

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined emotional intelligence and employee performance in telecommunication industry in Imo State, Nigeria. This study was guided by two measures of emotional intelligence like self-awareness and social-awareness, including two proxies of employee performance such as adaptive performance and task performance. The researcher employed survey design and random sampling method useful in collection of data. This study comprises population size of 203 employees selected from the three carefully chosen telecommunication companies in Imo State. Managers and senior staff were the employees available for the study. A sample size of 135 employees was realized through the aid of Taro Yamane's formula. Questionnaire was used as the primary research instrument while information received from company reports and Imo State government statistics served as the secondary source of the study. The research instrument was validated by experts in the field. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha method. Spearman correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study indicated that there was a positive significant relationship between self-awareness and adaptive performance as well as social-awareness has significant association with task performance. The researcher affirmed that emotional intelligence is positively connected to employee performance in telecommunication industry in Imo State, Nigeria. The researcher recommended that telecommunication industry should organize a workshop where workers could acquire more skills in emotional intelligence, social awareness, and self-awareness needed in enhancing employee performance.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, social awareness, self-awareness, employee performance.

Introduction

Individuals are faced with numerous challenging situations that need appropriate decisions. Before taking any decision people have to be conscious of the positive and negative impact of the decisions that affect humans. When a defective decision is made, it creates dissatisfaction and low output. Hence emotional intelligence is the emerging concept that has gain wider managerial attention to deal with every difficult situation in either organization or at the society level. Ordinarily, organizations encompass individuals with different feelings, needs, culture, and beliefs. A person has to be emotionally intelligent for him to minimize conflict and relate with others in a manner that could bring happiness and satisfaction to them. Emotional intelligence entails the ability to identify or manage personal feelings and the feelings of those persons we associate with through appropriate ways of dealing and associating with four domains of emotional intelligence (EI) which include; self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Goleman, 1998). This assertion is the same with Crystal (2013) who noted that emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, regulate, the personal emotions and the feelings of others to make use of the information that could guide individual thinking and actions. Emotional intelligence refers to people focus system that recognize personal feelings and the needs of others, use appropriate techniques to manage the entire activities. The high emotional intelligence person conduct himself skillfully, have knowledge, and positive attitude in his actions (Emily, 2006). Managers with emotional intelligence appears to be successful when they treating people well, communicating effectively, and exhibit good behaviour essential in transformation of business. Application of emotional intelligence helps organizations to train their employees in developing their interpersonal skills in order to perform effectively (Salovey, 2011). Indeed, workers in telecommunication industry need to enhance their emotional intelligence skills to enhance productivity and their job performance. Every successful business requires rational data and emotional data.

Emotional intelligence develops innovational creativity in employees which lead to higher performance in the organization. Kahtani (2013) pronounced that employee may handle their emotions accurately and display certain behaviours in the organization that permit them to gather good information, network other's behavior, and make better decisions about their activities, that result in improved job performance. Employee performance is a measure of the self-confidence of employee, effective, and efficient completion of mutually agreed tasks by the employee, as set out by the employer (Kulkarni & Kumar, 2013). Managers are to ensure that member of staff activities and output contribute to organizational goals. Kim et al. (2009) considered employees job performance as a degree of accomplishment of task that forms part of an employee's job. Employee performance signifies the ability of the employee to complete his task according to the standard set by the organization. Although, employee performance is related to productivity which translates to appearance on the job, morale at work, suitability of output, quantity of output, quality of output, as well as efficiency of the work completed (Danguah, 2014). Consequently, employee performance connotes the level to which the workers apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order to achieve the desired results and meeting specific objectives (Saddam & Muhammed, 2010). Furthermore, high performers are

often rewarded by financially and other benefits, get promoted more easily within an organization and generally have better career opportunities than low performers (McPheat, 2015). The ability of an organization to attain its objectives depend on the productivity levels of the employee. Employee performance is subject to the level of motivation each individual gets from the organization. Job tasks that are pleasant or enjoyable are considered to motivate employees and they perform better in such jobs (Danguah, 2014). However, if employees in telecommunication industry are dissatisfied over working conditions, their behaviour could be characterized by high rate of errors in their work, poor concentration and planning, and absenteeism.

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and adaptive performance in telecommunication industry in Imo State, Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between social awareness and task performance in telecommunication industry in Imo State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence denotes the ability of a person to know what is going on within his environment passionately, be prepared to control it, and be able to influence the feelings of others either positively or negatively (Jonas, 2013). Emotional intelligence entails the ability to monitor individual's and others' feelings, normalize them, and to authenticate this necessary information gathered to guide one's thinking and actions (Mayer, 2012). Emotional intelligence is an individual capacity to perceive the internal sentiments including others that deal with individuals' feelings inside themselves and their associations (Goleman, 2014). All these discussions are similar in Salovey (2011) who insisted that emotional intelligence is the skill, talent, or self-perceived to recognize, evaluate, and control of personal emotions, and that of organizations. Indeed, emotional intelligence is the ability to take part in feelings either personal or for other persons to understand desires, regulate reactions, and to promote personal growth. Emotional intelligence connotes the ability to appraise, express feelings, perceive accurately, and promote intellectual growth. Apparently, emotional intelligence is vital in determining success and accountable for deciding achievement in life. This indicates that emotional intelligence appears to play active roles in determining the communication among people specifically workers in their work place. Emotional intelligence performs a fundamental function in assisting the employees to handle their exciting change environment. Uzawanne (2015) stated that emotional intelligence principles provide a solution to understand, evaluate people's behaviours, management styles, attitudes, interpersonal skills, and potential. Emotional intelligence is indispensable in recruitment, customer relations, human resource planning, job performance, interviewing, and selection, management development, and customer service (Weinberger, 2012).

Emotional intelligence plays a significant part in assisting managers and employees to manage change in the business environment. Hoffman (2013) emphasized that management has the

responsibility of identifying and analyzing the perceptions of employee and how they formulate their response to feedback, criticism, and recognition. Jonas (2013) maintained that emotions control our actions and influences or redirect our behaviors for good or worse. It is imperative to handle personal emotions and those of others carefully particularly when faced with challenging situations. In addition, emotional intelligence relates to the ability of a manager to recognize the feelings of others and do the needful by managing the relationship. Employee achievements and job performance could be enhanced by improving on emotional intelligence (Kahtani, 2013). Emotional intelligence (EI) affects our daily lives especially how individuals behave, relate to others, make discrete, and group decisions to arrive at desired results. Emotional intelligence contains several crucial skills that influence employee communication, behaviour, while relating to several job-related outcomes, together with job performance (Cheok & Eleanor, 2011). Managers with positive mindsets are more likely to respond to challenging issues in a positive and informed manner than those who have negative emotions. (Karimi, 2014). When organizations give more attentions to workers emotional intelligence, there is the possibility of having increase sales, profitability, and improved job performance (Kaura, 2011). Moreover, Danguah (2014) declared that there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and customer satisfaction which in turn also has a positive relationship with organizational performance. Emotional intelligence skills help employees to survive the dynamic change in the business environment and improve workers productivity. Kahtani (2013) affirmed that emotional intelligence allows employees to improve a positive relationship at work, establish team work, and build social capital. Emotional intelligence (EI) also contributes to high job performance, manage stress, adapt to organizational change, and perform well under pressure. Goleman et al. (2002) recognized two basic measures of emotional intelligence which are self-awareness and social awareness.

Self-Awareness

Baloch et al. (2014) stipulated that self-awareness refers to being in touch with personal feelings and knowing their effects on our decision making, and to be in charge of them while constantly analyzing or to maintain our confidence levels at a high standard. Victoroff and Boyatzis (2012) declared that self-awareness is knowing individual internal state, preference, resources, and intuition. Similarly, self-awareness entails to have a comprehensive knowledge about individual feelings or behaviour and try to evaluate the effects of these feelings on persons within the environment. Self-awareness recognizes the position of a person feelings and how it affects his strengths and weaknesses. Boyatzis et al. (2002) noted that accurate self-awareness was the hallmark of superior performance. Employees with accurate self-awareness are aware of theory competences which include self-assessment, self-confidence, and emotion handling. Self-awareness also comprises having a realistic assessment of individual abilities. The audacity comes from human capabilities, certainty, through self-awareness, values, and goals. Consequently, self-aware individuals have the ability to accurately perceive his feelings and stay aware of them as they happen. This consists of responding to specific situations and people. Self-awareness employees are aware of their strengths and weakness, receive candid feedback from others, and willing to learn from past

experiences. Dierker (2014) proclaimed that self-awareness is not only to have adequate knowledge about people but include being in position to interpret this knowledge for the purpose of learning more about the people. Emotional self-awareness is the distinctive potential to identify, recognize, communicate, feel, use, remember, describe, learn from manage, understand, and explain reaction (McPheat, 2015). To be emotionally self-aware, manager ought to recognize employee's feelings and their effects (Victoroff & Boyatzis, 2016). Emotional self-awareness is concerned with the identification and response to the feelings that give rise to degree of autonomy (Ingram, 2013).

Social Awareness

Baloch et al. (2014) mentioned that social awareness signifies that an individual should have the capability to know what is socially acceptable in the society and how he should act in that manner accordingly. Victoroff and Boyatzis (2012) narrated that social awareness simply means how individuals handle relationships and the feelings, needs, of other persons after they have gained full knowledge of their predicaments. Ordinarily, social awareness or an empathic person is the one who is socially conscious of the feelings, concerns of other people, and willing to assist. From the look of things particularly in business environment, the communication among the employees appears to be complex because it requires only workers who could interact well that are empathetic in interactions to achieve better job performance. Moreover, employees do not work in isolation, they work with co-workers to embrace team work. Managers with social awareness are capable of managing relationships within the organizations in an appropriate manner, by ensuring that they give attention to the feelings of the subordinates or colleagues and make them feel happy to enhance performance (McPheat, 2015). Indeed, Laegaard and Bindselev (2006) emphasized that the absence of social awareness knowledge makes employees to work with wrong directions, which eventually lead to gratuitous mistakes. Lack of social awareness makes the worker to feel isolated, demoralized, and increase their stress. The impact of social awareness depends on the length of time that the employee utilized in the conversation with other employees, in order to have improved understanding necessary in performing their job effectively (Victoroff & Boyatzis, 2012). An effective job performance could change the negative situations within the work environment. High performance is possible to exist among employees with very high social connections or awareness as to be compared with employees who have low social connection. Thus, socially aware employees seek for advice about issues concerning their jobs from knowledgeable colleagues, they are also motivated and look forward to going to work every day and socialize with colleagues so that they could boost their job performance contrary to the anti-social colleagues (Treadway et al, 2013). Supervisors and managers may improve employee performance by encouraging team work, collaboration, and cooperation with co-workers to improve the working relationships amongst themselves and creating a working environment where employees are free to exchange ideas on work related issues to achieve organizational performance (Wang et al., 2015).

Employee Performance

Wall (2010) declared that employee performance entails assessing an employee's competency and measuring his productivity for the overall plan of the organization. Employee performance denotes the ability to meet the expected quality and achievement of tasks under the policy and time requirements of the organization (Manmohan, 2015). Moreover, employee performance is the act of doing something successful using knowledge as famous from merely possessing it (Samad, 2012). Employee performance represents the financial and non-financial result of the employee which is instrumental for organizational performance and success (Anitta, 2014). Employee performance is the positive roles of an employee in performing his tasks over a given period of time in order to achieve goals. Production is important and cannot be done if the member of staff potential and his ability to perform are not measured. Although, good relations with fellow workers, customers, and stake holders, result in improved business returns, employee satisfaction, competitive advantage, and good reputation of the organization (Agnes et al., 2013). Employees' performance is directly interrelated to organizational productivity and its success. Accordingly, healthier performance of each employee creates enormous progress which includes profitability, teamwork among employees, quality production, and commitment at work place (Saddam & Muhammad, 2010). When telecommunication industry provides motivation factors to employees and recognize their values, the workers are likely to express loyalty, commitment, improve performance, and be likeminded to the organizational visions. Goleman (2014) narrated that management need to have high level of communication with subordinate to understand employees demands and feelings. Delegating authority to subordinates require awareness and perception from the workers so as to enable managers to evaluate their subordinate's personality, values, emotional competencies, and determine the factors that could motivate people in order to achieve success. Employee's performance is a degree of accomplishment of task that could be measured using task performance and adaptive performance.

Adaptive Performance

Adaptive performance is described as a set of skills or behaviours that lead a person to maintain good performance during unexpected changes (Passenheim, 2010). This assumption is similar in Mahammad and Mahmand (2013) who demonstrated that adaptive performance relates to the ability of a person to modify his behaviour to meet the demands of a new situation or change environment. Adaptive performance connotes the willingness of an employee to change and comply with environmental changes or directives. Workers with low levels of adaptive performance may be moved into a function that requires less adaptive performance. If organizations do not adapt to these changes that affect both humans and environment, it may lead to negative effects for the organization (Goleman, 2014). Correspondingly, it is imperative that adaptation to changes in the environment takes place at all levels in the organization, starting with their employees (Saddam & Muhammed, 2010). When there are changes in leadership, policies, and decision making, the employees are obliged to adapt to such changes for effective operation. Basically, it is important for organizations to know which factors that may influence the adaptive performance of their

employees. Jong (2014) classified adaptive performance into two forms like reactive forms of adaptive performance and proactive forms of adaptive performance. Reactive adaptive performance consists of five components such as physical adaptability, handling emergencies, cultural adaptability, crisis managing work stress, dealing with uncertainty, and unpredictable work situations. Similarly, proactive adaptive performance comprises solving problem creatively, training, and learning effort, and interpersonal adaptability.

Task Performance

Task performance discusses the effectiveness of employee behaviours that contribute to organizational objectives (Austine, 2004). Task performance refers to result of two rudiments, which consist of the abilities, and skills that an employee possesses, which he utilizes to perform a better job (Chermiss, 2001). Similarly, Charbonnier (2010) insisted that task performance is an action or productive behaviour relevant to organizational goals. Task performance relates to the discharge of duties or responsibilities that contribute to the production of a good, service, and administrative tasks. Employers of labour and the management of telecommunication firms are expected to treat their employees as the most important internal resources and please them with favourable salary or condition of service, so that their commitment could be transformed to high productivity (Jaikumer, 2010). Ordinarily, when employees are devoted to their duties, they become high performers that contribute towards organizational productivity. In reality, performance that is founded on an absolute value or relative judgment may reflect overall organizational performance (Higgs. 2004). Performance measure that is on the basis of the performance appraisal items offers higher reliability in evaluating performance. Accordingly, high performance employees pursue higher level of employee and organizational performance which involve quality, productive, innovation rate, and time management (Goleman, 2014). Employee performance could be measured through task related performance and behaviour that generates profit in the organization.

Methodology

The researcher employed survey design essential in making business decision. The population size for this study was 203 employees selected from the three carefully chosen telecommunication companies in Imo State. These companies were registered and have operated for not less than 12 years in Imo State. The two types of employees that participated in this study were managers and senior staff nominated from the three various companies. The information regarding the number of companies and employees was collected from Imo State government statistics and human resources data. A sample size of 135 employees was realized through the aid of Taro Yamane's formula. Random sampling method was useful and it created equal opportunities for the participants to have choice. Questionnaire was used as the primary research instrument while information received from company reports and Imo State government statistics served as the secondary source of the study. The questionnaire was structured within the ambit of emotional intelligence and employee performance (Gill & Johnson, 2010). The questionnaire was separated into three parts such as section A, B, and C.

The section A, was for demographic's representation of the participants like gender, age, marital status, educational qualifications, and tenure in the organization. Section B epitomizes the independent variable known as emotional intelligence while section C, represented employee performance. The research instrument was validated by experts in the field. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha method and a correlation coefficient of 0.971 was obtained as a measure of consistency and trustworthiness. Spearman correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The consent of the selected companies was obtained and the information transferred by the participants were voluntarily and confidential. This study was guided by two measures of emotional intelligence such as self-awareness and social awareness, as well as two predictors of employee performance namely adaptive performance and task performance. The researcher also used ordinal scale and 5-point Likert's scale ranging from 1-5. Where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree 3 = neutral 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree.

Table 1 Population Distribution

Names of telecommunication companies		Population
1.	Globacom limited GLO	53
2.	MTN Nigeria	80
3.	Airtel Nigeria	70

Total 203
Source: Imo State Government Statistics, 2024.

Table 2 Cronbach Alpha Reliability Test

	Variable	Reliability	Number of Items
Emotional intelligence	Self-awareness	0.973	5
	Social awareness	0.966	5
	Adaptive performance	0.944	5
Employee performance	Task performance	0.924	5

Results and Discussion

Test of Hypothesis One

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and adaptive performance in telecommunication industry in Imo State, Nigeria.

H_{A1}: There is significant relationship between self-awareness and adaptive performance in telecommunication industry in Imo State, Nigeria.

Table 3 Spearman Correlation Coefficient between Self-Awareness and Adaptive Performance

Correlations				
			Self-awareness	Adaptive performance
Spearman's rho	Self-awareness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.904**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	135	135
	Adaptive performance	Correlation Coefficient	.904**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	135	135

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

The results of Table 3 confirmed the significant positive relationship between self-awareness and adaptive performance in telecommunication industry in Imo State, Nigeria. This suggests that the relationship was statistically significant. The r- value was 0.904 and p – value 0.000 which specified that self-awareness has positive significant relationship with adaptive performance. Where $p - \text{value} = 0.000 < 0.005$, the null hypothesis was rejected while alternative hypothesis was accepted. The positive significance r- value of 0.904 disclosed that 90.4% rise in self-awareness of employees may contribute to more adaptive performance in the organizations.

Test of Hypothesis Two

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between social awareness and task performance in telecommunication industry in Imo State, Nigeria.

HA2: There is significant relationship between social awareness and task performance in telecommunication industry in Imo State, Nigeria.

Table 4 Spearman Correlation Coefficient between Social-Awareness and Task Performance

Correlations				
			Social awareness	Task performance
Spearman's rho	Social awareness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.982**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	135	135
	Task performance	Correlation Coefficient	.982**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	135	135

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

The results in Table 4 showed that there was positive significant relationship between social awareness and task performance in telecommunication industry in Imo State, Nigeria. This indicated that r - value was 0.982 and p – value 0.000 which revealed that social awareness is meaningfully connected to task performance of workers. Where p – value = 0.000 < 0.005, the null hypothesis was rejected while alternative hypothesis was accepted. The positive significance r - value of 0.982 showed that 98.2% increase in employee social awareness could lead to a rise in task performance of the employees.

Discussion of Findings

The findings in hypothesis one shows that there is a positive significant relationship between self-awareness and adaptive performance in telecommunication industry in Imo State, Nigeria. This result reveals that employees with self-awareness are capable of increasing sales and create more customers. This finding is in accord with Boyatzis et al. (2002), who narrated that accurate self-awareness was the hallmark of superior performance. Correspondingly, the result is also consistent with McPheat (2015), who stated that emotional self-awareness is the distinctive potential to identify, recognize, communicate, feel, use, remember, describe, learn from manage, understand, and explain reactions. The second hypothesis proved that there is positive significant relationship between social awareness and task performance in telecommunication industry in Imo State, Nigeria. This result shows that employees in the organization practice social awareness to enhance productivity and job performance. The finding is justified in McPheat (2015), who unveiled those managers with social awareness are capable of managing relationships within the organizations in an appropriate manner, by ensuring that they give attention to the feelings of the subordinates or colleagues and make them feel happy to enhance performance.

Conclusion

The findings disclosed that self-awareness results in improved employee adaptive performance. Workers who had strong self-awareness were truthful in whatever choices they make while doing their work. The results in this study showed that there was positive significant relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance in telecommunication industry in Imo State, Nigeria. The finding revealed that self-awareness is significantly associated with adaptive performance of employees in the organization. Thus, social awareness has positive significant relationship with the task performance of workers. This implies that workers with high social awareness are likely to increase their task performance in order to boost productivity. Telecommunication industry should encourage their managers to develop self-awareness in understanding the feelings of subordinates, co-workers, and company needs, so as to increase their adaptive performance for the growth of the organization. Furthermore, the management of telecommunication companies should organize a workshop where workers could acquire more skills in emotional intelligence, social awareness, and self -awareness needed in enhancing employee performance.

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