

Managers' Intrapersonal Emotional Skill and Subordinate Quality Service of Manufacturing Firms in Rivers State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined how the application of managers' intrapersonal emotion skill can be used to foster subordinate quality service in manufacturing firms in Rivers State. In doing this two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated. The study adopted cross-sectional survey design; the population of the study covered 489 participants. In order to draw up a sample, the Taro Yamane formula was used and from which a sample of 220 was drawn. The study data was accessed using structured questionnaire. Data analysis was carried out using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. Given the outcome of positive relationship between the variables of the study, the study concludes that because of the essential roles the employees play in the pursuit and actualization of corporate goals, managers who do not possess and apply intrapersonal emotional skill will find it difficult to influence other to win their cooperation toward sustained service quality. Hence, the study recommends that emotional skill development programs such as training and coaching should be prioritized in the organization given its role in enhancing workers competency and self-control and also in facilitating reliability and courtesy.

Key Words: *Managers' Intrapersonal Emotional Skill, Subordinate Service Quality, Service Reliability, Courtesy*

Introduction

Quality has been described as being the fitness of use (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011) as regards user-oriented approach and the conformance to expectations of requirement (Crosby, 1979) in manufacturing-oriented approach. There are five major methods that identify the description of quality (Garvin, 1984): first, the approach or method that is transcendent; second, the product-oriented or focused method of economics; third, the user-oriented method of economics, management as well as marketing; fourth, the manufacturing-oriented and fifth, value-oriented methods of operation management. According to the transcendent position or perspective, quality indicates a form of excellence that is innate. It is an indication of uncompromising or unfaltering positions and excellent achievement, generally acknowledged, and recognized based on experience.

In the product-oriented approach, service is perceived as being concerned with the precise measurement of the variable as well as the differences in quality which indicate the differences or peculiarity in the quantity of some characteristic or features so improved or increased quality can only be achieved or attained at a higher price. In the user-oriented approach, quality can be equated with the extent of contentment with the product or service. The highest quality implies a higher level of satisfaction of consumers' expectations or demands. In manufacturing-oriented methods, quality is described or considered as doing it right from the onset or from the beginning. It is supply focused and concerned with both engineering as well as manufacturing activities. In value-oriented methods, quality is described as regards cost and price. It is viewed as an outcome of cost. However, there are some substantial distinctions between products and services (Nor *et al.*, 2010).

The characteristic and features of services is that it is intangible whereas products are tangible. Given that services are intangible, the measurement of quality as it concerns service quality is therefore more complicated. Quality in terms of service relates to how much the service rendered meets the needs and expectations of the customers. To be able to measure the quality of services, studies generally prefer the concept of perceived service quality. Perceived service quality is an outcome of the comparison of views or experiences about service delivery processes and the actual evidence of service (Gronroos, 1984; Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011).

Sweeney *et al.* (1997) analysed if service quality in service experiences impacts on perceived value and the client's willingness to pay for the service. Given the evidence from their study they argued that service quality perceptions in service encounter stage significantly influences clients much more than that obtained in product quality. Also, the increase in market competitions has made several companies to consider quality as a fundamental tool. Service quality is currently turning out to be regarded as being imperative and it is important that service providers improve the quality of their services to obtain sustainable competitiveness, customer retention/loyalty and also increased market share. The studies in literature indicate that clients/customers who are not happy with a service tend to express their dissatisfaction and experiences to others (Horovitz, 1990).

The demands and expectations of individuals are significantly dependent on the level of expectations as well as the individual and social value. Nor *et al.* (2010) observed that public sector organizations, which handle and attend to customer service, are one of the necessary and essential factors that contribute to building improved reputation and credibility in the society. Complaints from the public with regards to long queues, inadequate attention and poor physical facilities are not substantial enough to influence the image and the quality level of service in most public agencies and the sector. Teicher *et al.* (2002), argue that the evidence of service quality in public agencies is very weak and it is further exacerbated by the challenges in ascertaining the outcomes, considerable monitoring of the press as well as the public, the lack of freedom to improvise freely as well as the need for decisions that are premised upon the law.

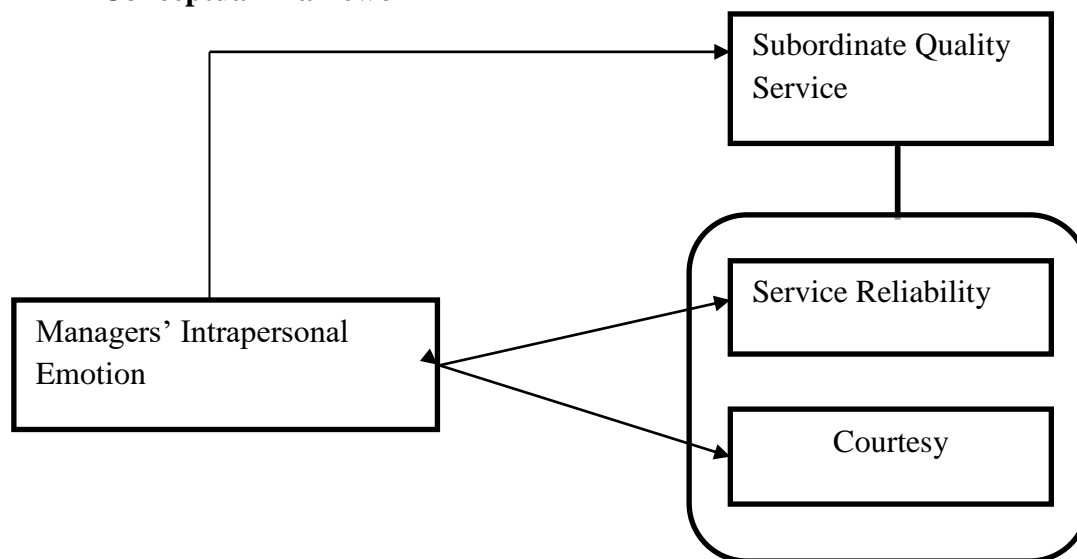
Unsatisfied workers produce poor and inadequate results, hence, it is essential and imperative for top management to look after their workers so as to emphasize and ensure that they are happy and contented in their roles and tasks; when employees/workers are satisfied; they tend to strive

for the organizations goals and objectives (Egan, 1998). The performance and effectiveness of any organization relies on the effort and capability of its leaders to provide a good and conducive environment for its workers. The problem for most leaders currently is how to keep their workers motivated and being effective on their roles. The leader of any organization has to be aware of the behaviour of each worker and what might drive and inspires each one individually. Through the understanding of worker's needs, managers and supervisors can understand what forms of tools and mediums to adopt to motivate them. The objective of most organizations is to benefit from the behaviour and contributions of their workforce within the workplace through the promotion of a win-win situation for both the organization and its employees.

Humans are the organizations most treasured asset and this is most evident in relatively low technology labour-intensive industries such as construction, however, humans or individuals also represent the most challenging and complex asset for organizations to handle and control. Unlike tangible and physical tools, workers have their own individual expectations and fears which must be met and desires which must be controlled if they are to offer anything meaningful to growth and effectiveness of the organization. They are workers who bring their own views, experiences, values and features to organizational life, and when managed effectively can bring considerable advantages to the organization (Mullins, 1999). However, when poorly managed workers have the tendency to severely constrain organizational growth and even threaten the survival of the organization. In any organization, be it agricultural, manufacturing, construction or any other form of production or service, its core is its workers; their functionality and contribution is very essential in such a way that they affect and influence the extent to which the organization is going to be a successful or a failure. An organization may have an experienced and exposed leader, a good mission and substantial objectives; however, if it neglects its workers, that organization is evidently going to have issues.

Whereas studies and extant literature on service quality from the 80s till today has rather emphasized on how workers adopt and handle roles or tasks within their various companies, as well as how the execution of the organizations' policies tend to contribute to emotional dissonance (Hochschild, 2003) or behaviours which can be considered as being devious and deviant (Rafaeli & Sutton, 2006), there has been less focus or activities devoted to the investigation of how workers adopt and utilize multiple, complex skills into a holistic and more healthier working self (Erickson, 2007) and thereby experience positive emotions as a result. Thus indicating the implications for a need to develop and grow in a more integrated pattern or process: negative feelings are integrated into the individuals understanding of himself/herself such that one turns out as more receptive, empathic and emotionally aware as a whole being (Saarni, 2009). Therefore, this study departs from previous literature as it examines the relationship between manager's emotional skill and subordinates service quality in manufacturing firms in Rivers State

Conceptual Framework



Source: Desk Research, 2022

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the empirical relationship between managers' intrapersonal skill and subordinate service quality in manufacturing firms Rivers State. Thus, the objectives of the study are:

- i) To examine the relationship between managers' intrapersonal emotional skill and service reliability in manufacturing firms in Rivers State.
- ii) To examine the relationship between managers' intrapersonal emotional skill and courtesy in manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

Research Questions

- i. What is the relationship between managers' intrapersonal emotional skill and service reliability in manufacturing firms in Rivers?
- ii. What is the relationship between managers' intrapersonal emotional skill and courtesy in manufacturing firms in Rivers?

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between managers' intrapersonal emotional skill and service reliability in manufacturing firms in Rivers.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between intrapersonal emotional skill and courtesy in manufacturing firms in Rivers.

Theoretical Foundation

Social Exchange Theory (SET) was used in this study to explain the theoretical link between the study variables. The social exchange theory is considered as a more comprehensive and appropriate framework which explains and adequately captures the theories about managers' emotional skill and subordinates service quality (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001). The Social Exchange Theory (SET) argues that when workplace relationships are effective, then the organisation benefits and therefore it is an important management task (particularly, for first level managers - supervisors) to ensure that effective workplace networks and relationships develop (Graen & Scandura, 1987). Using SET, employees who experience mutual reciprocity of resources, information, respect and power with supervisors in particular and management generally should also experience high perceptions of autonomy. Moreover, they would be satisfied with the resources, information, relationships and support offered by the supervisor, as well as the job generally – hence, they would be committed to staying in the organisation and giving their best to the organization.

Manager's Intrapersonal Emotional Skill and Subordinate Quality Service

Intrapersonal emotional skill is defined as an awareness of self-perception, self-value, and betterment of self toward addressing life demands, challenges, and stressors (Nelson & Low, 2011). Two distinct EI scales are used to define intrapersonal skill namely self-esteem and stress management. Self-esteem is the ability to view one's self as positive, competent, and successful, and includes having optimism, self-confidence, and self-worth (Nelson, Low & Trent, 2012). The ability to not only identify but also capitalize on individual strengths supports the development of positive self-esteem, optimism, and sense of self-worth. Optimism supports the ability of a leader (a) to communicate a positive attitude toward the ability of others to accomplish tasks (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005); (b) to see opportunity rather than threat (Goleman et al., 2002); and (c) to maintain a positive outlook and expectation for positive change.

The second component of intrapersonal skill which is stress management is the ability to choose and exercise self-control in response to stress, which requires the ability to regulate one's emotional levels using coping strategies, if necessary, during stressful situations (Nelson & Low, 2011). Characteristics that are common to those who demonstrate stress management skills include a strong sense of self-worth, competence, communication, decision-making, and time management skills, as well as assertiveness, and positive influence (Nelson & Low, 2011).

As a manager seeking to achieve organizational goals through and with others, possession of intrapersonal emotional ability is as much important as having interpersonal ability. This is because for an individual to understand and work well with others, such individual must have a proper understanding of self-emotion. This is why Wobodo and Zeb-Obipi (2019) contends that a manager with high level of self-awareness can easily work well with others in any social context. The scholars went further to state people who are very conversant with this competence and skills always have the tendency to achieve greater results.

Subordinates Quality Service

According to Parasuraman et al. (1988), service quality can be defined as an overall judgment similar to attitude towards the service and generally accepted as an antecedent of overall customer satisfaction (Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996). Parasuraman et al. (1988) have defined service quality as the ability of the organization to meet or exceed customer expectations. It is the difference between customer expectations of service and perceived service (Zeithaml et al., 1990). Perceived service quality results from comparisons by customers of expectations with their perceptions of service delivered by the suppliers. If expectations are greater than performance, then perceived quality is less than satisfactory and hence customer dissatisfaction occurs (Lewis & Mitchell, 2005).

Services unlike tangible products are produced and consumed at the same time in the presence of the customer and the service producer. The presence of the human element during the service delivery process greatly increases the probability of error on the part of employees and customers. This error is due to intangible behavioural processes that cannot be easily monitored or controlled (Bowen, 1986). However, although a substantial amount of service quality research has focused on service customers' perceived service quality (Carman, 2006; Cronin & Taylor, 2009), relatively little attention has been paid to exploring the factors that impact on service employees' behavior with regard to delivering service quality.

More than two decades ago, Surprenant and Solomon (1999) stated that service encounters are human interactions. They suggested that customers and service providers have roles to play during and possibly after service encounters and that these roles are based on "interpersonal interactions" between organizations and customers. Service quality in all service encounters is thus intrinsically affected by the perspectives of both the service provider and the service receiver. Similarly, Czepiel (2012) concluded that research on service quality must always include the perspectives of both the provider and the receiver. However, most research on the service quality construct has been restricted to one perspective: that of the service receiver (Babakus & Mangold, 2012). A few have applied dual perspectives and considered interactive features of service quality in service encounters (Cronin & Taylor, 2009).

Because service delivery occurs during the interactions between contact employees and customers, attitudes and behaviours of the contact employees can influence customers' perceptions of service quality (Schneider and Bowen, 2010). Moreover, Beatson et al. (2008) found that perceived employee satisfaction, perceived employee loyalty, and perceived employee commitment had a sizable impact on perceived product quality and on perceived service quality. According to Zeithaml and Bitner (1996), contact employees represent the organization and can directly influence customer satisfaction, they perform the role of marketers. Whether acknowledged or not, service employees perform marketing functions. They can perform these functions well, to the organization's advantage, or poorly, to the organization's detriment.

According to Bettencourt and Gwinner, (2000) first-line employee (FLE) has the opportunity to tailor in real-time not only the services the firm offers, but also the way in which those services are delivered. Customer actions, reactions and other characteristics can have a profound

influence on the actions and mannerisms of front-line service personnel (Matzler et al., 2004). Customers largely establish their impressions of the organization's level of service provision based on their encounters with FLE. Therefore employees involved in the delivery of front-line services can provide valuable information for improving service. FLE are knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the service through their contact with customers and this is an important form of feedback that can be used by organizations in decision-making to better serve customers. Research has established a positive correlation between the attitudes of employees and those of customers, including employee and customer perceptions of service quality (Schneider & Bowen, 2010).

Service Reliability

Service reliability is associated with perception of quality service delivery. It looks at physical access or reachability of services that meet a base standard (Carrillat, Jaramillo & Mulki, 2007). It is the customer's judgment about the general position and excellence of the administration they get, expected quality clarifies the assumptions about the administration they have gotten. Service reliability depends on handling customers' services problems; performing services right the first time; provide services at the promised time and maintaining error-free record. Furthermore, it is stated service reliability is the most important factor in conventional service (Parasuraman et al., 1988), and product and manufacturing organizational research (Yang & Feng, 2004). Reliability is also said to consist of accurate order fulfilment; accurate record; accurate quote; accurate in billing; accurate calculation of commissions; keep services promise.

Courtesy

Parasuraman et al. (1985) defined courtesy as knowledge and politeness of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence. According to Sadek et al. (2010), in British banks courtesy means providing assurance through behaviour and also being friendly, it is concerned with the provision of financial advice, interior comfort, eases of access to account information and knowledgeable and experienced management team. During service delivery encounter, courtesy manifests itself in the attitude of attention, respect and basic considerations to others. This is why Fewks (2021) maintains that courtesy is the sum of various behaviours individuals in the organization engage in to show one another they are valued and being heard. The hope is that demonstrating courtesy will help a business build cohesive interpersonal relationship, customer loyalty and facilitate free promotion through positive word of mouth.

Managers' Intrapersonal Emotional Skill and Subordinates Quality Service

As summarized by Smigla and Pastoria (2000) stressed that intrapersonal skill is an important element to create a productive working condition. Tucker (2002) show that 80% success at work depends on the intrapersonal, while only 20% dependent on expressions of behaviour. As cited in Cherniss (2000), the ability to manage feelings and control stress is another aspect of emotional intelligence that has been found to be important for success. One study from store managers in a retail chain found that the ability to handle stress predicted net profits, sales per square foot, sales per employee, and per dollar of inventory investment (Lusch & Serpkenci, 1990).

One important aspect and feature of intrapersonal skill is empathy. Empathy also is important aspect of intrapersonal skill that contributes to occupational success (Rosenthal, 2000). Emotions can give a variety of impact on everything that people do. In addition, emotions can cause an increase in the morale of employees, but the emotion can be destructive to the employee (Hayward, 2005). Consequently, emotions must be handled properly so that it leaves no adverse effect on a person. This is because the bad emotions like fear, anger, anxiety, and hostility can cause low morale, and this leads to absenteeism and apathy (Bagshaw, 2000) in (Hayward, 2005). Research by Cooper (1997) in Hayward (2005) shows that emotion that is managed well, and handled properly, will have a successful result. So, if the emotions are managed properly, it will lead to the trust, loyalty and commitment and improve productivity.

Methodology

In this study, cross sectional survey type of the quasi-experiment research design was adopted (Baridam, 2001; Sekaran, 2003). The population of the study comprises of 489 staff of five (5) selected manufacturing companies (duly registered with the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria) operational within the Port Harcourt metropolis; while the sample size is 220 as determined with the Taro Yamane 1970 formula (Sekaran, 2003; Bryman & Bell, 2003). The main source of data in this investigation was through primary source and this was achieved by administration of structured questionnaire to the respondents in relation to the study variables using multi-scale of 3-items each on a 5-point Likert scale. In order to ascertain the reliability of the study instrument, a reliability test was observed.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Relationship between Managers' Intrapersonal Skill and Measures of subordinate Service Delivery

		Interpersonal	Reliability	Courtesy	
Spearman's rho	Intrapersonal	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.638**	.691**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	198	198	198
Reliability		Correlation Coefficient	.638**	1.000	.508**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	198	198	198
	Courtesy	Correlation Coefficient	.691**	.508**	1.000

Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
N	198	198	198

Source: Research survey, 2022

In the assessment of the relationship between managers' intrapersonal emotional skill and the measures of subordinate service delivery, the findings indicate significant relationship in all instances with intrapersonal emotional skill and subordinate reliability reflecting a $\rho = .638$ and a $P = 0.000 < 0.05$; and intrapersonal emotional competency and intrapersonal emotional competency and courtesy reflecting a $\rho = .691$ and a $P = 0.000 < 0.005$. The results depict highly significant correlations between the variables.

Discussion of Findings

The results of the analysis reveal that managers' intrapersonal emotional skill contributes to improved subordinate service quality within the organizations of study. The implication of this is that application of effective intrapersonal emotional skill in dealing with people at the workplace is advantageous and imperative in securing a more quality service oriented and innovative workforce. This finding corroborates the assertion of Parasuraman et al. (1988) that the practice and engagement in activities which reflect emotional competency go a long way in ensuring improved subordinate service delivery. The study reveals that managers' intrapersonal emotional skill facilitate outcomes which invariably translate into subordinate service delivery within the workplace. In this regard, evidence from the previous studies (Goleman , 2002) offer elaborate explanations of the need for behavioural attributes such as self-management, self-control, and self-awareness in the daily affairs and functionality of the worker in the organization as well as the need for cooperation, collaboration and cohesiveness, these as argued enhance the nature of work and service quality of the organization. This is as such skill enhances relationship management at work. Accordingly, Wobodo and Zeb-Obipi (2019) reveal that bringing people from different divides into a cohesive body requires effective relationship management.

Conclusion

This study indicates that managers' intrapersonal emotional skill is a fundamental attribute in dealing with individuals at the workplace especially as it relates to manufacturing firms in Rivers State; the study concludes that because of the essential roles the employees or subordinates play in the pursuit and actualization of corporate goals, managers who do not possess and apply intrapersonal emotional skill will find it difficult to influence other to win their cooperation toward sustained quality service.

Recommendations

The study recommends that intrapersonal emotional skill development programs such as training and coaching should be prioritized in the organization given its role in enhancing workers competency and self-control and also in facilitating reliability and courtesy.

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