

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS IN POWER SECTOR FIRMS IN SOUTHERN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial success in power sector firms in South East Nigeria with an emphasis on beverage firms in the geopolitical zone. The study was conducted to ascertain how emotional intelligence competencies like self-awareness and empathy impacted customer loyalty and sales growth. The study was directed by four research questions and four hypotheses. The paper employed a survey research design. The main survey tool used in the study was a questionnaire. The instrument reliability ratio was calculated using the Cronbach Alpha statistic and was 0.77. The descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were the focus of the data analysis. To test hypotheses, correlation analysis was utilized. The findings show that with self-awareness and empathy, power sector firms beefed up customer loyalty and sales growth. It was concluded that emotional intelligence enhanced entrepreneurial success in power sector firms in Southern Nigeria. The study recommends that workers should beef up their emotional intelligence competencies for enhanced entrepreneurial success.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Entrepreneurial success.

INTRODUCTION

From time to time, organizational owners and managers have continued to search for various options for achieving success in their enterprises. One of the strategies they have found that can boost the success of entrepreneurial organizations is emotional intelligence. Markham (2014) defines emotional intelligence as the ability to manage emotional attachments with moderation and sympathy. At its core, what Whitbourne (2017) terms "emotional intelligence" is the ability to recognize and control one's own emotions as well as those of others. One must be self-aware and can channel emotions productively into mental tasks like analysis and problem-solving to be emotionally intelligent. The country of Nigeria's power grid needs immediate expansion. Competition for market share, increased electricity usage, shifting consumer tastes toward alternative kinds of entertainment, and the influence of technology on the entertainment sector are all elements that contribute to the industry's growth and vitality. If there is a large variety of products available, the market could be rather enormous.

Electric power company managers need more than just wits and brawn to thrive in today's cutthroat market. Unlike knowledge or technical know-how, emotional intelligence is what truly separates the best leaders from others. This intelligence consists of five traits that help leaders bring out the best in themselves and their teams (Goleman, 2003).

Emotional intelligence can be separated into "personal" and "social" competencies, which, according to Farooq and Mease (2013), essentially correspond to introspective and extroverted skills, respectively. Self-management is an example of personal abilities or competencies. Emotional self-awareness, sincere self-evaluation, and self-confidence are all components, as are self-control, dependability, social competence, adaptability, and creative thinking, as well as inspiration, which encompasses a determination to succeed, an eagerness to exert effort, a can-do attitude, and an optimistic outlook. Empathy, which is comprised of understanding others, fostering others, service orientation, leveraging diversity, and political awareness, is a component of the social skills or competencies that comprise how we interact with others. The capacity to exercise influence,

communicate effectively, settle issues, lead effectively, establish strong relationships, execute change, work well in a team, and collaborate effectively are further social skills.

As stated by Pathway to Happiness (2018), self-awareness is "a clear perception of one's capabilities, weaknesses, beliefs, beliefs, motivation, and emotions." Self-awareness enables one to understand the viewpoints and reactions of others to one's current actions and statements. Self-awareness enables a person to modify how they interpret and draw conclusions from information. Altering one's emotional state with a new interpretation of events is possible. A good amount of self-awareness is a crucial component of emotional intelligence. Developing a deep awareness of yourself is the first step towards gaining what you want from life and taking control of it. The individual's attention, feelings, reactions, personality, and actions determine the course of his or her life. Self-awareness is the ability to track where your mind and emotions are taking you. It also enables us to take charge of our emotions, actions, and personalities, allowing us to make the desired changes. Empathy is one of the numerous EQ components explored in this article. According to Anthony (2010), empathetic individuals can place themselves in the shoes of others and experience their emotions. The idea is to feel how they feel. It is the capacity to empathize deeply and significantly with another individual. In this study, the researchers also focused on two other crucial characteristics of empathy: a focus on service and an awareness of diversity in power dynamics. According to Truby & Truby (2018), having a service orientation indicates that you are competent and motivated to consider the needs of others and act accordingly, even if such needs have not yet been expressed by the other individual. Individuals with a service orientation prioritize providing gratification and making themselves accessible to others. Witt (2010), a specialist on the topic of diversity and its strategic use, argues that bringing together individuals from diverse origins brings both significant opportunities and challenges for businesses. Using diversity to your benefit also requires establishing relationships with individuals from diverse backgrounds (Goleman, 1998).

Emotional intelligence may trigger entrepreneurial success in power sector firms In the context of this research, entrepreneurial success is defined as an organization's capability to increase customer loyalty and sales through the application of emotional intelligence competencies such as self-awareness (emotional intelligence) and empathy (service orientation and leveraging diversity). A customer's loyalty can be defined as "the attitude and conduct of choosing one brand over all others," as defined by PR Loyalty Solutions (2011). This preference can be based on the customer's previous experience with the product or service, the reputation of the brand, the customer's personal history with the brand, or any combination of these factors. It helps familiar businesses compete in a competitive market by encouraging consumers to make more purchases, spend more money, and have a pleasant shopping experience. When a company's sales for a certain period are greater than they were at a comparable period in the past, the company is enjoying sales growth. This measure represents the sales increase over a given period.

This study, therefore, investigates emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial success in power sector firms in Southern Nigeria to find out how emotional intelligence competencies may influence success indicators.

Statement of the Problem

It is often a cause of failure in organizations when workers exhibit a lack of emotional intelligence in the conduct of their duties. While the topic of emotional intelligence is not new to the study of contemporary management, the study's author notes a dearth of research into the connection between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial orientation in Nigeria, and more especially the beverage industry. Some researchers have explored the link between the emotional intelligence of secondary school principals and their effectiveness in Southwestern Nigeria, as was the case in a 2014 study by Adeniyi and Omoteso. Additionally, Arelu and Tejumiola (2008) examined the

responsiveness of Nigerian law enforcement to various scenarios. In addition, Okoro-Ugo (2016) investigated how emotional intelligence (EQ) contributes to the performance of the hospitality industry, while Popoola and Zaid (2015) researched the leadership, self-efficacy, EQ, IQ, and IQU of managers at Nigerian packaging enterprises. Unfortunately, none of these studies surveyed electricity suppliers. The researcher was unable to locate any studies that examined the relationship between fostering more self-awareness and empathy and either increased customer loyalty or increased sales. This has revealed a huge gap in understanding. According to Yaya and Ebunuwele (2016), many businesses fail to recognize the potential influence of workers' emotions on their output. The contribution of employees' emotional intelligence to the bottom line and morale is often undervalued by managers. There appears to be a lack of knowledge regarding the effect of emotional intelligence on entrepreneurial success in Nigerian electricity organizations, even though business papers have posited the importance of emotional intelligence to human capital career development and organizational success, as in Esu's case (2012).

Employees and managers in many power sector companies may not have an accurate picture of who they are as people, including their best and worst qualities, their thoughts, beliefs, motivations, and emotions. This is, to say the least, dangerous to entrepreneurial success. Workers may not have been properly motivated to perform thereby making it difficult for success to be recorded in the organizations. Many a time, there may be relationship management challenges in organizations and the issue of self-regulation may have been relegated to the background in many entrepreneurial firms. Many employees may have found it difficult to control and manage themselves and their emotions, inner resources, and abilities. All these may have the capacity to reduce customer loyalty while threatening product sales and profitability.

Based on the dearth of the empirical literature on emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial success in the power sector firms in Nigeria, the researcher is faced with the key problem of investigating emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial success in power sector firms in Southern Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study was to examine the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and entrepreneurial orientation in the power industry in Southern Nigeria. Specifically, this study is intended to:

- i. Establish the correlation between self-awareness and customer loyalty.
- ii. Determine the link between self-awareness and sales growth.
- iii. Discover the relationship between empathy and customer loyalty.
- iv. Investigate the relationship between empathy and sales growth.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study, the researcher developed the following research questions:

- i. Does any relationship exist between self-awareness and customer loyalty?
- ii. What is the relationship between self-awareness and sales growth?
- iii. How does empathy affect customer loyalty?
- iv. Is there any relationship between empathy and profitability?

Hypotheses

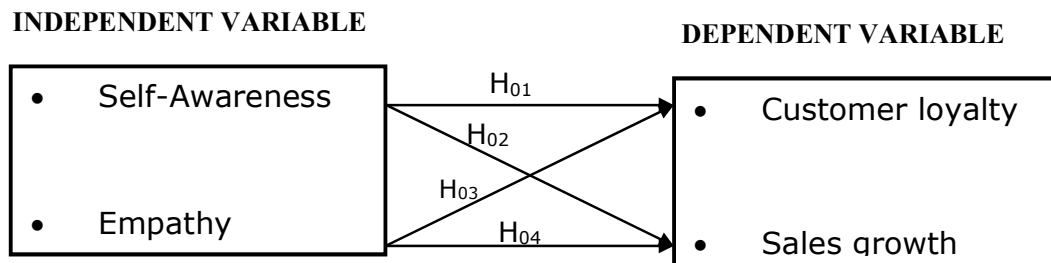
Based on the research questions, the researcher developed the following null hypotheses:

- H₀₁:** There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and customer loyalty.
- H₀₂:** There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and sales growth.
- H₀₃:** Empathy does not significantly affect customer loyalty.
- H₀₄:** There is no significant relationship between empathy and sales growth.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section comprises a conceptual framework and theoretical and empirical reviews.

Conceptual Framework: The researcher employed the following operational conceptual model to illustrate the study's variables.



Source: From the Researchers Desk (2019).

The model above shows that self-awareness and empathy may influence customer loyalty and sales growth.

Theoretical Framework

The researcher used the following theory to handle the theoretical framework:

Mayer and Salovey's (1997) Model of Emotional Intelligence

Regarding the query "What is emotional intelligence?" Mallery (2008) contributes some thoughts to the positive psychology.org.uk website. In 1997, Mayer and Salovey asserted that EI was a cognitive ability distinct from but related to Emotional Intelligence (EI) This approach consists of four skills: seeing emotion, facilitating emotion, comprehending emotion, and managing emotion. As a person ages, these tiers advance from fundamental to higher-order talents. Emotional perception is the ability to identify and comprehend one's own and other people's emotions. This also includes perceiving and experiencing the emotions elicited by environmental and artistic stimuli. The term "emotional facilitation" refers to how emotions might aid in cognitive processing. These methods include sending signs of important changes in the surrounding environment, modifying an individual's attitude to allow for multiple viewpoints on a particular circumstance, and enabling various forms of reasoning. Emotional intelligence necessitates understanding not only the names of various emotions but also how these emotions blend and change over time. Effective emotional management requires the capacity to regulate one's own emotions as well as those of others. In a study that lends credibility to this idea, Mar Salovey and David Caruso asked volunteers to rate the intensity of several emotional cues (eg faces, designs and colors). Participants concurred on a particular sub-branch of emotion perception (Mallery, 2008). Support for the management and comprehension of emotions is provided by research by Lane, Quinkin, Schwartz, Walker, and Zeblyn, as cited by Mallery (2008). These findings suggest that people who are proficient at responding to hypothetical emotional situations have higher levels of emotion perception and lower levels of alexithymia.

Empirical Reviews

Specifically, the researcher referenced the following publications as examples of their relevance: Rozell, Pettijohn, and Packer (2012) investigated the assessment of emotional intelligence (EI) utilizing a comprehensive scale to tap the construct in an empirical examination of emotional intelligence: the impact on managerial development. Exploratory factor analysis was used to investigate the factor structure of the scale using data collected from 295 business majors studying at a Midwestern university. The factor loadings allowed for the reduction of the scale to 51 items, from which five factors emerged. The demographic data showed that accounting students scored lower than the national average on the EI scale. It was also shown that participation in Greek

organizations and sports clubs was linked to higher EI scores. It was also discovered that foreign students performed worse than American pupils on the EI test.

Adeniyi and Omoteso (2014) conducted a study to determine if there was a correlation between principals' EQ and their ability to lead their schools effectively. The goal was to provide suggestions for enhancing principals' capacity for administrative leadership. Using multistage and selective sampling strategies, 821 educators and 1,723 students from 53 public secondary schools across four States in southwestern Nigeria were selected for the sample. Two instruments: The principals' Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire" (PAEQ) and "The principals' Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire" (PEIQ) was administered to the respondents to collect data. The data showed that 65.8% of educators felt that secondary school principals were extremely effective in their roles. Evidence showed that most teachers (54.2%) believed their school principals had a high emotional quotient. Secondary school principals' emotional and administrative efficacy were shown to be significantly related ($X^2 = 328.8, P < 0.05$). It was determined that the principals' high levels of emotional intelligence were directly responsible for their success as administrators.

METHODOLOGY

Emotional intelligence and Entrepreneurial success in Southern Nigeria's power sector were studied using a survey research approach. Employees at the sampled businesses filled out questionnaires, participated in observations, and were interviewed for the study. The population figure of 310 was obtained from middle-level managers of the five electricity distribution organizations in Southern Nigeria including Enugu, Benin, Ibadan, Ikeja, and Port Harcourt Distribution Companies. A sample of 174 was determined for the study using Taro Yamane's approach. Since some subjects were more suitable for the study than others, the purposive sampling approach was used. The study collected data from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data came from the survey tools, particularly the questionnaire, while the secondary data came from journals and other sources. The validity of the instrument was established by showing it to experts in management research for their input and making sure that the items in the instrument were solely based on the research questions. For determining the dependability of the research instrument, a pilot study was used. The goal was to assess response consistency. The Cronbach Alpha statistic was used to test the reliability of the data from the pilot survey. The outcome showed a 0.77 Cronbach alpha. Therefore, the instrument's reliability was 77%. The descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used in the data analysis to provide answers to the study questions. The testing of hypotheses used correlation analysis. SPSS was used to examine the data (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Data analysis was done at a 95% confidence level. Based on $P < 0.05$, the null hypothesis was rejected.

QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

DATA PRESENTATION AND FINDINGS

Only 150 of the 174 questionnaires that were provided were correctly completed and returned.

Table 1: Respondents' views on the association between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial success

Q/No	Item	SA	A	UN	D	SD	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Self-awareness and customer loyalty								
2	Companies in the power business that are self-aware have more loyal customers.	70	49	0	7	24	150	3.89	0.71
	Management programs emphasize developing employees' self-awareness skills to boost customer engagement.								
	Self-awareness and sales growth	80	35	7	28	0	150	4.11	0.992

3	With self-awareness, electricity distribution firms increase their sales growth.								
4	Workers who lack self-awareness competencies often reduce sales growth for their firms.	70	28	14	35	3	150	3.85	0.781
Empathy and customer loyalty									
5	Empathy is a great tool for improving customer loyalty in electricity distribution companies.	77	49	0	7	17	150	4.08	0.803
6	Sometimes, management organizes training programs for workers on the need for empathy.	70	42	14	7	17	150	3.94	0.611
Empathy and sales growth									
7.	Empathy can boost sales growth.	70	56	9	7	8	150	4.15	1.126
8	It is always interesting to the workers that sales growth is enhanced with empathy.	55	51	19	2	23	150	3.75	0.784

Field Survey (2019)

Data from the respondents' responses are shown in Table 1 above. The findings also showed that the respondents' opinions on the link between entrepreneurship success and emotional intelligence were broadly shared. Examining the mean and standard deviation values reveals a strong correlation between successful entrepreneurship and emotional intelligence.

Testing of Hypotheses

In this section, the study's hypotheses were tested. The hypotheses were examined to determine whether the difference in opinion was statistically significant.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and customer loyalty.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and sales growth.

H₀₃: Empathy does not significantly affect customer loyalty.

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between empathy and sales growth.

Test of Hypothesis One

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and customer loyalty.

Table 2: Correlation analysis between Self-awareness and Customer Loyalty

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Correlation Coefficient	P-value
Self-awareness	3.89	0.71	0.811	0.001
Customer loyalty	3.52	0.421		

SPSS Correlation Analysis Output (2019).

Table 2 displays the results of an analysis of the relationship between a company's level of self-awareness and the loyalty of its customers. The finding has a correlation coefficient of 0.811 and a p-value of 0.001. The result indicates that the alternative hypothesis is much more accurate than the null hypothesis (p-value 0.05). It follows that there is a statistically significant link between self-awareness and devotion from customers. That's why it's so important to know oneself: it directly affects customer loyalty.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and sales growth.

Table 3: Correlation analysis between self-awareness and sales growth

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Correlation Coefficient	P-value
Self-awareness	4.11	0.992	0.732	0.001
Sales growth	3.85	0.781		

SPSS Correlation Analysis Output (2019).

The results of the correlation analysis between self-awareness and increased sales are shown in table 3. The outcome displays a correlation coefficient of 0.732 and a p-value of 0.001. By rejecting the null hypothesis and embracing the alternative, which claims that there is a substantial association between self-awareness and sales growth, the result demonstrates a p-value less than 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 3: Empathy does not significantly affect customer loyalty.

Table 4: Correlation analysis between empathy and customer loyalty

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Correlation Coefficient	P-value
Empathy	4.08	0.803	0.883	0.001
Customer loyalty	3.94	0.611		

SPSS Correlation Analysis Output (2019).

The correlation between empathy and client loyalty is shown in table 4's findings. The outcome displays a correlation coefficient of 0.883 and a p-value of 0.001. By rejecting the null hypothesis and adopting the alternative, which asserts that empathy strongly affects customer loyalty, the finding has a p-value of 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between empathy and sales growth.

Table 5: Correlation analysis between empathy and sales growth

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Correlation Coefficient	P-value
Empathy	4.15	1.126	0.883	0.001
Sales growth	3.75	0.784		

SPSS Correlation Analysis Output (2019).

The correlation amongst empathy and improved sales is shown in table 5's results. The outcome displays a correlation coefficient of 0.883 and a p-value of 0.001. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative, according to which there is a substantial association between empathy and sales growth, is accepted. The result demonstrates a p-value of 0.05 level of significance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that emotional intelligence enhanced entrepreneurial success in power sector firms in Southern Nigeria. Self-awareness and empathy emotional intelligence competencies greatly improved customer loyalty and sales growth. The study recommends that management of electricity distribution should always ensure that their workers always possess emotional intelligence competencies for ensuring consistency in success. Workers should on their beef up their emotional intelligence competencies for enhanced entrepreneurial success.

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