

Employees' Mood and Emotion as Imperatives for Perceived Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

Organizations have realized that employee emotions and moods are pervasive in the workplace. The emotions and moods are not only a deep-seated part of work life but have an important role to play in one's job performance and satisfaction. The study investigated employees' mood and emotion as imperatives for perceived job satisfaction in a multinational organization in Nigeria. The research design for this study was a descriptive survey. Two hundred and forty four participants were used for the study which comprise males (100, 41.0%) and females (144, 59.0%) aged between <26 years and > 40 years. The participants consists of single (99, 40.6%), married (107, 43.9%), widowed (13, 5.3%), separated (8, 3.3%) and divorced (17, 7.0%). Three hypotheses were tested and the findings of the study revealed that there was a significant difference between positive and negative employees' mood on job satisfaction (Crit-t = 1.96, Cal.t = 3.941, df = 242, p < .05). Also, the result showed that there was a significant positive correlation between employees' mood and job satisfaction ($r = .246^{**}$, N= 244, P < .05). Lastly, the findings showed that positive mood positively correlated with job satisfaction ($r = .265^{**}$, N= 244, P < .05). It was concluded that employees' mood influenced job satisfaction. Based on findings it was recommended that management should endeavor to organize emotion management programs for their workers in order to ensure that their job satisfaction is improved upon and also to reduce the occurrence of high labour turnover and withdrawal intentions. Also, the deployment of emotional intelligence strategies should be used in organisations in order to ensure good working relations between employees and management and among employees.

Keywords: Mood, emotion, job satisfaction, positive mood, negative mood, employees

Introduction

Organizations have realized that employee emotions and moods are pervasive in the workplace. The emotions and moods are not only a deep-seated part of work life but have an important role to play in one's job performance and satisfaction. An employee's emotions and overall temperament have a significant impact on his job performance, decision making skills, team spirit, leadership, turnover and job satisfaction (George and Brief, 2006). It is believed that employees bring their feelings of anger, fear, love and respect with them when they come to work. Emotions and moods of employees matter because they drive employee's performance and have influence on job satisfaction.

Moods or emotions at work place, generally, fall into the category of positive (good) and negative (bad) emotions. Positive moods or emotions are those feelings of an individual that are favorable to the attainment of organizational goals while negative moods or emotions are those that are perceived to be destructive for the organization (Larsen and Dickson, 2004). Positive moods or emotions increase creativity, encourage helping behavior and cooperation and reduce aggression both against the organization and against people. Research suggests that positive people have better cognitive abilities and tend to do better in the workplace and with accuracy.

Emotions and moods directly influence behavior, so one has to manage emotions and moods while at work. Some jobs simply cannot be done, if emotions and moods are not dealt with first. Imagine how employees whose job tasks requires specific emotions (ability to manage their emotions and moods), like the front desk officer or customer care executives (Millar and Millar, 2006).

Statement of the Problem

The problem of emotions and its management has been a topical issue for psychologists, human resource practitioners, administrators and other specialists. Studies revealed that inadequate motivation of workers leads to negative moods of employees and hence affect performance/ productivity and job satisfaction (Price, 1993; Fernandez, 1999). Studies suggest that negative feelings have adverse effects on job performance and satisfaction (McConville and Cooper, 2003). Anger often leads to aggression toward colleagues while sadness leads to dissatisfaction with the job. Envy or conflict with peers also leads to frequent fights and in turn results in absenteeism at work.

The implications of the adverse behaviors of employees in the work place which are associated with individual's moods and emotions are enormous. These results into low productivity/ job performance; it increases absenteeism in the workplace; it increases the total costs due to cost of replacement of absent workers,

affects workers' job satisfaction and increases withdrawal intentions. Considering the above problems, it becomes imperative to investigate the influence of employees' mood on job satisfaction.

Research Hypotheses

1. There will be a significant difference between positive employees' mood and negative employees' mood on job satisfaction.
2. There will be a significant positive correlation between employees' mood and job satisfaction.
3. Positive mood will more likely correlate with job satisfaction.

Theoretical Framework

Affective Event Theory

Emotions and moods are an important part of human lives, especially work lives. But how do emotions and moods influence job performance and satisfaction? A model called Affective Events Theory (AET) has increased understanding of the links. AET demonstrates that employees react emotionally to things that happens to them at work and that this reaction influences their job performance and satisfaction. Affective Events Theory (AET) is a model developed by organizational psychologists Howard and Russell (1998) to explain how emotions and moods influence job performance and job satisfaction (Thompson and Phua, 2012). The model explains the linkages between employees' internal influences (e.g., cognitions, emotions, mental states) and their reactions to incidents that occur in their work environment that affect their performance, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction. The theory proposes that affective work behaviors are explained by employee mood and emotions, while cognitive-based behaviors are the best predictors of job satisfaction (Wegge, Dick, Fisher, West and Dawson, 2006). The theory proposes that positive-inducing (e.g., uplifts) as well as negative-inducing (e.g., hassles) emotional incidents at work are distinguishable and have a significant psychological impact upon workers' job satisfaction (Wegge, et. al., 2006; Citeman Network, 2012). This results in lasting internal (e.g., cognition, emotions, mental states) and external affective reactions exhibited through job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

The theory begins by recognizing that emotions are a response to an event in the work environment. The work environment includes everything surrounding the job – the variety of tasks and degree of autonomy, job demands, and requirements for expressing emotional labor. This environment creates work events that can be hassles, uplifts, or both. Examples of hassles are colleagues who refuse to carry their share of work, conflicting directions by different managers, and excessive time pressures. Examples of uplifting events include meeting a goal, getting support from a colleague, and receiving recognition for an accomplishment.

These work events trigger positive or negative emotional reactions, but employees' personalities and moods predisposes them to respond with greater or lesser intensity to the event. For instance, people who score low on emotional stability are more likely to react strongly to negative events. So, a person's emotional response to a given event can change depending on mood. Emotions influence a number of performance and satisfaction variables such as organizational citizenship behavior, organizational commitment, level of effort, intentions to quit, and workplace deviance.

The James-Lange Theory

The James-Lange theory is one of the best-known examples of a physiological theory of emotion or mood. Independently proposed by psychologist William James and physiologist Carl Lange, the James-Lange theory of emotion suggests that emotions occur as a result of physiological reactions to events (James, 1994).

According to this theory, you see an external stimulus that leads to a physiological reaction. Your emotional reaction is dependent upon how you interpret those physical reactions. For example, suppose you are walking in the woods and you see a grizzly bear. You begin to tremble and your heart begins to race. The James-Lange theory proposes that you will interpret your physical reactions and conclude that you are frightened ("I am trembling, therefore I am afraid").

This theory relates the physiological reactions experienced in the course of carrying out a task to the actual behavioral response given to the interpretation. Supposing an employee feels highly irritable (physiological), this will influence his/her disposition to work for the period.

Literature Review

Mood and Emotion

Although research has made progress in trying to conceptualize emotions, there is still no definition that every emotion researcher would agree on. Most theorists hold that emotions are the result of an evaluation (an appraisal) of some event relevant to a particular concern or goal (Frijda, 1986). These evaluations can be positive or negative. Emotional phenomena are often described in terms of affect, mood, and/or emotion. The general label affect is used to describe evaluative feelings, such as feeling good or bad (Parkinson, Totterdell, Briner, and Reynolds, 1996). These subjective feelings may include moods or emotions. Emotions differ from moods in that

they are always about something, whereas moods “simply are” (Frijda, 1994). Emotions are directed toward a specific person, object or event, whereas moods are less specific. Moods are also often less intense and longer lasting than emotions are (Ekman, 1984). Furthermore, emotions are characterized by distinct subjective experiences, physiological reactions, and action tendencies (Ekman, 1993; Levenson, Ekman, and Friesen, 1990; Parkinson, Fischer and Manstead, 2005). Discrete emotions are therefore often more informative than diffuse moods, both to the individual experiencing them and to observers.

Until recently, emotions were regarded as detrimental or disruptive forces that interfere with rational decision-making, instead of as social tools that facilitate decision-making. It was better to suppress your emotions, and keep a poker face during social interactions with others than to let your emotions influence your own or others’ behavior. Increasingly, however, this thought has made way for a functional approach to emotions (Frijda, 1986). This approach emphasizes that emotions are not just distractions, but instrumental means that help prioritize goals and prepare individuals to respond to changes in the environment (Keltner and Haidt, 1999; Van Kleef, De Dreu, and Manstead, 2010).

In the work context, researchers found relations between mood and performance, organizational spontaneity, pro-social behavior at work, employee withdrawal behavior, and creativity in the workplace (Andrew, et al, 2005; Chavez and Mendez, 2008; Coulson, et al, 2008; George and Zhou, 2007). Though the scope of mood’s research was enlarged, one needs to comply with specific work characteristics where moods are stronger in intensity and broader, particularly in customer service organizations, where more organizational actors are involved (Sy et al, 2005). As ‘when a customer interacts with an organization during service delivery, their exchange can similarly be considered a social exchange’, consumers’ mood can and should not be overlooked as a source of emotional contagion (Groth, 2005).

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a construct that has been part of the academic literature for a long time, without a consensus being reached on its definition (Falkenburg and Schyns, 2007). Locke (1976) described it as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences”. More recently, Alqashan and Alzubi (2009) illustrate it as the rewarding nature of a person’s work being either related to work experiences or with the nature of the work itself. The role of job satisfaction as an organizational competitive asset is one of unquestionable value and increasing interest and this is deservedly so given it’s, albeit indirect, relation with organizational productivity (Wright and Davis, 2003).

Judge et al. (1995) characterize job satisfaction as an intrinsic sine qua non dimension of career success. Although many scholars have tried to define affective traits and experiences as predictors of various organisational outcomes (Meyer et al., 2002), the exploration of the emotional variables of job satisfaction is still scarce. Fisher (2002) stated that employees with higher levels of job satisfaction are more likely to experience positive emotions and good moods at work.

Emotion, Mood and Job Satisfaction

Research investigating how affective traits and job satisfaction relate across individuals have found solid support for a positive relationship between trait measures of positive affectivity and job satisfaction and a negative relationship between trait negative affectivity and job satisfaction (Agho, Price, and Mueller, 1992; Brief and Roberson, 1989; Watson and Slack, 1993). Watson and Clark (1994) showed that average levels of positive and negative affect are substantially correlated with measures of their respective affective traits, thus average scores of momentary affect ratings are considered good indicators of affectivity (trait affect). Consequently, it is expected that average levels of mood will be related to average levels of job satisfaction across individuals.

Judge (1992) noted that “a central limitation in past dispositional research [on job satisfaction] is its failure to rely on psychological theories in explaining dispositional effects” (p. 49). Job satisfaction, like other attitudes, has both affective and cognitive components (Brief, 1998; Locke, 1976; Weiss et al., 1999). Affective disposition will influence the ways in which individuals process and evaluate information about their jobs (Judge, 1992), at least partially, through its impact on experienced (momentary) affect. Experienced affect, in turn, influences cognitive evaluations of work events and experiences through mood congruency phenomena. The effect of experienced affect on job satisfaction is not entirely mediated by cognitions about the job, that is, job affect can also arise as an autonomic response to the work situation, similar to emotional reactions to environmental stimuli such as the fear induced by threatening situations. Affective disposition should also be related to this distinct component of job satisfaction through the mechanisms that link personality to the basic affect system (Watson, 2000). In sum, job satisfaction is viewed as an emotional state comprising both job affect resulting from cognitive appraisals of the work situation and independent affective responses to this situation (Locke, 1976).

METHOD

Research design

This study design employed in this research work was based on the use of descriptive survey research.

Participants

This study was based on a sample of 244 respondents of a multinational company in the FMCG sector of the economy comprising males (100, 41.0%) and females (144, 59.0%) aged between <26 years and > 40 years. The participants consists of single (99, 40.6%), married (107, 43.9%), widowed (13, 5.3%), separated (8, 3.3%) and divorced (17, 7.0%). 39(16.0%) of the respondents had no formal education, 6(2.5%) of them had Primary education, 8(3.3%) of them had Secondary education, 37(15.2%) of them had NCE/OND, 101(41.4%) of them had HND/University Degree, while 53(21.7%) of them had MBA/Professional Qualifications. 145(59.1%) of the respondents were Christians, 88(36.1%) of them were Muslims, while 11(4.5%) of them belonged to other religions. 135(55.3%) of the respondents were Yorubas, 61(25.0%) of them were Igbos, 47(19.3%) of them were Hausas, while 1(0.4%) of them belonged other ethnic groups. 61(25.0%) of the respondents were in Sales Department, 65(26.6%) Production Department, 43(17.6%) Finance/Accounts Department, 41(16.8%) Personnel/Admin. Department, 24(9.8%) Quality Control Department, while 10(4.1%) of them were in other Departments. 94(38.5%) of the respondents were in the Senior Cadre, 102(41.8%) Middle Cadre, while 48(19.7%) Lower Cadre.

Instruments

A set of questionnaires were used to collect data. 260 questionnaires were distributed and 244 were found usable and were subjected to further analysis. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section contained questions about the demographic characteristics of the respondent, section B measures emotion and mood. It was measured by Positive Affect and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS) developed by Watson, Clark and Tellegen, 1988. The scale comprises two mood scales, one measuring positive affect and the other measuring negative affect. The scale is a 20-item scale (10-items for positive affect and 10 items for negative affect). Each item is rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = very slightly or not at all to 5 = extremely to indicate the extent to which the respondent has felt this way in the indicated time frame. The authors have used the scale to measure affect at this moment, today, the past few days, the past week, the past few weeks, the past year, and generally (on average). Watson et al. (1988) reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the various time reference periods ranging from .86 to .90 for the Positive Affect scale and .84 to .87 for the Negative Affect scale. For the general period, alpha was .88 for Positive Affect and .87 for Negative Affect. Positive Affect comprises items 1, 3, 5, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 19. A higher score indicates more positive affect, or the extent to which the individual feels enthusiastic, active, and alert. Negative Affect comprises items 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15, 18, 20. A higher score indicates more negative affect, or the extent to which the individual feels aversive mood states and general distress and vice-versa. Section C measures job satisfaction and the scale was developed by Ofo (1994). The scale has 20 items that were rated on a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree. The Cronbach alpha of the scale gave 0.89.

Statistical analysis

The data collected were analyzed with t-test and Pearson's Correlation. Hypotheses 1 was tested with independent t-test and hypotheses 2 and 3 were tested with Pearson's correlation.

HYPOTHESES TESTING

Hypothesis1: There will be a significant difference between positive employees' mood and negative employees' mood on job satisfaction.

Table 1: Summary of t-test table showing the significant difference between positive employees' mood and negative employees' mood on job satisfaction.

Employees' mood	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Crit-t	Cal-t.	DF	P
Low	117	71.4359	15.6565				
High	127	63.5512	15.5720	1.96	3.941	242	.000

Table 1 shows that there was a significant difference between positive and negative employees' mood on job satisfaction (Crit-t = 1.96, Cal.t = 3.941, df = 242, P < .05 level of significance). The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a significant positive correlation between employees' mood and job satisfaction

Table 2: Summary of Pearson correlation table showing the significant positive correlation between employees mood and job satisfaction

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Job Satisfaction	67.3320	16.0726				
Employees' Mood	1.5205	0.5006	244	.246**	.000	Sig.

Table 2 shows that there was a significant positive correlation between employees' mood and job satisfaction ($r = .246^{**}$, $N = 244$, $P < .05$). The hypothesis is however accepted. Hence, employees' mood had influenced job satisfaction.

Hypotheses 3: Positive mood will more likely correlate with job satisfaction

Table 3: Summary of Pearson correlation table showing the effect of positive mood on job satisfaction

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Job Satisfaction	67.3320	16.0726				
Positive Mood	69.2910	10.1755	244	.265**	.000	Sig.

Table 3 shows that positive mood positively correlated with job satisfaction ($r = .265^{**}$, $N = 244$, $P < .05$). The hypothesis is however accepted. Hence, positive mood had influenced job satisfaction.

Conclusion

The following conclusions were derived from this study:

- i. There was a significant difference between positive and negative employees' mood on job satisfaction.
- ii. There was a significant positive correlation between employees' mood and job satisfaction.
- iii. Positive mood positively correlated with job satisfaction.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are given:

- i. Management should endeavor to organize emotion management programs for their workers in order to ensure that their job satisfaction is improved upon and also to reduce the occurrence of high labour turnover and withdrawal intentions.
- ii. The deployment of emotional intelligence strategies should be used in organisations in order to ensure good working relations between employees and management and among employees.

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