

Employee Self-Esteem and Workplace Spontaneity in the Nigerian Hospitality Sector

Global Journal of Social Sciences Studies

Vol. 5, No. 2, 168-178, 2019

e-ISSN: 2518-0614



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ABSTRACT

The need to further explore the understanding of human behaviour as a strategic means of facilitating functional workplace outcomes has been stressed. This study therefore scientifically examined the empirical relationship between employee self-esteem and workplace spontaneity in the Nigerian hospitality sector. The cross-sectional survey design was deployed hence, the questionnaire instrument was primarily used to generate data from a sample of 286 participants. The data were analyzed descriptively using mean scores and standard deviation. Inferential analysis was also done using the Pearson Statistic and regression. The results indicates a positive and significant relationship between employee self-esteem and workplace spontaneity. It was also found that assertiveness has greater impact with $\beta=0.638$ and $t=3.913$ on work place spontaneity. The study concluded based on the findings that employee self-esteem correlates with workplace spontaneity and it was therefore recommended amongst others that managers and other employees should build capacity in terms of psycho-social element, that ensures assertiveness.

Keywords: *Self-esteem, Purposefulness, Responsibility, Spontaneity, Assertiveness.*

DOI: 10.20448/807.5.2.168.178

Citation | Konyefa, Rachel; Christopher Akpotu (2019). Employee Self-Esteem and Workplace Spontaneity in the Nigerian Hospitality Sector. Global Journal of Social Sciences Studies, 5(2): 168-178.

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Funding: This study received no specific financial support.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

History: Received: 18 September 2019/ Revised: 22 October 2019/ Accepted: 27 November 2019/ Published: 30 December 2019

Publisher: Online Science Publishing

Highlights of this paper

- The need to further explore the understanding of human behaviour as a strategic means of facilitating functional workplace outcomes has been stressed.
- The results indicates a positive and significant relationship between employee self-esteem and workplace spontaneity.

1. INTRODUCTION

As organizations strive towards gaining competitive advantage, employees undoubtedly undertake crucial and strategic work roles. Infact, [Greene and Baha \(2011\)](#) argues that employees critical and uncommon inputs are extensively required as first hand resource to gear up operational effectiveness as competition takes monumental dimension. What is essentially required of employee considering the environmental turbulence is showing deep commitment to work goals through voluntary sense of undertaking extra-roles that are goal oriented. Undertaking such roles according to [Muyil \(2012\)](#) will require a workforce that has a sense of purpose that is in conformity with organizational goals. Theories of work behaviour are quite categorical in explaining inherent traits that channel behaviour in work setting and have reemphasized capacity to believe in oneself as imperative ([Barclays, 2010](#); [Jara and Miller, 2010](#); [Jibade, 2014](#)).

[Emenalo \(2005\)](#) noted that, the implicit content of the employee needs to be underscored as managers take routine decisions relating to deploying them and assigning tasks. This simply suggests that beyond the acquired competencies, skills and mental capabilities of the worker, there exist behavioural compositions that are channeled by the employee inner content. They guide expressions, actions and the overall ability to undertake tasks, showing commitment and getting involved in focused responsibilities. For instance, [Jara and Miller \(2010\)](#) are of the view that employee whose motivational drive reminisce recognition of his implicit desire to be socially applauded will essentially not be disposed when exposed to explicit elements wholly. [Maslow \(1957\)](#) traditional theory of motivation stressed self-esteem as a motivational factor as the employee moves through the pyramidal structure of being motivated. It underscores the understanding of the behavioural dynamics that prompts both functional and in some cases dysfunctional outcomes.

Further, the outcomes expected also result from a cohesive workforce that had support for both organizational goals and co-worker. Co-worker support as noted by [Ochulunor and Millow \(2010\)](#) is required to enrich work skills of employee as they share knowledge and experiences. The need to nurture work behaviour that promotes and facilitates attainment of goals and overall performance of firm is considered imperative. [Green and Green \(2009\)](#) have harped on the extra-role in terms of co-worker support targeted at encouraging work members self development that spur workers to acquire additional skills and building capacity to support operations and above all showing goodwill that enhance organizational goals drive. Importantly, the thinking is, attaining spontaneity among work members also require a workforce that is behaviourally prepared and conscious of the challenge of putting in the desired effort which involves responsibility and purposefulness amongst others. While this position subsists, there is the need to expand the knowledge scope through an incisive empirical incursion. This study therefore examines the empirical relationship between employee self-esteem and workplace spontaneity behaviour in the Nigerian hospitality sector.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Self-Consistency Theory

There exists common belief in behavioural psychology thoughts that individuals explore self consistency ([Pauly and Kaure, 2004](#); [Jeremaiah et al., 2009](#); [Theodore, 2014](#)). Infact, [Feghias \(2010\)](#) argues that there is much

attraction to cognitive consistency which in turn define attitudes and behaviour. [Korman \(1970\)](#) remains one of the earliest theorists to have incorporated the self-consistency theory into organizational psychology. The self-consistency theory provides support for organizational thinking regarding self-esteem and emanated the thinking that employee with remarkable self-esteem are likely to show much commitment to task hence more productive. [Agatu \(2013\)](#) noted that self-consistency initiates personality visibility that is in itself motivating to the extent that employee feels esteemed. In otherwords, it stimulates behavioural outcomes that are considered positive while striving towards attaining work goals. This simply means that self-consistency instigates the inner confidence that is required to willingly undertake roles and responsibilities and this is the focus of this study.

2.2. Concept of Employee Self-Esteem

The concept of employee self-esteem has had huge shelf space due to research effort aimed at explaining how it channels work place outcomes ([Jaja, 2007; Jeremi, 2015](#)). It aptly describe individual personality though its ability to throw-up inherent traits and configure a characteristic behaviour that represent the individual ([Madzar, 2001](#)). [Korman \(1970\)](#) noted that self-esteem is an overall evaluation of our self-worth and the extent an individual see himself as a competent need satisfying individual. [Ajara \(2006\)](#) argues that self-esteem is a self-recognition template that assures the individual capacity to dispense of his inner content while relying on himself. In otherwords, it represents a personality factor that instigates confidence on the employee to function within his social context. [Neal \(2000\)](#) is also of the reinforcing view that self-esteem reflects the employee's evaluation of his personal adequacy and worth as an organizational member. These definitions present the capacity of self-esteem to liquidate the employee sense of self-disbelief and operational ineptitude. While examining the development of self-esteem, [Elisha \(2011\)](#) posits that self-esteem is developed overtime based on his contextual experiences. Simply put, routine interactions as individual get engaged shapes his worth and in some cases define his cognitive mould and eventual personality content hence the individual self-esteem. [Lasrah and Meidugu \(2010\)](#) posits that self-esteem provides the premise for consistency in appraising individual self worth with a view to clearly define your capabilities and competencies while at same time providing the impetus to deploy them for use and in some instances offer the opportunity for self-improvement. The conceptual focus on self worth notwithstanding must not be misconstrued for egoism while theorizing on self esteem rather it is expressed in relation to its capacity to consolidate ability of the individual to indepthly develop a psycho-social tact required to function optimally in the organization. In a holistic exposition on the concept of self-esteem [Amingo \(2012\); Oblidigbo and Onyekuru \(2012\)](#) both notes that it is associated with some unique features therefore must not be amorphously conceptualized. The features that characterize the concept, according to them include humility, purposefulness and commitment to tasks. [Mbanga and Alemezi \(2010\)](#) expressed self-esteem in terms of consciousness and responsiveness as it get individual to be cognitively prepared to undertake roles. In addition to the mentioned conceptual prescription, [Lambert and Lambert \(2014\)](#) mentioned responsibility and assertiveness as key components of self-esteem. They posit that self-esteem when developed ensures taking responsibility and doing that authoritatively by being assertive. Interestingly, their position convey the fact that self-esteem is developed either through conscious environmental interaction and social disposition or it is formed as a trait that manifest in the form prescribed by the authors. In this study review our conceptual consensus is formed around purposefulness, assertiveness responsibility and consciousness. This is meant to avoid conceptual ambiguity that is often associated with multidimensional concepts and constructs.

2.3. Purposefulness

Purposefulness as a component of self-esteem is instructively central to individuals who build self-worth capacity. Larsako (2014) is of the view that purposefulness perse, initiate self-development and eventual esteem. Rasul *et al.* (2013) argues that purposefulness as an inner trait that defines action and plans that determine positive outcomes. One thing that a purposeful employee does according to Noser and Zeigler-Hill (2014) is to ensure that all actions are goal directed. They function optimally in the arena of action to achieve their desired end point. Di Giunta *et al.* (2013) posits that employees and centrality of organizational objectives is found amongst purposeful employees and accounts for their characteristic hardwork and resilience. Yang and Hu (2008) aptly expressed the virtues of a purposeful employee as hardworking, passionate, modest and confidence filled and these provide the esteemed impetus at goals.

The expressed features of purposefulness, which apparently typify self-esteem points to ensuring functional outcomes in, work organizations. Mona (2012) espoused that purposefulness predictably guides and channel positive individual behaviour that is required for competitiveness. Elebenyi and Sara (2012) link employee purposefulness with innovativeness as they undertake strategic renewal programmes. These positions notwithstanding, these outcomes are likely induced by individual employee behavioural disposition to undertake extra roles showing commitment at levels beyond the mundane organizational expectation. Having an empirical position on this proposition is important therefore the hypotheses that;

Ho: Purposefulness does not relate significantly with workplace spontaneity.

2.4. Consciousness

Workplace psychology literature has provided more than marginal attention to intangible human expressions that propel outward behavior (Blessing and Omoleye, 2009; Ibang and Ibang, 2012; Peterson, 2015). One of such area of attention is individual consciousness phenomena. Consciousness according Rasul *et al.* (2013) reinforce our capacity to contribute meaningfully to set goals. Consciousness as activated through a cognitive awakening is to do good and achieve positive outcomes. Concioueness guides action that buffer self-worth of the employee and instigate his contribution within his social context. Elloy and Randolph (2006) observed that consciousness is the elixir of self-esteem and accounts for positive spirit development amongst individuals, engendering team spirit for attaining goals of the organization. Laffi *et al.* (2013) noted that conscious employee promote good customer relationship since they are aware of their self worth and cognitive preparedness to proactively ensure quality service delivery.

A self-esteemed employee is a conscious one that initiates actions that are targeted at aligning strategies with objectives. This simply means that self-esteem demonstrated by consciousness in the individual worker is likely to spur positive workplace outcomes. This being the case, the need for an empirical position for theory building is imperative therefore, it is hypothesized thus;

Ho: Consciousness does not relate significantly with workplace spontaneity.

2.5. Assertiveness

When needs and desires are uniquely attended to and facilitate attainment of desired end points, it typify assertiveness. The dynamism and complexities that characterize work environment in addition to its unpredictability requires same dosage of assertiveness in opting for alternatives that are meaningful to the vision, mission and objectives of the organization. The employee state of self-esteem is an asset that is accompanied with capacity to be assertive not just for egoistic expression but a character that channel goal oriented actions.

Importantly, assertiveness according to [Pourgaz et al. \(2015\)](#) represents capacity to express convincingly, individual viewpoints, feelings and disposition without necessarily undermining the views of others. A major underlying element is the self-assurance and tact that is showcased by the individual. Assertiveness has been described by [Serinkan et al. \(2014\)](#) as showing typical confidence, respect for others opinion, validating others feeling, listening and solving problems. The confidence factor demonstrated by assertive employees is a fillip for positive organization behaviour that will aid and facilitate effort at goal attainment. [Coetzee \(2013\)](#) viewed assertive individuals as showing entrepreneurial behaviour giving credence and support to the renewal strategies of the organization. [Caprara et al. \(2013\)](#) has shown empirical position on assertiveness correlating with employee engagement. In other words, employee with the self-esteem component of assertiveness gets more committed to their organization. However, the conceptual variance between employee engagement and willingness to undertake extra roles voluntarily and ensure goals require empirical insight therefore, the hypothesis thus;

Ho: Assertiveness does not relate significantly with workplace spontaneity.

2.6. Responsibility

The responsibility component of self-esteem has been variously defined to the extent that care is required not to make it conceptually amorphous. This notwithstanding, this review has a set focus within the self-esteem literature to give common meaning for all purposes. [Benson et al. \(2014\)](#) defined responsibility as an obligation to satisfactorily undertake a task as may be assigned or willfully undertake by one's self with the primary underlying belief to accomplish it or in some instance fails. To attain desired end points ([Mona, 2012](#)) noted that responsibility as associated with self-esteem abhors vicariousness therefore, implies that responsibility is a phenomenal action that requires end point accountability whether successfully undertaken or not. This suggests that individuals, whom by their cognitive and social development feel esteemed, will voluntarily take responsibility whether successfully undertaken or not. This suggests that individual whom by their cognitive and social development feels esteemed, will voluntarily take responsibility whether assigned at work or decides to take on their own. [Coetzee \(2013\)](#) posits that responsibility is a summation of congruence between your words and action at work and beyond. He noted further that it entails call to duty that is targeted at achieving desirable end point. Importantly, the responsibility factor in self-esteem personalities at work channels behaviour towards positive outcomes. Responsibility evokes commitment that ensures that rewarding extra roles are likely to be embarked upon by such individual. There is however scanty research evidence linking responsibility component of self-esteem to definite workplace outcomes. [Coetzee and Schreuder \(2013\)](#) had correlated responsibility with student academic performance, which is, apart from the micro analytical level, there is characteristic difference between student academic behaviour and the employee who function under strict workplace regulations and contractual context. Based on this it is hypothesized thus;

Ho: Responsibility does no relate significantly with workplace spontaneity.

2.7. Workplace Spontaneity

The literature on workplace functionality has been undoubtedly built around human resource at [Coetzee et al. \(2006\)](#); [Amabebe \(2012\)](#) their daily input ranging from planning; organizing and controlling amidst other functions are the lead action to goals. Simply, their capacity and willingness to undertake diligently administrative and operational roles lay the premise for attaining goals. All the same, the heightened level of competition amongst firms requires that employees should be affectively driven to undertaking voluntarily some roles that will enhance the functionality of organizations towards attaining desired goals. This proposal on extra roles has provoked the

conceptual discourse on workplace spontaneity. Drawn from the early works of [Judge and Bono \(2001\)](#) work place spontaneity is defined as extra role behaviour that are voluntarily embarked upon by employees to improve on the overall functioning of work enterprise. For instance at a mild level, [Asuquo and Inaja \(2013\)](#) noted that speaking favourably on the image of the organization to improve on its market size amongst her customers is an act of workplace spontaneity. [Bridgestock \(2009\)](#) argues that workplace spontaneity is a behaviour that is knowingly expressed to help the organization succeed effectively and efficiently. [Alizadegani et al. \(2014\)](#) posits that spontaneity at work represents positive work behaviour that are expressed beyond contractual prescriptions that facilitate and support all other group members effort at goals. While characterizing workplace spontaneity concept, [Judge and Bono \(2001\)](#) mentioned, helping co-worker, protecting the organization, making constructive suggestions, developing oneself and spreading good will as representing spontaneity.

All of these characteristics enunciated undoubtedly amplify the positive extra-role behaviour that is exemplified in the concept. What can be clearly inferred is that positive work behaviours that are voluntarily demonstrated by the individual employee are geared towards functional work organization and are goal directed.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research used the quantitative paradigm and the cross-sectional survey design. Using the structured questionnaire instrument, it obtained data from a sample of 318 employees of 14 nos four-star hotels in Portharcourt. The sample subjects were obtained using the Proportionate Stratified Random Sampling with the [Bowley \(1968\)](#) techniques. The questionnaire instrument had 37 question items that covers all the dimensions and measures of the examined constructs. They were distributed to the respondents directly and it had through research auxiliaries facilitated retrieval of 286 copies of the survey instrument. Amongst the retrieved, 29 were discarded for double ticking of response options by respondents and 257 of them were usable. The reliability of the instrument was conducted relying on Cronbach alpha co-efficient matched with the [Nunnally \(1978\)](#) alpha threshold of 0.70. The alpha co-efficient of 0.84, 0.91; 0.78, 0.72 and 0.88 were applicable for purposefulness; assertiveness, responsiveness, consciousness and workplace spontaneity respectively. The results are indicative of the instrument reliability. The data generated with the instrument were descriptively and inferentially analyzed to exhumate meaning thereof.

3.1. Measurement

The instrument used for the study which is in three parts, has the predictor and criterion sections. For the predictor variable, it adopted the [Krammer \(2009\)](#) and [Belly \(2011\)](#). 18 item and 7 item scales on purposefulness, responsibility, consciousness and assertiveness respectively. The participant were asked to respond to the extent they agree or disagree with statement like, I know what my hotel want me to do always.

For the workplace spontaneity construct, the study adapted the [Mannasseh \(2016\)](#) 12 item scale. The participants were also requested to indicate the extent to which in their unbiased opinion they agree or disagree with such statement like, I will be willing to work beyond normal work hours because I consider it my duty to do that. These were all drawn using the 5point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1).

4. RESULTS/ANALYSIS

Table-1. Correlation matrix for employee self-esteem and workplace spontaneity.

	\bar{X}	Std	P _p	A _s	R _{sp}	C _{on}	WPS
Purposefulness	3.516	.638	1.00				
Assertiveness	4.118	.834	0.42	1.00			
Responsibility	3.841	.816	0.61*	0.23**	1.00		
Consciousness	4.433	.753	0.48	0.66	0.31	1.00	
WPS	3.921	.682	0.33**	0.27	0.35*	0.72	1.00

Note: ** Correlation is Significant @ the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is Significant @ the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation values expressed in the Table 1 shows relationship between the predictor dimensions (purposefulness, assertiveness, responsibility and consciousness) and the dependent variable. The mean scores descriptively emphasized self-esteem amongst work members. The inferential results also indicate a significant relationship between purposefulness and responsibility components of self-esteem and work place spontaneity.

Table-2. Showing regression coefficient of Self-esteem on WPS

Construct	Standardized co-efficient	t-value	Sig
Purposefulness	0.241	1.672	0.007
Assertiveness	0.638	3.913	0.081
Responsibility	0.422	2.227	0.000
Consciousness	0.264	2.113	0.014

Note: Dependent variable –WPS.

Table 2 show regression coefficients. The standardized co-efficient explain the weight of the effect of the four dimensions of employee self-esteem on workplace spontaneity. Simply put, it show which of the four has greater effect on the dependent variable in a multiple regression analysis. Assertiveness with beta 0.638 and t=3.913 has the greatest effect on workplace spontaneity followed by responsibility with beta 0.422 and t=2.227 purposefulness with beta, 0.241 and t=1.67 has the least effect.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are assertive in different perspectives. First the study outcomes reiterates positive relationship between employee self esteem and workplace spontaneity especially when viewed as a undimensional. These outcomes emphasized the result of Elisha (2011) study which correlated employee self-esteem and productivity. Employee self-esteem though was not operationalized as a multidimensional construct in that study showed empirical relationship that represents and indicates its tendency to influence work outcomes. Second, this study results in relation to the dimensions of the predictor variable, has substantiated the findings of Kellog (2010) relating employee assertiveness with affective commitment. In other words, the results in this study indicated a positive and significant relationship between employee assertive behaviour and workplace spontaneity Simply, what is brought to the fore here is when employee shows assertive attitude in handling assigned responsibilities, it attracts psychological readiness to be involved in prosocialbehaviour and willingness to be involved in extra roles (Fallows and Steven, 2000; Caprara *et al.*, 2013; Alizadegani *et al.*, 2014; Benson *et al.*, 2014) argues that employee confidence activates his sense of assertiveness as he is psychologically convicted about his ability to undertake such roles and make meaningful and goal oriented contributions.

Further, the result on purposefulness agrees with extant position in literature (Elisha, 2011; Elebenyi and Sara, 2012; Coetzee, 2013; Serinkan, 2014). Purposeful employees from the study outcome are willing to expresses positive behavioural disposition towards organizational goals. Mona (2012) posits that where employees have a

clear-cut understanding of the organizational vision and objectives, it in turn channel behaviour concretely to functionally undertake work roles that facilitate attainment of goals and objectives. Self-esteem according to Amingo (2012) creates a mental, social and psychological tact that guarantee the employee willingness to take responsibility. Responsibility as used here is capacity to live up to the desired bidding and showing co-worker support. Abah (2013) argues that responsibility taking involves all level collaboration and synergizing action to achieve common goals. In this study, responsibility dimension has a positive relationship with workplace spontaneity. The relationship though is shown to be weak, it is significant. This finding is at variance with the outcome of Sagies and Tones (2010) study. The reason for this variance is not unconnected with the moderating variable and the banking sector in which this study was conducted. Regulatory control served a moderating variable as it is common knowledge that the banking sector is highly regulated and this is likely to shapenbehaviour in such work organization than the hospitality sector with high level operational and administrative flexibility (Ademelekum, 2010; Rasul *et al.*, 2013). Finally, the study findings indicate a strong positive and significant relationship between the consciousness component of self-esteem and workplace spontaneity. The findings agree with the work of Merana (2014) whose study outcome, support a relationship between employee consciousness and responsiveness. This implies that consciousness per se as a dimension of self-esteem creates a disposition to act favorably towards organizational desired outcomes.

6. CONCLUSION/IMPLICATIONS

The primary objective of this study is to examine the empirical link between employee self esteem and work place spontaneity. Attracting extra role behaviours from employees as a strategic alternative to achieving goals is viewed as being critical to competitiveness. Improving employee self esteem to gain the psycho-social preparedness required for pro-social behaviour constitute major work place concern for managers in work organizations as they remain a strategic resource. This study has through the questions raised relating to the dimensions of the constructs examined, established empirical link between assertiveness, purposefulness, responsibility and consciousness and employee workplace spontaneity. In otherwords, employees with self-esteem are characteristically inclined to showing spontaneity aside other variables not in this study which involves taking extra roles that facilitate attainment of goals. It is concluded from the findings that workplace spontaneity behaviour by employees in the studied sector results from their built up self esteem. Simply, employee self esteem relates positively with workplace spontaneity.

Practically, the findings of the study are definitive in terms of guiding managers and employees in building capacity and strengthening their psycho-social mould that will engender an esteemed workforce. The results will no doubt activate the sense of purposefulness and attraction to responsibilities that are strategic to goal attainment in work organizations. Further, the findings points to the fact that employees should as a necessity be assertive in demonstrating ability to handle tasks and at same time showing confidence in understanding such roles that are dutifully assigned.

6.1. Suggested for Further Studies

This study in particular has empirically indicated the critical incentive that accompanies esteemed employee towards functional behaviour that ensures goal attainment. This notwithstanding, it is candidly suggested that a moderating variable should be examined along with the predictor and criterion variables since there are other workplace factors that are likely to combine to shapen such outcomes. This study is also suggested to be conducted in knowledge creating sector, which require esteemed employees to undertake research and other responsibilities.

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