

Mediating Effect of Employee Commitment on the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Employee Performance: A Study of Listed Food and Beverages Companies in Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the mediating effect of employee commitment on the link between emotional intelligence and employee performance in the food and beverage industry in Nigeria. The main objective of the study is to assess the mediating role of employee commitment on the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance. The study adopted social cognitive theory as the theoretical framework for the study. The study adopted a survey research design and a questionnaire was used as an instrument of data collection. The respondents for the study were selected randomly from the listed food and beverage industry in Nigeria. The sample respondents were given a self-administered questionnaire. The study employed Structural Equation Modelling on SMART PLS3 as data analytical technique. The findings of the study revealed that employee performance is significantly and positively impacted by emotional intelligence. The findings also showed a positive and significant relationship between employee commitment and performance. The study discovered that the link between emotional intelligence and worker performance is mediated by employee commitment. The study recommended that the food and beverages industry should intensify skill training to help in developing the mental abilities of individual employees. Therefore, employees should be encouraged to develop their social skills which would lead to their greater acceptance among their colleagues and subordinates thereby enhancing the work process and leading to success in the organization.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence; Employee Performance; Employee Commitment; Nigeria; Food; Beverage Companies

INTRODUCTION

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Organizations are expected to manage their resources effectively and efficiently to accomplish their goals. The resources needed for the attainment of organizational goals comprises of physical assets, money, methods, tangible and intangible assets. To accomplish the objectives of the organization, it is essential to manage the human element effectively.

Employees are valued since they actively participate in the multiple duties carried out to achieve the organization's stated objectives. The intense competition that exists between businesses to win clients and keep their relevance in the marketplace has

resulted in the necessity to anticipate higher management efficiency to meet the appropriate goals of their business organizations. Obiekwe, Mobolade, and Akinade (2021) assert that high levels of employee commitment are necessary to achieve managerial efficiency and organizational productivity and to support the companies' aims, visions, and objectives. Therefore, to fulfill corporate goals, employees must have the emotional capacity and commitment to produce results (Adhiyasa & Satrya, 2021). Researches that investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence have established that employees with high emotional intelligence have higher performance in the work place. This is so because it enables them to be able to handle and manage emotions and feelings of co-workers that they work with on daily basis, customers and even the management of the organization.

The capacity to recognize, comprehend, and react to the emotions of others is just as important as the capacity to understand, express, and regulate one's own emotions. Employees with emotional intelligence are aware that, despite their strength, emotions are ultimately transient. It should be highlighted that when an emotionally charged incident occurs, such as being enraged with co-workers or clients, the emotionally responsible course of action would be to wait a bit before responding. This is essential because it gives everyone the ability to manage their emotions and think more sensibly about all of the circumstances surrounding the disagreements. This is applicable to all nations and industrial sectors, studies that established this conclusion have demonstrated that it is not restricted by geographic boundaries or industry sectors. However, studies that examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and workers' performance have discovered a positively significant relationship (Gunu & Oladepo, 2014; Javed, 2018; Kahtani, 2013; Kaur & Sharma, 2019; Navas & Vijayaakmar, 2018).

According to studies conducted in Nigeria, it is getting harder to work in the manufacturing sector, especially in the food and beverage industry, because of the daily hardships that employees face while on the job looking for conveniences, which causes them to leave their jobs and cause unnecessary stress (Eluka & Okafor, 2015). Therefore, under this circumstance, self-awareness, self-management, and well-committed employees will all play a key role in motivating the employees to give it their all to achieve higher performance.

Organizations are designed to create an environment where employees may successfully or efficiently carry out their duties to advance the goals of the organization. To have a positive impact on the organization, employees are expected to be in good emotional and mental health. Previous studies' findings have revealed mixed findings, for example, employee performance and emotional intelligence are positively correlated, according to research by Gunu and Oladepo (2014), Javed (2018), Kahtani (2013), Kaur and Sharma 2019, Navas and Vijayaakmar (2018), Supramaniam and Singaravelloo (2021); emotionally intelligent employees, for example, get along well with coworkers because they can understand what others are thinking and feeling, which promotes a pleasant work atmosphere and a productive workplace culture. Additionally, there is a strong and positive relationship between employees' commitment and emotional intelligence (Adhiyasa & Satrya, 2021; Alsughayira, 2021; Ibiekwe et al., 2021; Supramaniam & Singaravelloo, 2021).

Particularly in developing countries like Nigeria, emotional intelligence is vital for improving employee performance and the efficiency of the firm. On the relationship between employee commitment and performance or emotional intelligence, however, not much research has been done in Nigeria. This signifies that the current work seeks to fill a scholarly gap, particularly one of a geographic kind. This study is believed to increase the amount of knowledge previously available on emotional intelligence as a result.

Relationship management is an element of social competence proposed by Goleman. It is the ability of an individual to relate to others. The aspects such as developing others, influence, communication, conflict management, visionary leadership, building bonds, teamwork, collaboration, and catalyst for change are included in the dimensions of relationship management (Cherniss & Goleman 2001). They are also strong advocates of teamwork and collaboration and have the ability to resolve conflicts (Riopel 2021).

Studies such as Adhiyasa and Satrya, 2021; Alsughayira, 2021; Ibiekwe et al., 2021; Supramaniam and Singaravelloo, 2021 investigated direct relationship between emotional intelligence work outcomes. The study therefore aims at building a model that tests both the direct and indirect relationships between emotional intelligence (self-awareness and self-management) and employees' performance in order to add to the literature of emotional intelligence. In the research model, employee commitment which

deals with level of enthusiasm an employee has towards his/her tasks assigned at a workplace was introduced as a mediator as a gap to be filled in the current study. The main objective of the study is to assess the mediating role of employee commitment on the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance. The hypotheses to be tested are stated as thus:

H0₁; Emotional intelligence has no significant effect on employees' performance in food and beverages companies in Nigeria.

H0₂; Employee commitment has no significant effect on employees' performance in food and beverages companies in Nigeria.

H0₃; Employees' commitment does not mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and employees' performance in food and beverage companies in Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Oyewunmi, Ojo, and Oludayo (2015) assessed how emotional intelligence affected the productivity of Nigerian healthcare professionals. The study employed a survey methodology and randomly chooses industry leaders and employees. Data analyses using the t-test and the analytical technique of hierarchical regression reveal a strong correlation between employee performance and the emotional intelligence of leaders. According to the study, considering the numerous challenges Nigeria's public healthcare system faces, successful leadership requires a certain amount of emotional intelligence to support employees' performance. There is a need for more research in the food and beverage industry. In addition, only leaders in the health sectors participated in the survey, and the need for studies that will concentrate on the lower cadre that engages in production activities.

Oriarewo, Agbim, and Zever (2014) examined how leadership and academic success were impacted by emotional intelligence in Nigeria. The study investigated the mediating function of emotional intelligence to better understand how managerial competence influences the relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial performance. A questionnaire was employed in the study to gather information from a small sample of respondents in the hotel industry in Benue State, Nigeria, using an ex-post-facto, multi-stage sampling technique. The data were analyzed statistically using multiple regression. It was found that managerial

proficiency acts as a mediator in the relationship between the elements of emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial performance. Enterprises' owners should ensure that their managers and employees are emotionally intelligent and managerially competent through a well-planned recruitment and selection process. However, the current study used managerial competencies as mediating variable and the need to investigate commitment as a mediator to see differences in the result.

In the study, Chipumuro (2015) assessed emotional intelligence (EI) as a factor influencing performance efficacy in South Africa. A survey research design was employed for the investigation. The study is concerned with how men and women differ from one another in terms of emotional intelligence and general efficiency. In many dimensions of human living, it has been found that emotional intelligence, which entails having particular emotional traits and skills, can be helpful. There were extremely slight differences between the sexes, but this does not mean that managers and employees should be aware of them. It is more realistic to make decisions based on emotional intelligence levels according to each individual and not on whether they are male or female.

Gilbert and Konya (2020) looked at the connection between organizational performance and continuing commitment in manufacturing enterprises in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey approach was used in the study to investigate the factors. Through the use of a self-administered questionnaire, primary data was produced. The results of the study showed a substantial correlation between the organizational performance of manufacturing enterprises in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, and continuation commitment. According to the study, managers of manufacturing companies should be encouraged to offer equitable pay and benefits to their employees because motivated employees are more likely to work hard and give their all to accomplish organizational objectives. While the current study used the emotional intelligence dimensions with commitment acting as a mediator, the previous study employed commitment as a predictive variable.

Mohyi (2021) examined how emotional intelligence affects worker performance in Indonesia. The study's performance measurement takes into account data on the efficient use of resources that produce goods and services, the caliber of those goods and services, the comparison of activity results with targets, and the effectiveness of activities in achieving goals. The study, which included 80 workers from Taman

Sengkaling UNMUH Malang, Indonesia, used a purposeful sampling technique. The study employed a multiple linear regression analysis. This study discovered a significant link between emotional intelligence and employee effectiveness. However, given the study was conducted in Indonesia, more investigation is needed in Nigeria to confirm the results while taking into consideration regional conditions and cultural differences.

Supramaniam and Singaravelloo (2021) conducted research in Malaysia on the relationship between emotional intelligence and performance level. The research employed a survey approach, and 700 ADOs with their Putrajaya headquarters in the five selected ministries were given the survey instrument. 375 of the 700 surveys that were handed out got accurate responses. The study made use of SMART-PLS, and the results showed that performance is significantly improved by emotional intelligence. However, there is a gap in the conception of the performance assessment used in the study, which calls for this study to fill it.

Adhiyasa & Satrya (2021) looked at the mediation role of job satisfaction in the relationship between emotional intelligence and commitment. Using the disproportionate stratified random sampling (probability sampling) method, 74 of the 91 permanent employees who made up the study's sample were still included. The Path Analysis and the Sobel Test are two of the data analysis methods employed. The findings demonstrate that organizational commitment is favorably and significantly influenced by both work satisfaction and emotional intelligence. Additionally, emotional intelligence and organizational commitment are connected to job satisfaction. Danquah (2014) looked at how emotional intelligence affected organizational development in Ghana's banking industry. Quantitative research is the approach utilized to look into the connection. Twenty banks in Ghana are the basis for the analysis. Hypotheses were tested using Pearson's correlation test, partial correlation test, and ordinary least squares regression analysis. The results of the study show a positive relationship between organizational efficiency and emotional intelligence. However, the use of return on investment as a measure of performance against emotional intelligence cannot obtain a reliable result since emotional intelligence is not measured in quantitative form. The use of secondary data for return on investment that is commuted in money terms cannot be used against emotional intelligence that was obtained through the use of the questionnaire. Therefore, subjective measures of performance and emotional intelligence using a questionnaire would have obtained more reliable results.

Social Cognitive Theory

The social cognitive theory was utilized in this investigation. Bandura (1986) proposed the theory. From his earlier and more in-depth research on social learning theory, Bandura (1986) created the notion of social cognitive theory. According to him, motivation is affected in different ways by three important factors, including the workplace itself, the performer's beliefs, and the performer's actions. Bandura emphasizes the necessity of performers being conscious of their actions and self-reacting. However, his central claim is that how people perceive their capacities-what they think or believe about the-helps to explain how performers' perceptions of what they are capable of or unable to achieve affect performance (Bandura, 1994). A strong performance requires positive self-beliefs of efficacy in addition to appropriate skills and abilities.

The first, mastery experiences, is prioritized as a particularly potent personality-shaping factor. In essence, mastery experiences deliver incremental achievements that increase effectiveness. According to the study, persons who can overcome challenges and succeed are thought to be relatively confident performers, while outright failure, particularly early and repeated failures, might impede the formation of self-efficacy or even produce a negative capacity evaluation.

The effective management of mastery experiences is essential for developing a solid sense of self-efficacy that can withstand occasional failures. The way people feel about their self-efficacy is another result of observing others complete the same activity. People gain confidence when they achieve success, particularly if the successful role models they look up to are relatable and similar to themselves. People think they can complete the assignment successfully. For performers who are just starting to apply their knowledge and skills to a task, vicarious observation can be extremely beneficial.

Verbal persuasion is a third type of influence, which is used by managers to persuade staff members that they possess the skills necessary for success. This tactic may not have much of an immediate impact, but the brief buzz may motivate people to make the necessary efforts to complete the work (Buchner, 2007). Bandura (1986) cautions against exaggerating or adopting false self-beliefs because failure could harm self-efficacy (and the persuader's credibility). Fourth, people's perceptions of their sense of self-efficacy may be influenced by how they interpret the physiological responses to

pressure in their bodies. The damaging effects of heightened arousal can be mitigated by assisting individuals in transforming arousal (like dread) into a feeling of energization and readiness to perform (Bandura, 1986, 1994). In terms of performance management, Bandura's concept of self-efficacy stands out as the part of the social cognitive theory that requires the most attention. People who believe they perform exceptionally well are more willing to exert extra effort to complete challenging activities. More specifically, high levels of goal complexity, effort expended to achieve goals, tenacity, and resilience are signs of self-efficacy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. The population that was used in this study is the lower cadre of employees of some selected food and beverage companies in Nigeria. The choice of the use of a lower cadre is a result of the fact that the lower cadre carried out the production of the activities and interact with everyone on daily basis. The sample size was determined using a formula suggested by Taro Yamane (1973) known as Yamane's formula. The sample size for the current study is 320. In order not to fall short of the sample size of 320, and also to take care of other unavoidable errors such as incorrect filling and failure of some respondents to return the questionnaire. It was advised by Israel (2013) that 30% should be added to the sample size, which results in the 416 sample size that was used for this study.

The primary source of data was used in the study to examine the mediating effect of employee commitment on the relationship between emotional intelligence and the performance of some selected food and beverage companies operating in Nigeria. Primary data was obtained using a self-administered questionnaire to choose those registered food and beverage companies in Nigeria.

Data collected was tested using Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) on SmartPLS3. The data were tested for missing values. Missing values were replaced using mean substitution. Outliers were also screened. The data further undergo a normality test using skewness and kurtosis statistics, and multicollinearity was tested using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). SmartPLS3 has two models, the measurement model and the structural model, also known as the outer and inner models respectively. The outer model was used to cycle between path

coefficients and path loadings, while the inner model was used to cycle among path coefficients, total effect coefficients, and indirect effect coefficients (Garson, 2016).

The standard bootstrapping procedure with several 5,000 bootstrap samples and 416 cases was applied to evaluate the structural model (Hair et al., 2011). In particular, the significance of the path coefficients, level of the R-squared value, and predictive relevance of the model were assessed. Fourthly, after the analyses of the main PLS path model were run, a supplementary PLS-SEM analysis (i.e., mediator analysis) was conducted. Hence, following Henseler and Chin (2010) approaches to the analysis of mediating effects in PLS path models, a two-stage approach was used to test the mediating effect of employee commitment on the relationship between emotional intelligence and employees' performance.

RESULTS

The first step of the structural model evaluation involves assessing theoretical relationships. Based on Hair *et al.* (2017) and Henseler *et al.* (2009) recommendation, the standard bootstrap procedure was used on a sampled case of 416 using 5,000 bootstrap samples to assess the importance of path coefficients for the direct and indirect relationships.

Table 1: *Bootstrapping Results of the Structural Model*

Variables	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Decision
Emotional Intelligence -> Employee Performance	0.394	0.396	0.071	5.557	0.000	Supported
Employee Commitment -> Employee Performance	0.373	0.369	0.072	5.212	0.000	Supported
Emotional Intelligence -> Employee Commitment -> Employee Performance	0.306	0.302	0.063	4.864	0.000	Supported

Source: SmartPLS3 output

The reflection of the results in table I is shown in figure 1:

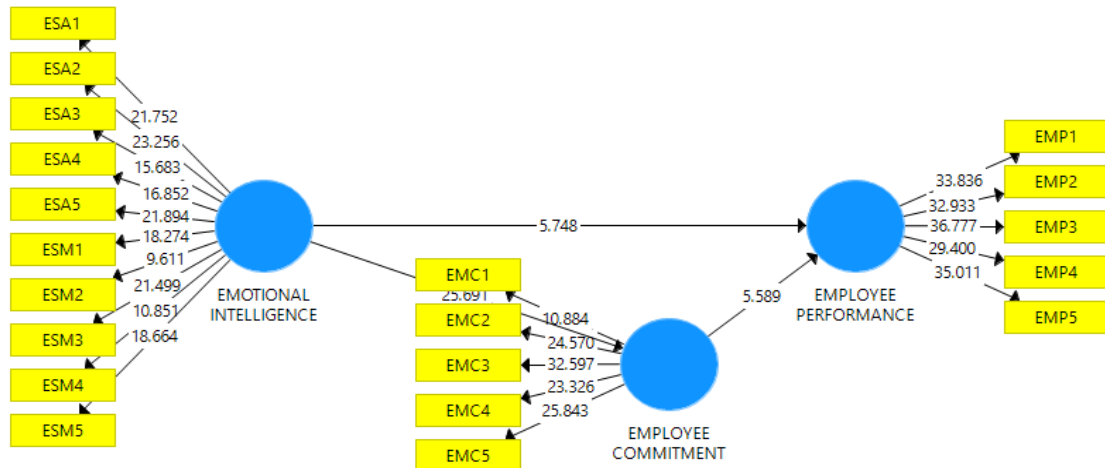


Figure 1: *Structural Model*

The results in Table 1 and Figure 1 show a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and employees' performance. The result revealed that emotional intelligence exerts a positive and significant effect on employees' performance (β value = 0.396 and p-value of 0.000). Thus, the alternate hypothesis which states that emotional intelligence is significantly related to employees' performance is supported at a 5% level of significance. Similarly, the results reveal a positive and significant relationship between employee commitment and employees' performance (β value = 0.369 and p-value of 0.000). Finally, the results of this study reveal that employees' commitment positively and significantly mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and employees' performance in the food and beverages industry in Nigeria (β value = 0.302 and p-value of 0.000). The finding supports the hypothesis which states that employees' commitment mediates the relationship between self-management and employees' performance.

Effect Size (f^2) and Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

The f^2 statistics provide an overview of an exogenous construct's effect on the endogenous latent variable. The decision criteria are 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 for small, medium, and large effect sizes respectively (Selya *et al.* 2012). In addition, the coefficient of determination, also known as R-square, is used to evaluate the extent of variance explained by the exogenous constructs on the endogenous constructs. According to Chin (2010), R^2 values of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 are considered substantive, moderate, and weak. Finally, the predictive correlation (Q^2) of external latent variables was also examined using cross-validated redundancy criteria, reflecting endogenous latent variables.

Table 2: R-Square (R^2), Effect Size (F^2), and Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Constructs	f^2 Satisfaction	Effect Size	
Emotional intelligence	0.159	Medium	
Employee commitment	0.098	Small	
R-square (R^2)	0.536	Adjusted 0.534	
Predictive Relevance			
Indicator	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
Emotional intelligence	3,900.000	3,900.000	
Employee commitment	1,950.000	1,279.363	
Employee performance	1,950.000	1,312.562	0.327

Source: SMART PLS output

From Table 2, self-awareness has a large effect size, self-management has a small effect size and employee commitment has a medium effect size on employee performance in the beverage industry in Nigeria. The R-Square value indicates that emotional intelligence (self-awareness and self-management) and employees' commitment have jointly explained the variation in the employees' performance in the food and beverages industry in Nigeria by 53.6%, while other factors not captured in this study accounted for the remaining 46.4%. Finally, the model could be said to have predictive relevance because the Q^2 value (0.327) is greater than zero, as suggested by Duarte and Raposo (2010).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study tested the mediating effect of employee commitment on the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance in the beverage industry in Nigeria. The findings show a positive and significant effect of emotional intelligence on employee performance. This implies that employees with a high level of emotional intelligence are more stable and have a good sense of judgment, the ability to proffer solutions to problems and which could lead to employee performance. It also implies that emotional intelligence ensures the development of new ideas, innovation, high cognitive thinking, and better service delivery to customers which significantly improves employees' performance.

The findings suggest that emotional intelligence rapidly modifies the state of mind of employees in rendering service in the industry especially the beverage industry to foster innovation. This finding corroborates previous studies (Oyewunmi, Ojo & Oludayo 2015; Oriarewo, Agbim & Zever, 2014; Chipumuro, 2015; Mohyi, 2021). This greatly makes the employees more customer-focused through efficient service delivery and it increasingly provides individuals and businesses with quality service delivery that eventually contributes to their performance. Emotional intelligence promotes services and management efficiency in the beverage industry through emotionally balanced and stable employees leading to changes in employees' attitudes in a positive manner that brought about their happiness and subsequently higher performance.

As earlier shown, the results of this study reveal a positive and significant relationship between employee commitment and employee performance. This suggests that if employees are committed to their job and show a good level of enthusiasm for the job, it will help meet the organizational goal by ensuring that services delivered meet the expectations of the customers or provide the customers with what they want and when they want it, at an acceptable cost, within the business's operating constraints, and offering a better service than the customer expects, their attitudes, happiness and satisfaction will positively improve. Thus, from the foregoing and empirical evidence from this study, employees' commitment determines employees commitment primarily through their perceived delivery of the service attributes they expect. This finding is in line with the findings of Gilbert and Konya (2020). Similarly, the findings indicate that the performance of employees with the delivery of the service attributes they expected from the customers and stakeholders. From the preceding discussion, a beverage

company that has employees that are committed to their job and emphasizes ensuring emotional intelligence to their customers will have an advantage over their competitors, leading to an increase in employee performance.

Furthermore, the results of this study indicate a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and employee commitment. This means that the existence of emotional intelligence which lead to improvement in employees' commitment and eventually increase the performance of employees in the study domain. The findings imply that the beverage industry that hire employees with a high level of emotional intelligence provide effective services to customer which will also increase customer satisfaction. It suggests that the beverage industry with employees that have a high level of emotional intelligence provides more efficient services, and streamlines processes to enhance customer happiness and satisfaction. Similarly, the results of this study show a positive and significant mediating effect of employee commitment on the relationship between emotional intelligence and employees' performance in the beverage industry. The result corroborates previous studies such as that of Adhiyasa & Satrya, (2021); Mahfouz, Awang Muda & Bahkia (2020). This means that employee commitment is a conduit through which emotional intelligence influences employees' performance. It suggests that if beverage companies continue to employ a high level of emotional intelligent employees, the commitment of employees to their job would improve and that would make employees happy with their job and thus improve employee performance. Therefore, to achieve greater employee performance, the beverage industry should hire employees with a high level of self-awareness and self-management to improve employee commitment and eventually higher performance.

From a theoretical point of view, this study introduced employee commitment as a mediator to see if it could enhance the effect of emotional intelligence on employees' performance. Therefore, the study has broadened our understanding of the direction through which emotional intelligence has positive and significant effects on performance using empirical evidence. The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)'s idea that people who can achieve despite challenges develop into competent performers has been furthered by the facts. The development of self-efficacy may be hampered by outright failure, especially in young people who fail frequently, and it could even result in a negative capacity judgment. It's critical to manage mastery experiences effectively if you want to develop a solid sense of self-efficacy that can withstand the occasional

setback. Another effect of watching others perform the same task is how people feel about their own self-efficacy. When people see others succeed, especially if those being watched are like them, they become more confident. People believe they can successfully execute the task as well. Vicarious observation can be especially helpful for performers who are just beginning to apply their knowledge and skills to a task.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study examined the mediating effect of employee commitment on the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance in some selected food and beverage companies in Nigeria. The study concludes that employee commitment serves as a conduit through which emotional intelligence improves employee performance. It is concluded, therefore, that if the beverage industry continues to hire employees with a high level of emotional intelligence, the commitment of employees would improve and that would make employees happy with the organization and thus improve their performance. The study also concludes that emotional intelligence components are important determinants of employee performance in the beverage industry. Additionally, it is concluded that when businesses employ employees with a high level of emotional intelligence such as self-awareness, and self-management they would be happy and thus have their performance increased.

In a similar vein, it has been discovered that employee commitment is a significant factor in employee success in the food and beverage business. Additionally, the study concludes that employee understanding largely determines commitment. Employees must therefore demonstrate a high level of devotion to their jobs if they want to help the beverage industry achieve high performance. The mediating function of employee commitment on the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance, has thus added new evidence and perspective to the literature. For researchers, practitioners, and policymakers, the discoveries and contributions have produced new theoretical insights and significant practical implications.

According to this study, there is a connection between commitment, emotional intelligence, and employee performance. As a result, the study suggests that the food and beverage industry should intensify skill training to help in developing the mental

abilities of individual employees; employees should be encouraged to develop their social skills because this will increase their acceptance among their coworkers and subordinates, thereby enhancing the work process and resulting in success in the organization; and organizations should increase the use of social media to promote employee engagement and performance.

Limitation and future research

This study has some limitations just like every other academic paper. One of the major limitations of this study is that it relies on perception measure to assess the performance of employees and sometimes biasness existed in the process. Although effort has been made to minimize it but such biasness cannot be eliminated completely in perception studies. Therefore, further studies should use different measurement of performance such as sales growth. Secondly, this study is limited to food and beverages companies operating within Nigeria and therefore the findings cannot be generalized, therefore, further studies should be carried out in different sectors to determine if the result will be different.

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