

EMPLOYEE EMOTIONAL CONTAGION AND SALES PERFORMANCE: MOVING ON THE SAME EMOTIVE PATHWAY

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Abstract: *This study examined the association between employee Emotional Contagion (EC) and Sales Performance (SP) of 3 and 4 star franchise hotels in South-South Nigeria. The PANAS model was adopted with some adjustments after negative affect failed to be a good fit for model specification. The study adopted an explanatory research design; data were collected through a cross-sectional survey using a closed-ended questionnaire. Data collected from sixty (60) respondents representing fifteen (15) 3 and 4 star franchise hotels were used in the final analysis of the study. The analysis was aided by Eview 9.5, SPSS 22.0 and Lisrel 9.0 software packages. The finding holds that positive affect has very strong positive and statistically significant correlation with SP while negative affect showed contrary result. The study concluded that positive EC correlates SP of 3 and 4star franchise hotels; and that SP of 3 star and 4 star franchise hotels associates with positive emotions of service employees. The study recommends that management of 3 & 4star franchise hotels in South-South Nigeria that crave for improved SP should promote and reinforce positive emotional enrolment by recognizing service employees that discharge positive effects.*

Keywords: *Emotion, Contagion, Franchise, PANAS, and Sales Performance*

1.1 Introduction

The South-South Nigeria is about the most naturally endowed region of the country, and among the most metropolitan of Nigeria. The region attracts visitors from all over the world for various business interests and leisure; hosts several big brands of franchised hotels that cater for a catalogue of service needs of in-dwellers, visitors, residents who often crave for home-away-from-home experience. Franchise hotels have presumably become favourite marques among tourism seekers because of some sensitivity; soothing facilities, unique service, and range of varieties world over. These hotels often offer free and seamless internet access, other enticements like local and intercontinental cuisines, on-site cocktail bars, well-resourced fitness hubs and commodious apartments. They also have restaurants with standard catering services using well-trained staff that readily assist customers to the most memorable and sophisticated experiences so desired. However, it is perceived that improved Sales Performance (SP) that precipitate business growth and survival, especially in service settings, does not depend solely on excellent programmes, processes, policies, or structures, but on the human components that facilitate proper functioning of businesses. It is common knowledge that many service firms focus more on the

non-human elements in their operations at the expense of the human elements and narrowly consider the emotions of the service personnel who deliver services that enhance customer satisfaction. A satisfied customer, however, is an evangelist of service experienced. On the other hand, the effective delivery of customer experience would rest solely on the business drivers (employee) of which, some perform the boundary-spinning role for these hotels. It is likely that the emotions of these employees would engender a service situation that bears on the experience of customers and impact on firms' overall performance. The hard nut though, is on how franchised hotel brands, can achieve SP based on certain predetermined goals. This likely query explains the employee as one that drives business concert. According to this paradigm of discourse, salespersons can be proficient in developing intentionally expressive knowledge base and behaviours that are suitable to the profile of the customer; either positively or negatively. It is on the basis of the foregoing that this current study examined the association between employee Emotional Contagion (EC) and Sales Performance (SP) of 3 and 4 star franchise hotels in South-South Nigeria.

Literature Review

Theoretical Foundations

Baseline Theories

When complex behaviours are assumed to have the same emotions and cognitive attributes (Pessoa & Adolphs, 2010), it is then difficult to isolate existing problems of an individual from emotions emanating from contributory feelings (Andries, 2009) initiated by streams of information at their disposal. The social learning theory serves this study because of the much debate; those individuals observe the behaviours of others in certain conditions and tend to replicate them. Emotion is a multi-level construct comprising psychological, behavioural, and social phenomena (Hatfield et al., 1993). It is highly dynamic and swings at intervals (Ashkanasay, 2003) hence, share the same neural lane with cognition (Pessoa & Adolphs, 2010; Duncan & Berrett, 2007) which reflects subjective experience, rather than natural certainty.

This study focuses on probing employee Emotional Contagion (EC) and how it correlates Sales Performance (SP) hence, it is anchored on the social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) which explains how role modelling and the primitive EC theory functions (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1993). Emotions are transferable and evoke feelings, thoughts, and reactions on observers (Andries, 2009). This suggests that people can transfer their emotions to team members or customers in service interactions as a result have some far reaching effects on the consumers' experience towards the firm that the employee represents. Inversely put, Positive inclination would arguably cause positive results while negative feeling would result to negative outcome.

The primitive EC theory hypothesizes that distinction could be made among individuals with the force to spread emotions and those susceptible to contagion. The theory postulates that primitive EC instigates unintentional mimicry, expressions, postures and vocalization with peers or superiors to congregate emotions (Hatfield et al., 1993). This theory is adequate in this study and typical of every selling situation thus; service personnel are sometimes compelled to make presentations in certain ways and as such, inadvertently make presentations like their superiors or peers that are successful would. We reason that primitive EC can as well be very important in sales relationships. This is basically plausible because service employees and customers can often track each other's actions unintentionally, and act in manners that suit the situation.

Conceptual Review

Contagion

Contagion is a term with its roots in pathology (a branch of medicine), where it is described as the process by which diseases are communicated among living organisms, but which found its usage or application in the social and behavioural sciences. In the social and behavioural sciences, contagion may be seen as the ready spread of ideas or emotions from one human agent to the other through some forms of interactions. It occurs when and where there is a common connection, and in most cases, when something of value is being exchanged. Contagion is also a reflex associated with feeling or responses of shared communication between admirers or object of admiration (Chao, Wührer, & Werani, 2005). In this sense, contagion occurs through emotional involvement and is influenced by “individuals’ command system that direct repetition, stimulation, imitation or an apparent response from postural, verbal, facial, sensible, self-awareness or processes which can be inferred on the basis of communicative behaviour” (Hatfield et al., 1993). This corroborates the observation of Adam Smith (1723-1970) that: when we see a blow directed at a person and just ready to get on him or her, as we would expect, shrink in resistance. Often, we naturally organize our actions towards the facial expressions, voices, postures, movements, and instrumental behaviours of another person(s). As a result, contagion is said to have significant effect on buying behaviour especially in a retail setting (Newman & Dhar, 2014); as certain actions or inactions may emanate from service personnel, necessitating a corresponding reaction on their colleagues or customers. This is premised on the assumption that, service personnel’s level of fulfilment is closely related to that of customers served (Homburg and Stock, 2004) revealed that a hence it is most likely that some of the reaction. susceptibilities

Emotional Contagion

The past three decades have witnessed a considerable scholarly debate on EC in workplaces (Loewenstein & Lerner, 2003; Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002). The earliest organizational studies on EC advocate that super-ordinate have the capacity to infect sub-ordinates with their emotions and behaviour as well influence them towards attaining set objectives (Bartel & Saavedra, 2000). EC is frequently unintended, often subconscious modelling of emotions and the expression of others in an interactive mood. This emotion reflects a psychological process by which leaders and organizational members exert influence on one another; and used it to command followership and commitment. Role-related emotional build-up that enhances goal attainment could emanate from bosses, customers, colleagues, self (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002) and as well influence employees’ behaviour in different ways depending on the strength of the source of emotion (Andries, 2009). Individuals admire, emulate and mimic certain character attributes of those that they admire (Hatfield et al., 1994).

It has also been noted that the actions or inactions of service employees, as predicated on their emotions, prompts and transfers affects to customers they interact with and often alter the course of events (Lewis, 2000). The Affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) thus promotes the idea that firms ought to pay attention to emotions in the work environment because negative emotions, irrespective of how negligible, affect the output of individuals as they are at the core of attitude formation and behavior expressions. This suggests why most service providers insist on stringent rule on employees’ display of positive emotion (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002). In this study, we subscribe to valence (positive or negative), the two factors that are assumed to impact employee EC according to Watson, Clark and Tellegen (1988).

Employee Emotional Contagion

The complexities within organizational research span from varied misconceptions held about emotions and inability to correlate it. Emotions are not formed in a vacuum (Brehm, 1999) but the interactions between man and his environment cannot be divorced from its antecedents and carriers. It can be traced to the process of information and interactions, formed at the conscious and unconscious levels (Andries, 2009) of man's activities and defined at a greater degree of consciousness. Emotion may be categorized as an intuitive feeling derived not from logical reasoning, but from circumstances, moods or interactions with other or situational reflexes. Often, it represents an individual's phenomenological reaction to important events or conditions, and triggers distinctive bodily and behavioural changes (Barret, 2017). This is one of the reasons why emotions cannot be detached from the contexts in which they actually occurred; they are context-specific and are formed by the interactions between individuals and their environment (e.g. Brehm 1999). They are also traceable to conscious and unconscious levels of information processing of individual activities (Andries, 2009) and viewed through the lenses of real and stimulated emotion because of its momentary adjustment (Andries, 2009). Often, researchers fall into the illusion of real emotions and stimulated emotions (Andries 2009); this is because of its tendencies of being adjusted in a short while. According to Kiesler (1973), emotions are activated amongst members through interactions and interpretation of behaviour with respect to expectation or defined outcomes. Many professions involving services are categorized by robust rules regarding how employees display their emotions (Ekman et al, 1988). These emotions as it apply to workplaces; reside at the core of attitude formation and behaviour (Ashkanasay and Daus, 2002). It is argued that emotions exhibited within the context of a formal setting and their causes should not be treated with levity even if they seemed ignorable. The effective events theory states that no matter how negligible negative emotions are, go a long way to affect individual output and should not be ignored hence, organization should attend to its emotional environment. Emotions and its management have remained inherent of the main in development and practice (Ashkanasay & Daus, 2002). Scholarly works on emotion in workplaces are relatively new and one of the first among others are Rafaeli and Sutton, (1987) and Van Maanen and Kunda (1989).

Sales Performance (SP)

Sales represent the actual amount of money or units of products a firm disposes in different sales channels. Sales stimulate production and accounts for profits. Performance on the other hand is considered the ratio of output to input, measured in terms of efficiency and effectiveness using quantitative or qualitative indices. It is a dynamic concept used to assess the extent to which an undertaking has or is attaining its financial and nonfinancial business goals (Lebans & Euske, 2006). SP is thus a measure of the outcome of sales activities against stated sales goals, using a specified plan in an assumed sales environment. It may be the monthly or annual total amount a firm generates in sales or units of products a firm sells through different sales channels. Amadi and Igwe, (2016) conceptualized SP as the evaluation of the amount of goods and services sold in each period as compared to the expected or budgeted figure set out by a firm over a period. SP is affected by salespeople's skills, motivation, customer relationship, and general marketing management decisions. The strength of a firm in its chosen market is often measured by the growth in its sales as more dominant firms are apt to command a larger market share, hence, more sales. The measurement of SP has been an on-going challenge in marketing praxis as several scholars have proposed different indicators of the construct. Market share, sales growth, and profit (Brown & Caylor, 2009), the ability to obtain sales volume, ability to interact with customers and engage in relationships with customers (Swenson et al., 1993) are some of the indicators of SP available in literature. This study therefore adopts the metrics of SP proposed by Swenson et al. (1993).

Employee Emotional Contagion and Sales Performance

Positive emotions create positive energies that could be converted to positive outcomes; similarly, negative emotions create negative outcomes. The methods service employees use to interact and influence other role participants are likely to correlate SP significantly. In other word, literature suggests that positive emotional expressions of employees engender the right impression on customers (Pugh, 2001) more so, strong positive emotions of service personnel would result to customer delight (Ashkanasay & Daus, 2002). It is thus advanced, that the pursuit of organizational goals must be in consonance with employees' emotions especially, in leader-follower and employee-customer interactions and relationships. This is thought to enhance emotional bond and direction. Arguably, favourable emotional expression improves quality of employees' service delivery and affects how customers perceived service (Morris & Feldman, 1997). Affirming that Positive emotions have the tendency to engender contagion effect among groups and subsequently lead to positive outcomes (Ashkanasay & Daus, 2002). Employee who in course of his job duties shows positive emotional expressions can as well be interpreted by customers as willingness to cooperate or an act of open mindedness. This expression of positive emotions can improve employee-customer relationships in thoughts and actions. This follows from the idea that positive emotions of superordinates attract and bonds subordinates and improves job satisfaction (Fredrickson, 2001). Elfenbein (2007) avers those positive moods are particularly important at the workplace because of their association with occupational performance. Organizational members and customers alike, interpret positive emotions as indicators of healthy relationships. Conversely, the expression of negative emotions by service providers to customers has been adduced to resulting to losses in many ways (Ashkanasay & Daus, 2002).

Feelings and behaviour are strongly influenced through interactions and relationships. These feelings increase members' mood and team outcomes as there is much emphasis on teamwork in today's work environments and places team leaders in a position to influence their teams (McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2002). Personal selling and sales management literature provides touch, use of verbal messages and situational factor as possible reference platforms for emotional affects. Scholars in this field contend that emotions affect the dynamics of interactions between salespeople and their colleagues and indeed the customers (Elfenbein, 2007). Those individuals that easily infect others with their emotions are consequently seen as the emotionally clever ones (Goleman, 1995) and taken seriously at the period of goal drive. This line of thought argues that service personnel can proficiently develop an intentional expressive knowledge base and as well, develop behaviours that are suitable to the profile of individual customers from such knowledge pool. Perhaps, the feelings and behaviour of service personnel could be inclined to their interactions with others (peers or customers); as people use the affective states of others as clue to their personal goals, intentions, attitudes, and in turn influence their own thoughts and actions (Van Kleef, 2009). In view of the foregoing, we argue that ability to obtain sales volume, the interaction quality, and the ability to engage in relationships with customers could be predicated on the emotional expression (positive or negative) of service employees. It is therefore hypothesized that:

Ho: there is no correlation between employee EC and SP of franchise hotels in South-South Nigeria.

Methodology

Extant literature reveals a myriad of scholarly works on positive and negative affects showing how each of the constructs explains the latent variables. Beiser, (1974), Tellegen, (1985) and Waston, Clark and Tellegen (1988) were among the first scholars that related their works on social programs and the rate of pleasant activities. While Beiser, (1974), Tessler and Mechanic (1978), Lararus, (1991) and Wills, (1986) took to the stress based construct. Although Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS) is claimed to have provided an autonomous and self-regulated measure of positive and negative affect (Crawford and Henry, 2004). Green, Goldman & Salovey (1993) had argued that the positive and negative affect may seem autonomous in claim whereas they are contradictory extremes of the same measurement. As the work of Diener et al (1985) reflected a higher correlation of positive and negative affect. A similar study by Crocker, (1997) reported that the PANAS 20 item measure is oblique claiming a misspecification of the model. The most contentious piece of PANAS however is the self-acclaimed independence of its measures (Crawford and Henry 2004). From another view

Ekman (1994) included a set of distinct emotional representation like seven single emotions as anger, contempt, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise as well as Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson and O'Connor (1987) who combined, anger, love, joy, sadness, and surprise while the Plutchik and Kellerman (1974) emotions profile index has a myriad of mixed emotional scales used. These scholars did not observe their distinctiveness but used them in their works. According to van Shuur and kiers (1994), the purpose of factor analysis of manic concepts is to recognize the two metrics as independent and treat them as such. However, we observed the structure of the variables, to identify and reports multicollinearity of PANAS, reduce the number of variables where necessary, to suit the context of this study and appraise the construct validity of the PANAS scale.

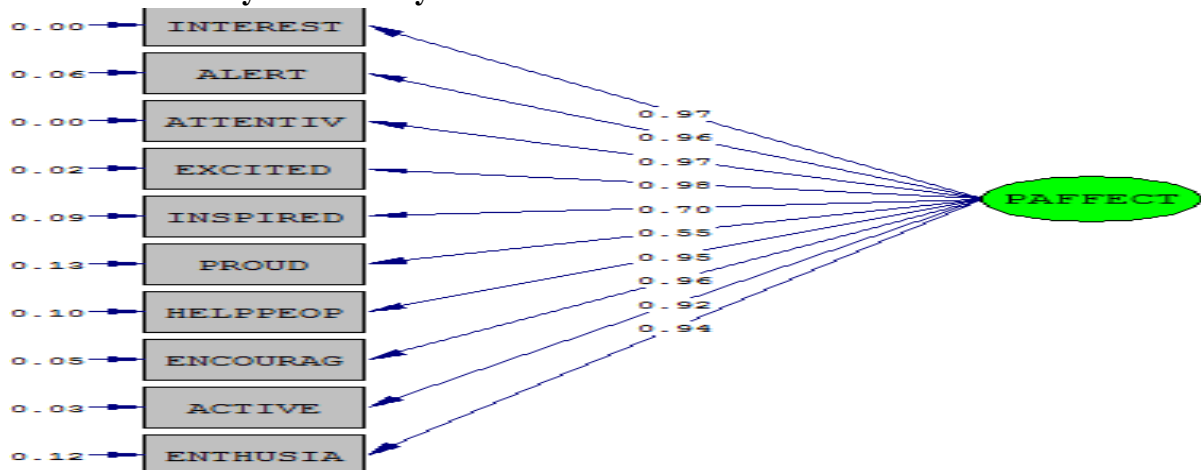
The focus of this research was to examine the correlation between employee EC and SP. The study was conducted in a natural setting hence, the researchers did not have control over the test units therefore, explanatory research design was assumed. This, however, supports the realist ontological, positivist epistemological point of view and the deterministic nature of man's interactions with his environment, hence, relied on a nomothetic methodology. The cross-sectional survey permits researchers to collect data from test units at a point in time. The study adopted stratified random sampling in classifying franchise hotels in South-South Nigeria and considered the micro level of analysis which integrates all concerned persons within the focused group to the investigation. A total of Fifteen 3stars and 4stars franchised hotels were surveyed, each of which had four (4) respondents: hotel sales representatives, marketing managers, front desk staff and room service personnel. The questionnaire was used to collect primary data from the study subjects given that the study was vivid; therefore, standardized data collection method was designed, issued, and collected from a representative sample. The instrument comprised of demographic data of the respondents; age, gender, marital status, level of education, years of experience and information relating to the constructs. The instrument was replicated into 60 copies of questionnaire, issued, and were retrieved and found useable after data cleaning. The statement items for this study were adapted from the work of Watson, Clark and Telleoen (1988) PANAS model which had been proven to be effective and efficient index for determining the two dissimilar mood situations (positive and negative affect) over different time intervals and subjected the statement items to construct validation. We further steered the construct items to a confirmatory test and bivariate analyses with the aid of Eview 9.5, SPSS 22.0 and Lisrel 9.2 in determining their validity and correlation between the study variables.

Note that the study used all the descriptors of PANAS initially without any input of our own however, the positive affect became a best fit for the model while negative affect deviated substantially. This substantial difference may have occurred as a result of the study area chosen

and the element sampled in the study. We further obtained the negative descriptors that serve the purpose for which the study was designed by modifying a few of the Waston, Clark and Tellegen (1988b) negative descriptors hence, adapting them to this study. The analysis and subsequent interpretation clearly highlights the positive and negative affective trait of an individual reactivity when subjected to positive or negative_affect. With special reference to the work of Tellegen, (1985) and Waston, Clark and Tellegen (1988), the respective trait factors were said to be biological and dynamic psychological constructs of relative sensitivity to conditional exposure that leads to appreciation or rejection.

4.0 Data Analysis and Interpretation

4.1 Confirmatory factor analysis

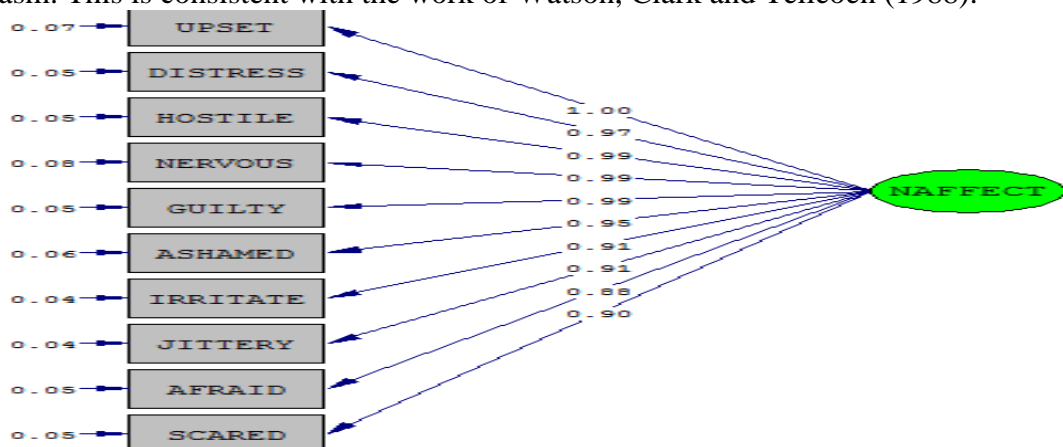


Square=41.37, df =35, P-value=0.21242, RMSEA=0.055

Figure: 1 CFA path diagram for positive affect

Source: Eview output of data analysis on employee EC and SP (2020).

Fig. 1 demonstrates that the Chi-square statistic is not significant at conventional levels ($\chi^2 = 41.37$, $p\text{-value} = 0.2124$), suggesting that the model fits the data well. The hypothesis of a good fit cannot therefore, be rejected. Likewise, the root means square error of below 0.06 threshold (RMSEA = 0.054) suggests that all affirms the model. Thus, there is evidence that the latent variable, PAFFECT which represents positive affect, underlies the set of observed variables, namely; interest, alert, attentive, excited, inspired, proud, help-people, encouraged, active and enthusiasm. This is consistent with the work of Watson, Clark and Tellegen (1988).

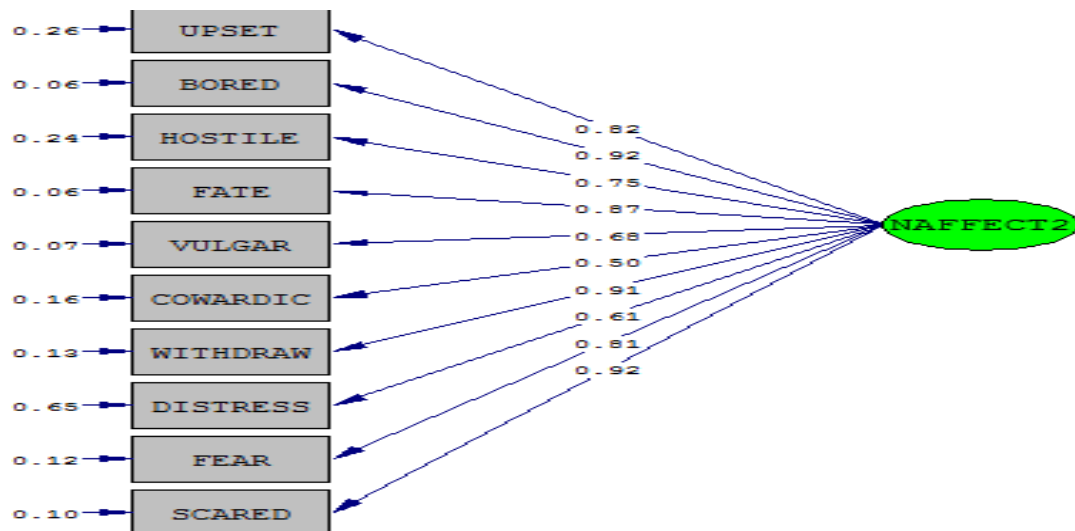


Square=444.67, df =35, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.442

Fig. 2: CFA Path diagram for Negative Affect

Source: Eview output of data analysis on employee EC

Fig. 2 shows that the Chi-square statistic is significant at less than 1% level ($\chi^2 = 444.67$, $p\text{-value} = 0.0000$), suggesting that the model does not fit the data well. The null hypothesis of a good model fit is therefore, rejected. Similarly, the root means square error is substantially higher than 0.06 threshold level (RMSEA = 0.442), indicating that the NAFFECT model does not adequately describe the data. Thus, there is evidence that the latent variable, NAFFECT which represents negative affect, does not underlie the set of observed variables: Upset, depressed, hostile, nervous, guilty, straight face, irritated, anxious, afraid, and scared. This contradicts the work of Watson and Clerk (1988) on basis of the variables used to measure negative affect. Consequently, Richins (1997) argues that certain emotional studies relevant to psychology and behavioural literature may not apply in marketing circumstance as some measures were not originally intended to include some sensitive scales however; we adjusted the model for the negative affect thus;



Chi-Square=40.80, df =35, P-value=0.23049, RMSEA=0.053

Fig. 3 Path diagram of the confirmatory analysis and test statistic for the adjusted negative affect.

Fig. 3 shows that the adjusted model is appropriate, with the Chi-square statistic failing to reject the null hypothesis of a good fit at conventional levels ($\chi^2 = 40.80$, $p\text{-value} = 0.2304$). Similarly, the root means square error is lower than the 0.06 threshold level (RMSEA = 0.053), indicating that the NAFFECT2 model adequately describe the data. Thus, there is evidence that the latent variable, namely, NAFFECT2 which represents negative affect, underlie the set of observed variables, namely; upset, depressed, bored, hostile, fate, vulgar, cowardice, withdrawn, distress and fear. We can therefore, proceed to analyse the relationships of interest using our variables and data.

Descriptive Summaries

Table 1: Descriptive summary of responses for positive affect

Code	Questionnaire Item	Mean	SD
PA1	Hearing the scream of people gets me interested in their situation	3.63	0.974
PA2	I tend to be alert when I notice people pace about the place	3.70	0.997
PA3	The rowdiness in an environment makes me more attentive	3.63	0.974
PA4	I easily feel excited when I find happy people around me	3.65	0.988
PA5	people with positive ideologies get me really inspired	3.83	0.763
PA6	I am always proud whenever I see people, I think am better off than	3.67	0.655
PA7	I get determined to help people out of their stress and difficulties	3.52	1.000
PA8	People's display of strength gives me the courage to be strong	3.68	0.983

PA9	I tend to be less active around dull people	3.67	0.933
PA10	excitement gives me a relaxed feeling	3.68	1.000
PAFFECT: Variable (Grand)		3.67	0.897

Source: Simulation from SPSS output of data analysis on service employees EC (2020).

The respondents were required to respond to ten (10) questionnaire items on various aspects of positive emotion items: interest, alert, service, attentive, excited, inspired, proud, ability to help people, encouraged and active. At the scale level, these items collectively measure the tendency of respondents to exhibit positive affect toward customers. As Table 1 indicates, both the mean response for each of the items and the variable (Grand) mean is within 3.5 – 4.4 bounds, indicating that employees in the selected hotels generally tend to exhibit positive affects toward customers.

Table 2: Respondents that exhibit positive affects by gender and age

Characteristic		Present mean (3.5-5.0)	Absent mean (1.0 – 2.4)	Indifferent mean (2.5-3.4)	Total
Gender	% of Male	20(33.3%) 57.1%	5(8.3%) 14.3%	10(16.7%) 28.6%	35(58.3%) 100%
	% of Female	17(28.3%) 68.0%	4(6.7%) 16.0%	4(6.7%) 16.0%	25(41.7%) 100%
Age	20yrs & below	0(0%) 0%	5(8.3%) 31.2%	11(18.3%) 68.8%	16(26.7%) 100%
	21 – 30yrs	25(41.7%) 89.3%	1(1.7%) 3.6%	2(3.3%) 7.1%	28(46.7%) 100%
	31 – 40yrs	9(15.0%) 100%	0(0%) 0%	0(0%) 0%	9(15.0%) 100%
	41 – 50yrs	3(5.0%) 100%	0(0%) 0%	0(0%) 0%	3(5.0%) 100%
	Above 50yrs	0(0%) 0%	3(5.0%) 75.0%	1(1.7%) 25.0%	4(6.7%) 100%
Total		37(61.7%)	9(15.0%)	14(23.3%)	60

Source: Simulation from SPSS output of data analysis on service employees EC (2020).

Table 2 shows that employees who exhibit positive affects toward customers are substantially higher than those who do not for all of the items, with approximately 62% exhibiting positive affect. 57.1% of the 35 respondents who are male exhibit positive affect while 68% of those who are female exhibit positive affect. All the respondents who are 31 – 40years and 41 – 50years exhibit positive affect towards customers. No respondent of age 20years or below and above 50years exhibited positive affect. While 89.3% of the 25 respondents are 21 – 30 years exhibit positive affect toward customers, 1.7% did not and 7.1% are indifferent.

Table 3 Descriptive summary of responses for negative affect

Code	Questionnaire Item	Mean	SD
NA1	I get upset and want to back out when people hug me affectionately	2.45	1.032
NA2	I get bored and depressed being around distressed people	2.43	0.998
NA3	When the environment seems hostile, I don't feel welcomed	2.47	1.016
NA4	I leave it to fate when I hear the scream of a terrified child in a room	2.38	1.027
NA5	I act cautiously when people handle appliances/equipment carelessly	2.38	1.010
PA6	I see it as cowardice when those around me laugh hard	2.38	0.976
NA7	I feel withdrawn in an irritating and uncomfortable environment	2.45	0.928
NA8	When someone paces back and forth, I feel distressed	2.47	0.929
NA9	I get afraid when the power fails within the service environment	2.48	0.911
NA10	The presence of armed men around a service environment scares me	2.50	0.930
NAFFECT2: Variable (Grand)		2.44	0.951

Source: Simulation from SPSS output of data analysis on service employees EC (2020).

The selected employees were asked to respond to 10 questionnaire items on various aspects of negative emotions including distressed, upset, bored, hostile, fate, vulgar, cowardice, withdrawn, distress and fear. At the scale level, these items collectively measure the tendency of employees exhibiting negative affect towards customers. As table 3 indicates, both the mean response for most of the items and the variable (Grand) mean is lower than 2.5, indicating that employees in the selected hotels generally do not tend to exhibit negative affects toward customers.

4.3 Bivariate Analysis

Table 4: Correlation between positive affect and sales target (p-values in bracket)

	STARGET	PAFFECT
STARGET	1	.939** (0.000)
PAFFECT	.939** (0.000)	1

Source: Simulation from SPSS output of data analysis on service employees EC and SP (2020).

Table 4 shows the correlation between positive affect and ability to meet sales target. The Table shows that there is a very strong positive and statistically, a correlation between positive affect and ability to meet sales target, with the associated p-value being significant at less than 1% level. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 5: Link between positive affect and selling skills (p-values in bracket)

	SLSKILL	PAFFECT
SLSKILL	1	.948** (0.000)
PAFFECT	.948** (0.000)	1

Source: Simulation from SPSS output of data analysis on service employees EC and SP (2020).

Table 5 shows the correlation between positive affect and ability to exhibit good selling skills. The Table shows that there is a very strong positive correlation between positive affect and ability to exhibit good selling skills before customers, with the associated p-value being significant at less than 1% level. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 6: Link between positive affect and interaction quality (p-values in bracket)

	CINTERACT	PAFFECT
CINTERACT	1	.950** (0.000)
PAFFECT	.950** (0.000)	1

Source: Simulation from SPSS output of data analysis on service employees EC and SP (2020).

Table 6 shows the correlation between positive affect and interaction quality with customers. The Table shows that there is a very strong positive and statistically, a correlation between positive affect and interaction quality with customers, with the associated p-value being significant at less than 1% level. Thus, the null hypothesis is also rejected.

Table 7: Link between negative affect and sales target (p-values in bracket)

	STARGET	NAFFECT
STARGET	1	– 0.908** (0.000)
NAFFECT	– 0.908** (0.000)	1

Source: Simulation from SPSS output of data analysis on service employees EC and SP (2020).

Table 7 shows the correlation between negative affect and ability to meet sales target. As the Table indicates, there is a strong and statistically negative correlation between negative affect and ability to meet sales target, with the associated p-value being significant at less than 1% level. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 8: Link between negative affect and selling skill (p-values in bracket)

	SLSKILL	NAFFECT
SLSKILL	1	– 0.916** (0.000)
NAFFECT	– 0.916** (0.000)	1

Source: Simulation from SPSS output of data analysis on service employees EC and SP (2020).

Table 8 shows the correlation between negative affect and ability to engage in relationship with customers. Again, there is a strong and statistically negative correlation between negative affect and ability to engage in relationship with customers, with the associated p-value being significant at less than 1% level. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 9: Link between negative affect and interaction quality (p-values in bracket)

	CINTERACT	NAFFECT
CINTERACT	1	– 0.927** (0.000)
NAFFECT	.927** (0.000)	1

Source: Simulation from SPSS output of data analysis on service employees EC and SP (2020).

Table 9 shows the correlation between negative affect and interaction quality with customers. As this table clearly shows, there is a strong negative and significant linear association between negative affect and interaction quality with customers, with the associated p-value being significant at less than 1% level. The null hypothesis is therefore, rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Correlation between Positive Affect and Sales Performance

This finding shows a positive correlation between the study variables. Emotion has been noted as a major influence of behavioural intentions (McColl Kennedy Smith, & Patterson 2005). This result is consistent with the assertion of Friend, Johnson, Luthans, and Sohi, (2016) who argued that positive emotions exhibited by employee in a service encounter can induce positive behavioural outcomes; customer trust, expected future interactions and customer satisfaction. Buyer-seller interactions are in the main boundary-spanning interface that would benefit from emotional application (Friend, et al., 2016). A positive environment is however infectious and will aid in the accomplishment of firm's objectives (Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988; Tombs & McColl-Kennedy, 2003). Oliver, (1997), Posit that connections have been made between emotions and plans to return. Accordingly, extant literature has established that EC impacts the client's attitude on a product (Ashforth and Humphery, 1993; Howard and Gengler, (2001), there is however established link between superiors' emotions and that of subordinates, resulting to unusual growths in general performance (Weber, 1920).

Correlation between Negative Affect and SP

This finding shows a negative correlation between the study variables and is consistent with the works of McColl-Kennedy and Sparks, (2003) that customers who are subjected to an intense emotion are most likely to get back at the organizations that aggrieved them. Andreassen (1999) however argued that negative emotion is synonymous with exit behaviour. The job of the frontline staff is crucial to client emotion, beyond their primary responsibility; their actions frequently initiate customer emotions by enhancing their withdrawal from service encounters (McColl-Kennedy, & Smith, 2006).

Conclusion and implications

The work life of today's employee is dissimilar to what obtained in the immediate past. Yesterday's machine-like work environment has evolved into a humanistic environment, such that conscious and unconscious emotions increasingly influence employees' routine interactions and relationships with colleagues and customers. Scholarly efforts suggest that employee infect peers, customers and the entire service-interacting elements with emotions and induce certain behaviours that impact company's objectives.

Emotions at workplaces present both pleasant and unpleasant outcomes, depending on the type that is communicated. Positive emotions correlate positive outcomes while negative emotions are in semblance to negative outcomes. Based on the results of the statistical analyses and the discussions that followed, this investigation concludes that positive emotions of service employees correlate SP (measures) while negative emotions are disadvantageous to SP (measures). The study thus concludes that positive EC correlates SP of 3 star and 4 star franchise hotels. SP of 3 star and 4 star franchise hotels depends on positive emotions of service employees. The study thus recommends that, as managements of 3star and 4star franchise hotels in south-south Nigeria move towards managing workplace emotions, they should promote and reinforce emotional intelligence by recognizing those service employees that release positive affect and are able to infect peers and customers with such positive emotions.

The study also recommends that 3star and 4star franchise hotels in south-south Nigeria that seek a positively emotion-charged work environment, should pay more attention to an emotionally stable staff. Some strong and salient but ignorable demographic metrics as gender and age at the recruitment stage reflect some sensitivity and should be considered as being strong emotion drivers as shown in our findings. The study shows that the male folks seem to exhibit more positive affects in dealing with customers, hence meet their performance obligations more

easily whereas there is the likelihood of mood swing among the female folks. This may not be far from the psychological make-ups of both sexes.

To attain these set sales objectives, management of 3star and 4star franchise hotels in south-south Nigeria should develop or train salespeople within the age bracket of 31-40 years to perform customer-facing roles as our findings indicate that majority of those who fall within this age bracket tend to be more emotionally stable, all things being equal. The study further advises that in the absence of the afore mentioned age bracket, people in the ages of 41-50 years would probably represent such ideal than those above 50 years and below 20years.

Suggestion for Further Study

This study suggests that further investigation be conducted using firm's orientation and cultural background of a staff to moderate the influence of EC on SP. It is possible that firm's orientation and or cultural background of an individual may be exogenous influence to how individuals perceive and succumb to the behaviours of their superiors or object of admiration.

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