sector in Nigeria. The design adopted for this study is cross sectional survey design. 339 questionnaires were distributed out of which 313 were retrieved, out of which 273 were found usable. Taro Yamen's technique was used to arrive at the sample size. Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used for the bivariate analysis and partial correlation was used for the multivariate analysis with the aid of SPSS 20.0. Findings revealed that there is a high significant level of relationship between Empathy and Employee Commitment which influences positive connectivity within superiors and subordinates and also improves interaction and cooperation among workforce. Hence, consequently leading to better organisational performance.

Tantua, (2022) examined investigated the top-down influence of manager empathy on a process model of employee well-being. Sixty employees supervised by one of 13 managers completed a daily survey for two weeks, producing a total of 436 observations. Hierarchical linear modeling results revealed that, at the daily level, employees who reported somatic complaints made less progress on their goals and felt lower levels of positive affect and higher levels of negative affect. At the group level, cross-level main and interactive effects of manager empathy were observed, such that groups of employees with empathic managers experienced lower average levels of somatic complaints, and daily goal progress was more strongly related to positive affect for groups of employees with empathic managers. We discuss the implications of these results for the emerging literature on leaders as managers of group emotion.

Kumar and Bhalerao (2016) carried out a study on the role of emotional intelligence in leaders and on the commitment level of employees in information technology and manufacturing sector in India. The purpose of the study was to explore the role of emotional intelligence in leaders and on the commitment level of subordinates. Data was collected from dyadic sources using survey method and convenient sampling. A total of 155 professionals forming 89 pairs from Information Technology (IT) and manufacturing sector in India participated in the study. The findings revealed

a significant relationship between trait-based EI and affective commitment, when the designations of the leaders and the subordinates were controlled. However, no significant results were found between EI and normative and continuance commitments. The finding challenged some of the basic assumptions about EI and suggested that the relationship between EI and organisational commitment is complete. This work is linked to the present study because it considered EI variables and job performance just like the present study.

Ayogu (2015) carried out a study on emotional intelligence and implication for career development in selected Federal Universities in South-East, Nigeria. The study sought to assess the significant areas that require emotional intelligence in the management of selected Federal Universities in South-East, Nigeria; assess the implication of emotional intelligence on the non-academic staff; ascertain the attributes of emotional intelligence on the non-academic staff, ascertain the attributes of emotional intelligence that enhance academic staff career development; determine the extent of the relationship between motivation and training and examine the extent to which emotional intelligence affects career development in selected Federal Universities in South-East, Nigeria. The study adopted the survey research design and data were collected from primary source through questionnaire and oral interview. Data were also obtained from secondary sources. The target population of the study comprised both academic and non-academic staff of Federal Universities in South East, Nigeria. A sample size of six hundred and fifty-one (651) respondents was determined using the finite population formula of Godden (2004). The chi-square statistics, z-test, linear regression and the pearson product moment correlation co-efficient through the application of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 17.0 windows) were used to test the hypotheses stated. The findings indicated that leadership, negotiation and decision making are significant areas that require emotional intelligence in the management of selected Federal Universities in South-East, Nigeria. The relationship between Ayogu's (2015) work and the present study is motivation; one of the EI variables. The impact of EI on academic staff job performance is also a serious link. The past and the present study also used questionnaire for data collection and correlation statistics for testing hypotheses.

Objective of the Study

The major objective of this study is to examine the influence of empathy on employees' commitment in Champion Brewery, Plc, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The survey research design is use in this study. The choice of this design was influenced by the nature of the research problem. The target population of study include all the permanent staff of Champion Brewery Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. From the Human Resource department of Champion Brewery Plc, Uyo Akwa Ibom State, the total population of the employees working in the organization is Ninety 90. The break- down of the population under study is as follows (Human Resource Department of Champion Brewery Plc, Uyo, 2023):

Table 1: Population of Employees in Champion Brewery Plc, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State

Employees of Champion Brewery Plc	Number of Employees	Percent
Marketing department	32	35.5

Information and Communication Technology	13	14.4
Production department	21	23.3
Human Resources department	14	15.5
Finance/Accounting Department	10	11.1
Total	90	100

Source: Human Resource Department of Champion Brewery Plc, Uyo Akwa Ibom State

The sampling technique used in the study was simple random sampling technique. This method was chosen because it gives the subjects in the population equal chance of being selected. Data used in this study were obtained from primary and secondary sources. The Primary source of Data for this study was obtained through the use of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was a modified Likert scale rating ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. These are;

Strongly Agree (SA)	4
Agree (A)	3
Disagree (D)	2
Strongly Disagree (SD)	1
Undecided	0

Specification of Model

Simple regression analysis was used to test the influence using the Statistical Package Social Science (SPSS version 25).

$$y = X_i + X_{ii} + X_{iii} + \varepsilon$$

Simple linear Regression Model Specification for Objective One

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

Whereby

- Y = dependent variable (Commitment),
- β_0 = Beta Coefficient
- X_1 = Conscientious
- β_1 = coefficients of determination
- ε = error term.

Presentation of Data

Table 2: Number of copies of questionnaire administered and returned

Departments	No. of Administered	No. of returned	%
Marketing department	32	20	35.6
Information and Communication Technology	13	9	14.4
Production department	21	15	23.3
Human Resources department	14	10	15.6
Finance/Accounting Department	10	8	11.1
Total	90	62	100

Source: Researcher's Compilation (2024)

From the table 2, out of 90 copies of questionnaire administered, 62 copies were successfully returned in usable form. This 62 made up the 100% response rate for the study.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis One

H0₁: Empathy does not influence employees' commitment in Champion Brewery, Plc, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Hi₁: Empathy does influence employees' commitment in Champion Brewery, Plc, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Table 3: Result of Linear Regression Analysis showing the influence of Empathy on employees' commitment in Champion Brewery, Plc, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.668 ^a	.437	.311	.26543	2.632

a. Predictors: (Constant), Empathy

b. Dependent Variable: Emp_Comm

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.832	1	3.823	19.514	.000 ^b
	Residual	6.909	61	.081		
	Total	10.791	60			

a. Dependent Variable: Emp_Comm

b. Predictors: (Constant), Empathy

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.878	.343		2.561	.012
Empathy	.782	.106	.668	7.383	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Emp_Comm

From the above model summary, R^2 value of 0.357 implies that about 35.7% variation in employee performance was explained by the independent variable (Empathy). The regression model appears fit with F-value of 54.504 which is significant at 5% level. Also, the Durbin-Watson statistic is 1.687 which shows the absence of auto-correlation and it is acceptable as the value lies between the acceptable range of 1.5 to 2.0. The regression model is a robust predictor of the influence of empathy on employee commitment in Champion Brewery Plc., Uyo, Akwa Ibom State under study. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis which states that there is a significant positive influence of empathy on employee commitment in Champion Brewery Plc., Uyo, Akwa Ibom State is accepted.

The value of Unstandardized Coefficient Beta of empathy is 0.782; which implies that every empathy will result in 78.2 % unit increases in commitment of employee in Champion Brewery Plc., Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Discussion of Finding

The objective of the study was to assess the influence of emotional intelligence on commitment of employees in Champion Brewery, Plc, Uyo, considering empathy perspective. In line with this, it was hypothesized that empathy does not influence employees' commitment in Champion Brewery, Plc, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. From the result of the findings, R^2 value of 0.357 implies that about 35.7% variation in employee commitment was explained by the independent variable (empathy). The regression model appears fit with F-value of 54.504 which is significant at 5% level. Also, the Durbin-Watson statistic is 1.687 which shows the absence of auto-correlation and it is acceptable as the value lies between the acceptable range of 1.5 to 2.0. The regression model is a robust predictor of the influence of empathy on employees' commitment in Champion Brewery Plc., Uyo, Akwa Ibom State under study. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis which states that empathy does influence employees' commitment in Champion Brewery Plc., Uyo, Akwa Ibom State is accepted. The value of Unstandardized Coefficient Beta of empathy is 0.782; which implies that every empathy will result in 78.2 % unit increases in commitment of employees in Champion Brewery Plc., Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Ehoro, Oparanma and Konya (2019) who examined on empathy and Employee Commitment in the health sector in Nigeria. Findings revealed that there is a high significant level of relationship between Empathy and Employee Commitment which influences positive connectivity within superiors and subordinates and also improves interaction and cooperation among workforce. Hence, consequently leading to better organisational performance.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Regardless of how the other person's perspective differs from their own, empathy is a crucial aspect of social intelligence. It is the capacity to perceive the world from another person's perspective and to tune into what another individual may be thinking and feeling about a situation. Employees will need to encourage an environment of inquiry and openness, patience, and encouragement—all of which are components of empathy—in order to foster mindset development and advance learning. Equally, management of champion breweries plc need to clear the barriers that interfere with empathy such as anxiety which is usually caused by time pressure and lack of insight of others emotions. This may further enhance the commitment of their employees.

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