

Romantic Attachment and Gender as Predictors of Job Performance among Employees of Small Scale Business in Aba, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the romantic attachment and gender as predictors of job performance among employees of small scale business in Aba. The participants were employees of Zannzy Eateries and Fastfood, which is a small scale business enterprise that engages in fastfood business, snacks production, event planning, outdoor catering services, and hospitality management. Participants were 24 in number comprising 10 males (46%) and 14 female (54%). The average age of the participants is 20.59. Data were collected using Koopmans (2015) Individual Work Performance Questionnaire and Fraley and Shaver (2000) Experiences in Close Relationship-Revised (ECR-R) Questionnaire. Linear regression statistics was used for data analysis, the results showed that both romantic attachment ($\beta = -.06$; $t = .91$; $p < .05$) and gender significantly predicted job performance ($\beta = .07$; $t = .75$; $p < .05$). However, romantic attachment showed negative significant prediction. The findings were discussed in line with theoretical framework. This implies that individuals with attachment related anxiety has a negative relationship with job performance

Keywords: Romantic Attachment, Gender, Job Performance

Introduction

In the contemporary competitive business environment, employees are regarded as major assets that help the organisation toward achieving its goals (Ezeanya & Ezeanya, 2019). In this light, organisations are not only interested in recruiting those individuals that possess the required skills that a particular job demands. That is to say those managers of the organisations are ready to hire those individuals that possess the key indicator variables that can predict job performance. This has projected performance as a driving force that can guarantee productivity in the business environment. Thinking in this direction, Adeyemo (2000) declared that job performance is so important that organisational managers cannot overlook it. Today scholars in industrial and organisational psychology and human resource managers have directed research towards identifying those key variables that can predict high job performance among organisational staff.

Performance in general term deals with the process of executing a task in an expected manner. Motowidlo and Beier (2010) explain job performance as the total expected value to the organisation of the discrete behavioural episodes that an individual carries out over a stated period of time. This definition reveals that in entering an organisation, individual has an expected behavioural trait that the organisation measures over time. In this sense, performance refers to the expected value of any individual worker to the organisation. In this light, Austin and Crespín (2006) define performance as the expected values of behaviour that can promote organisational goals. The word expected simply means that there is a standard for measurement. This means that if any individual meets the expectation or goes above it, the individual is of value to the organisation towards goals accomplishment. However, if the individual fails to meet the expected value, it means that the individual contribution is counterproductive towards achieving organisational goals. This means performance has both positive and negative effects. That is to so that high performing employees contribute positively to organisational goals, while low performing employees hinder the realisation of organisational goals. In a

nutshell, whichever direction employees' performance goes, they make a difference in determining the survival of the organisation.

The definitions of performance have shown that performance is a behaviour. Being a behaviour simply means that it can be influenced by different factors. Secondly, as a behavior it can be changed. In this sense, managers are to create opportunities that promote performance and also provide training to change performance if need be. If there is a problem, the manager should intervene to create an environment that can ensure performance. However, to be able to do these, the manager needs to be armed with the key variable that can predict performance. The present study looks at romantic attachment and gender as key indicator variables that can predict performance.

Romantic attachment refers to pattern of attitude and bond toward a significant other in an intimate relationship (Fraley & Waller, 2000). It deals with emotional attachment and mutual trust between two individuals who are in intimate relationship with each other. The two provide a sort of emotional protection and supportive care for each other. Researchers have revealed that romantic attachment and attachment style can influence work behaviours, such as individual emotional regulation behaviour at work, work attitudes, turnover intentions, organisational commitment and job performance (Richard & Schat, 2011, Wu & Paker, 2017). Research in attachment styles and employee performance revealed that attachment related anxiety has a negative relationship with job performance (Virga, Schaufeli, Taris, Beek & Sulea, 2019). To this end, attachment theory provides a relational framework in explaining interpersonal relationships and work behaviors. The theory reasoned that attachment style influences work behaviours like job performance. If the individual is securely attached in a romantic relationship the person is less likely to experience anxiety and in turn exhibit a good work behaviours. However, any individual who is nursing any sense of insecurity is likely to exhibit high level of anxiety which is likely to negatively affect his/her work behavior (Brennan, Clark & Shaver, 2009).

Workforce gender diversity is on increase in the developing countries like Nigeria. Powell (2011) define gender as the physiological inference of someone being either male or female, like expectations and beliefs regarding what kind of attitudes, behavior, values, knowledge, skills, and interests areas are more suitable for or typical of one gender than the other. The increase in workforce gender diversity has attracted research interest from scholars. The key interest is to discover whether gender composition will affect individual, group or organisational performance level. Some researchers have reported the positive impact of gender on job performance. Shrum (2007) reported significant effect of gender on job performance. However, Green, Jegadeesh and Tang (2007) also reported that women perform better than their male counterparts on client service jobs. Joshi (1993) working on genders differences as determinants of job performance observed that family related factors have more impact on female participants than their male counterparts. Qaisar, Abalul and Aamer (2011) observed that gender discrimination which is normally directed towards female employees is a major reason for performance differences.

Although, some studies have attempted to link gender (e.g. Ngao & Mwangi, 2013, Yukiko, 2015) and Romantic attachment (Richard & Schat, 2011; Wu & Park, 2017; Virga, Schaufeli, Taris, Beek & Sulea, 2019), these studies were done in western countries, which have different cultural orientation regarding gender role and romantic attachment from Nigeria cultural environment.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on romantic attachment theory developed by Bowlby (1969). Although the theory was developed to explain the nature of parent-child relationship, researchers have employed it in explaining adult romantic relationship. Yip, Ehrhardt, Black and Walker (2017) stated that attachment theory provides a distinct relational perspective to the study of organisational outcomes.

According to Bowlby (1982), the attachment behavioural system is activated when a person is exposed to physical or psychological threat. He further stressed that the nature of individual attachment to romantic partner goes a long way to shape individuals' expectation, attitudes, and belief. In a nutshell, it influences the individuals' thinking, feelings and actions.

Attachment theory is an established theory of human relationships and among the most influential theories in psychology (Finkel & Simpson, 2015). The theory has two dimensions or styles. First is avoidance, which reflects the degree to which individuals are comfortable with closeness and emotional intimacy in relationship (Brennan, Clark & Shaver, 1998). Avoidant individuals strive to create and maintain independence, and control in their relationship, which Mikulincer and Shver (2015) believes they do because maintaining emotional proximity to romantic partners is undesirable.

The second dimension, anxiety assesses the degree to which individuals worry about their romantic partners in relationship (Brennan, Clark & Shaver, 1998). Highly anxious individuals are heavily invested in their relationships and they yearn to get closer to their partners emotionally to feel more secure (Fraley, 2002). This makes them to nurse negative self-view about themselves and unnecessary worry about the future and direction of their relationship. Their fear of losing their partner affects their thinking and actions (Fraley, 2002).

Researchers have found that attachment theory influences several work outcomes like individual emotional regulation behaviour at work, work attitudes, turnover intentions, organisational commitment and job performance (Richard & Schat, 2011; Finkel & Simpson, 2015; Wu & Parker, 2017). According to Virga, Schaufeli, Taris, Beek and Suvea, (2019) anxious individuals mostly develop a negative mental work attitudes that negatively affect their work outcomes unlike the avoidant individual that mostly exhibits positive work outcomes.

Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical and empirical findings this study is conceived to test the following hypotheses:

- i. Gender will significantly predict job performance among employees of small scale business in Aba.
- ii. Romantic attachment will significantly predict job performance among employees of small scale business in Aba.

Method

Participants

The participants were 24 employees of Zanzzy Eateries and Fastfood. This organisation is small scale business enterprise into sales of fastfood, production of snacks, event planning, outdoor cooking services and hospitality management. The organisation was chosen because it has workers on a full time employment as most of the small scale businesses make use of casual workers that have no employment contract with the organization. Participants were randomly selected in the organisation using the accidental sampling technique. Employees whom the researchers were able to meet every day on the shift cycle were selected and they participated in the study. Study participants comprised 10 males (46%) and 14 females (54%). The average age of participants is $\bar{x}=20.59$, $SD=7.4$. Their age range is 18 to 30 with the mean age of 20.59.

Instruments

The Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (Koopmans, 2015)

The Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (Koopmans, 2015) is an 18-item scale developed to measure behaviours that are relevant to the goals of the organisation. It has three main dimensions of job performance: task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behaviour. Task performance which the scale was originally developed to measure deals with the proficiency with which individuals perform their duties. It has the coefficient reliability of 0.93. Contextual performance deals with the behaviours that support the organisational, social, and psychological environment in which the individual works. It has the coefficient

reliability of 0.91. Counterproductive work behaviour deals with the behaviors that harm the growth and well-being of the organisation. It has the coefficient reliability of 0.83. All items have a 5-point rating scale (0 = seldom to 4 = always for task and contextual performance; and 0 = never to 4 = often for counterproductive work behaviour). A mean score for each IWPQ scale can be calculated by adding the item scores, and dividing their sum by the number of items in the scale.

The Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R) Questionnaire (Fraley et al., 2000)

A 36-item measure of adult attachment style questionnaire was used. The ECR-R measures individuals on two subscales of attachment: Avoidance and Anxiety. The first 18 items above comprise the attachment-related anxiety scale. Items 19-36 comprise the attachment-related avoidance scale. In real research, the order in which these items are presented should be randomized. To obtain a score for attachment-related anxiety, average a person's responses to items 1-18. However, because items 9 and 11 are "reverse keyed" (i.e., high numbers represent low anxiety rather than high anxiety), you'll need to reverse the answers to those questions before averaging the responses. (If someone answers with a "6" to item 9, you'll need to re-key it as a 2 before averaging). It has the coefficient reliability of 0.90. To obtain a score for attachment-related avoidance, please average a person's responses to items 19-36. Items 20, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, and 36 are to be computed in reversed order. It has the coefficient reliability of 0.84.

Procedure

The questionnaires were distributed among the staff in their respective duty posts at the eatery. The researcher introduced himself and his research assistant and described what the study was all about using simple terms. The general instructions were read out and they were asked to follow the standardized instructions contained in each section of the questionnaire form. The researcher was present to address any questions raised by any of the staff. The research assistant helped gather the completely filled out questionnaires. The employees took about 40 minutes to complete the entire set of questionnaires while the rest requested to submit the questionnaires they have the next day. All distributed questionnaires were appropriately filled out. Informed consent to participate in the research was obtained from all the employees before they filled the questionnaires. Participation was strictly voluntary and the employees were assured that the responses would be confidential and anonymous since there was no form of identification required on the questionnaires. It took the researchers two days to collect data for analysis.

Design and Statistics

The design for this was a cross sectional survey design. The statistics used was the linear regression analysis to test the predictive role of gender and romantic attachment on job performance using SPSS version 22.

Results

The study made use of linear regression analysis. Based on this analysis, the following findings were made.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of study variables

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Relationship Attachment	24	80.00	200.00	143.75	24.06
Job performance	24	40.00	70.00	64.50	4.43
Gender	24	1.00	2.00	1.50	.58
Age	24	18.00	30.00	20.59	7.40

From table 1 above, participants' scores on the relationship attachment measure has a mean score of $x = 143.8$ and a standard deviation $SD = 24.1$. The highest score on the measure is 200 and the lowest is 80. It is also shown that participants' scores on the job performance measure has a mean score of $x = 64.5$ and a standard deviation of $SD = 4.4$. The highest score on the measure is 70 and the lowest is 40. Gender is a categorical variable whose mean shows no statistical relevance. Meanwhile the mean age of participants is 20.6 and a standard deviation of 7.4. The maximum age is 30 years and the minimum is 18 years.

Table 2: Regression Analysis of Relationship Attachment and Gender as predictors of Job performance among employees of a small scale business

Model	β	SE	R ²	F	t
Romantic Attachment	-.06	.05	.55	.83	.91*
Gender	.07	.33	.29	1.00	.75*

* $p < .05$, Romantic Attachment = adult romantic attachment.

Table 2 above shows that romantic attachment was found to have significantly and negatively predicted job performance among employees of a small scale business in Aba metropolis ($\beta = -.06$; $t = .91$; $p < .05$). Thus, the alternate hypothesis was accepted and the null hypothesis rejected. The R square coefficient indicates that adult romantic attachment explains 55% of the variance in the job performance of the employees. It also revealed that gender significantly predicted job performance among employees of a small scale business in Aba metropolis ($\beta = .07$; $t = .75$; $p < .05$). Thus, the alternate hypothesis was rejected and the null hypothesis accepted. The R square coefficient indicates that gender explains 29% of the variance in the job performance of the employees.

Discussion

This study examined the predictive role of romantic attachment and gender on job performance among employees of small scale business in Aba.

First, we found that gender significantly predicted job performance. This simply means that there is gender difference on job performance of employees of small scale business. Male were found to have higher job performance than the female. This finding was in consistent with the findings of Joshi (1993), Green, Jegadeesh and Tang (2007) and Qaisar, Abdul and Aamer (2011). These findings maybe as a result of gender discrimination which has made most of the managers of business to have more belief on the ability of male gender to perform than the female counterpart. Such discrimination may have affected the self-belief of the female employees which affected their performance. As a result, they were unable to live up to their potentials.

Second, the study also revealed that romantic attachment has significant negative prediction on job performance. This means that decrease in romantic attachment brings about an increase in job performance of the employees. This finding supported the earlier findings by Richards and Schat (2011), Wu & park (2017) and Virga, schaufeli, Taris, Beek and Sulea (2019). This finding is in line with attachment theoretical assumptions. The finding showed that employees who have high level attachment to their intimate partner are likely to experience anxiety which in turn affect their performance level. This is also likely to make such individuals to engage in counterproductive work behaviors like absenteeism, low productivity, and increased intentions to quite. Ronen and Mikulincer (2000) observed that individuals with anxious attachment experience hyper-activate negative emotions while those with avoidant attachment suppress negative emotions which subsequently impact on job performance. Reizer (2015) also observed that individuals with anxious attachment experience a loss of energy, cognitive liveliness, and physical strength which negatively affect their levels of job performance.

The findings of this research advance our knowledge about the possible key indicators of job performance. Gender diversity management has a serious implication on job performance of employees and organisation

productively. This implies that effective management of gender diversity by organisational manager will not only increase individual job performance but will also improve overall organisational productivity.

Romantic attachment as a personal attribute that affects work behaviours has been under-studied in Nigeria. This study applied attachment theory to demonstrate how romantic attachment can affect our job performance. Employees who are too anxious about the welfare of their romantic relationships are more likely to be deprecating in the areas of work performance. Although this may be seen as individual's personal sexual disposition, it has however, been found to have serious implication on the performance of individual at work and overall productivity of the organisation in general. This simply implies that managers should design means to properly manage employees who develop insecure romantic anxiety because of the negative implication it has on the emotional stability of such individual which in turn affects both employees and organisational productivity.

This study helps in understanding how insecure romantic attachment can negatively predict individuals work attitudes and behaviour. It proffers the maintenance of healthy and secured attachment as a way of helping individual to be in a good and favourable emotional state, which is an important factor in improving productivity. However, the generalisation of the findings of this study is limited due to the sample size and self-report approach in data collection. We then suggest that future researchers should increase the sample size and include other means of data collection that reduce the level of bias.

This study reveals that there is gender difference in job performance. It then suggested the better management of gender diversity in the workplace so as help each individual worker perform to their full potential irrespective of gender. It also showed that anxious attachment is detrimental to individual's work behaviours like job performance. This calls for designing a way of helping individuals who experience attachment anxiety because it has negative implications on the performance of both the individual and organisational productivity.

Managers of small scale organisations in Nigeria should understand that the emotional health just like the physical health of their employees is very important. They should take care of their emotional health because emotions play a very important role in overall human behaviour including work behaviour. They should engage the services of organizational psychologist who can help to counsel and guide employees who are experiencing emotional crisis. This measure will not only improve employees' quality of work life but will also improve their performance at work. They should also promote gender diversity in a manner that will help every employee realise their full potential irrespective of their gender.

The results of this study have provided a policy framework for government, managers, organisational practitioners and policy makers. They should formulate and enforce the policy that will promote the emotional health of the organisational employees. This is very important because emotional health has great influence on overall well-being of workers and work behaviours. This should also be extended to the area of gender diversity so as to protect and improve the work life of every worker. These measures will both improve employees' emotional well-being and organisational productivity.

In conclusion, employees are humans with emotions. Their emotional health is as important as their physical health. However, most of the times we care more about physical fitness than psychological fitness in work settings. Manager should understand that a health worker is the one that enjoys sound physical, emotional and mental health. Emotion is affective as it determines our disposition to perform well or not. It is important that managers care for their emotional well-being as it will benefit the organisation more when workers perform well on their jobs.

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