

LIKEABILITY OF SUPERIORS AMONG EMPLOYEES OF ANIMAL CARE KONSULT LTD AND OGUN-OSHUN RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the effects of likeability of superiors on employees' job performance in Ogun-Osun River Basin Development Authority (OORBDA) and Animal Care Konsult Limited. The multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select 213 respondents in the study area. Information were collected on socioeconomic characteristics of respondents, likeability traits of superiors, employees' job performance, and the factors that are affecting performance of employees in the study areas. Study data were analysed by using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages and means as well as inferential statistics which were Chi-Square, Regression and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). Results show that majority (54.1%) of the respondents were male, married (65.5%), HND/BSc. Degree holders (54.1%) and senior staff (59.2%) with mean age of 39 years. Their mean work experience was 14 years with monthly income of ₦73,549.22. Expertise trait ($\bar{x} = 4.63$) was the likeability trait of superiors identified by the respondents. Clear definition of workers' roles ($\bar{x} = 4.44$) was the major factor affecting employees' job performance. A significant but inverse relationship existed between likeability traits ($r = -0.691$) of superiors and employees' job performance. Significant relationship exists between attractiveness and expertise, and employees' job performance; between likeability traits ($t = -0.295$), and employees' job performance ($t = 0.688$), and between OORBDA and Animal Care Konsult Limited. The study concluded that expertise traits are exhibited by superiors in the study area. The study recommended that superiors should develop and maintain intelligence, possess knowledge and talent to deal with subordinates in their organisations.

Key words: Likeability, Traits, Expertise trait, Superiors, Job performance

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Likeability is considered an important trait of a relational leader. For instance, if in an agricultural organisation, a manager is found to be likeable, the subordinates are likely to have a positive relationship with such manager. Furthermore, Feistauer and Richter, (2018), in a study that

examined the correlation between teachers' likeability and students' attitude opined that a teacher's likeability describes students' general positive attitude towards the teacher.

The term likeability describes the overall perception relating to attractiveness, friendliness, and pedagogy. Cottringer (2003) theorised that the more likeable a person is the more positive influence they will have on others within their locale. Cottringer noted a few uniqueness that influences a person's perception of likeability. The most effective traits are honesty, empathy, humour, politeness, positive thinking, and supportiveness (Cottringer, 2003). Cottringer (2003) suggests that likeability is a build-up of several uniqueness that other people quickly perceive and judge in a positive way. Kenrick *et al.* (2002) opined that likeability has been labelled a persuasion tactic and a model of self-presentation. Aspects that emerge to increase likeability include physical attractiveness, similarity to the perceiver, compliments, and association.

Cottringer (2003) also pointed out eight simple ways to communicate likeability and improve chances for success as a leader. They are to laugh, listen more, learn empathy, appear attractive, act smart, and be honest, positive, as well as being humble. Reysen (2006) as well revealed indication for a relationship between laughter and likeability. Likeability of an individual can be seen as the measure to which a person is perceived as friendly, nice, polite, and pleasant to be around (Ellegaard, 2012). People who are likeable are naturally more pleasing to be around. Several studies have related likeability to concepts such as similarity, familiarity, attractiveness, and friendship, but likeability should be seen as a discrete construct with different implications rather than related concepts (Jayanti and Whipple, 2008).

Therefore, the concept of likeability is important for an organisation to flourish consistently. In an organisation, employees' performance needs gaugeable assessment. It is important to note because it may affect the achievement of organisational goals. Every organisation nurtures the intention to accomplish a competitive edge in its business processes through effective and efficient utilisation of resources (Lameck, 2011; cited in Tango *et al.*, 2022). Gerhart and Fang (2014) defined job performance narrowly as employee productivity, while broadly speaking; it is the combination of skills and outcomes gained. According to Touré-Tillery and Fishbach, (2014), performance measures include precision, quantity of work done, and highest level of accomplishment.

According to Nasution *et al.*, (2018), the term employee performance means the extent to which an employee carries his/her duties depending on what is expected by the employer in line with

his/her capabilities, experience, time, and seriousness in performing the given task. Employees are likely to perform well in the workplace when encircled with personalities they like, and they tend to trust those likeable persons more than the others. Likeability is the ability to generate positive attitudes in other individuals through the release of emotional and physical benefits (Judge *et al.*, 2009; 2012).

A manager who is likeable can give a sense of joy, happiness, relaxation, or rejuvenation to subordinates in an organisation. He or she can bring relief to subordinates that are depressed, full of anxiety or boredom. By being likeable, that is, being able to generate positive feelings in others, one has a share in the benefits as well as likeable managers get pleasant recognition from subordinates. Even though studies imply that likeability has a significant influence on interpersonal interaction, there is dearth of literature on how the concept of likeability influences performance of employees in an organisational setting. Tellefsen and Thomas (2005), discovered that likeability is strongly related to commitment while Abosag and Naudé (2014) established that there is a positive relationship between likeability and the development of relationship.

Therefore, it becomes expedient to expand the scope of literature on likeability of superiors and how these relates to employees' job performance. Hence, the study aims at providing answers to the following questions:

Research Questions

1. What are the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents in the study area?
2. What are the leaders' likeability traits in the study area?
3. What is the level of employees' job performance in the study area?, and
4. What are the factors affecting job performance in the study area?

Research Objectives

The main objective of this research is to determine the effects of likeability of superiors on employees' job performance, while the specific objectives are to:

1. describe the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents in the study area;
2. identify the superiors' likeability traits in the study area;
3. determine the level of employees' job performance in the study area; and
4. identify the factors affecting job performance in the study area.

Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the objectives of the study the following hypotheses were tested. The hypotheses were stated in the null form.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between socio-economic characteristics of respondents and their job performance.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between superiors' likeability and employees' job performance.

METHODOLOGY

Study Area: The research was carried out in Ogun-Oshun River Basin Development Authority and Animal Care Services Limited, Ogun State, Nigeria. The population of the study was the employees of Animal Care Services Limited and Ogun-Oshun River Basin Development Authority, Ogun State.

Method of Data Collection

Multi-stage sampling procedure was used for the selection of the respondents from the various departments of the organisations. In the first stage, simple random sampling was used to select 70% of the departments in the organisations. In the second stage, proportionate, stratified random sampling was used in such a way that suitable proportion were chosen from the existing departments of each of the organisations. In the third stage, 50% of the population from each department of the organisations were selected. In the last stage, simple random sampling was used to select a total of two hundred and thirteen (213) respondents (employees) for the study.

Data for this study was sourced primarily with the aid of a well-structured questionnaire administered to the sampled respondents. The questionnaire was in four sections, capturing information which included socio-economic characteristics respondents, likeability traits of superiors in the study area, level of employees' job performance, and factors affecting job performance of the respondents.

Analytical Tools: Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used in the analysis of the data obtained from the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic Characteristics of respondents in the study area:

Results presented in Table 1 showed that the majority (54.1%) of the respondents were male, most (65.6%) of them are married and the mean age of the respondents is 38.55 years. This signifies that the organisation constitutes employees that are categorised as youths (active age bracket) which constitutes human resources whose performance can be continually improved with a suitable style of leadership as well as a possession of good likeability traits to help them function optimally to achieve organisational goals and objectives. Approximately 71% of the respondents in the study area were Christians and 29.3% of the population of the respondents were Muslims. All the respondents have acquired tertiary education with majority (54.1%) of them being HND/B.Sc. Holders.

With this level of education, it could be taken that the respondents possess requisite level of educational background to enable them deliver on their assigned tasks. This is in line with Kelly (2006) who remarked that the capacities of individuals depend on their access to education. The average monthly income of the respondents is ₦73,549.22. The results showed that majority of the respondents earn ₦100,000 or less (79%) as other respondents earn above ₦100,000 (21%). This implies that, the respondents earn above the minimum wage. It is suspected that those with higher educational degree earned more income. Most (59.2%) of the respondents were senior staff while the remaining 40.8% of the respondents are junior staff in rank. Above 60% of the respondents had 11-20 years of experience on the job while 21.7% of the respondents had less than 10 years working experience. This implies that majority of the respondents have had reasonable organisational experience.

Table 1: Socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents (n=157)

Variables	Frequencies	percentage	Mean
Sex			
Male	85	54.1	
Female	72	45.9	
Age			
<= 30.00	37	23.6	
31.00 - 40.00	59	37.6	
41.00 - 50.00	53	33.8	38.55
years			
Above 51.00	8	5.1	
Marital status			
Single	54	34.4	
Married	103	65.6	
Educational qualification			
NCE/OND	85	54.1	
HND/BSC	72	45.9	
Religion			
Christianity	111	70.7	
Islam	46	29.3	
Rank			
Junior	64	40.8	
Senior	93	59.2	
Income			
<=50000	68	43.3	
50001-100000	56	35.7	
73549.22			
Above 100000	33	21.0	
Years of experience			
<=10 years	34	21.7	
11-20 years	95	60.5	14.32
Above 20 years	28	17.8	

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Likeability traits of superiors within the study areas

Results in Table 2 revealed the perception of the respondents about the various likeability traits of superiors in the study area. Based on the rand mean (scores), the likeability traits of superiors is 2. The expertise trait of superiors ranked more (\bar{x} =4.63) than the attractiveness of superiors (\bar{x} = 4.21) in the study area. On the expertise trait of superiors, respondents revealed that their managers are intelligent (\bar{x} =4.83), knowledgeable (\bar{x} =4.73) and talented (\bar{x} =4.64). Furthermore, the respondents reported that their superiors are experts (\bar{x} = 4.54) and competent at doing their jobs (\bar{x} = 4.39). On the attractiveness (trait) of superiors, the respondents opined that their superiors are modest (\bar{x} = 4.54), genuine (\bar{x} = 4.39), and friendly (\bar{x} =4.29) in nature as they appear to be approachable (\bar{x} =4.19) and warm-hearted (\bar{x} =4.19) personalities. Furthermore, the respondents also reported that their superiors are likeable (\bar{x} =4.10), and amiable (\bar{x} =3.75)

persons to be around. The findings suggest that employees are sensitive to their leaders' (superior) attitudinal characteristics.

Ellegaard (2012) opined that likeability of an individual can be seen as the measure to which a person is perceived as friendly, nice, polite, and pleasant to be around. This implies that the respondents believed their superiors possess expertise (\bar{x} = 4.63) traits in their interpersonal relationship with their subordinates. According to Sanders (2005; 2006), four elements, including friendliness, relevance, empathy, and realness, are necessary to improve one's likeability and are effective in both professional and personal environments. Researchers have also found that people will "do things for people they like" (Pulles and Hartman, 2017) based on expectations of social exchange and the need to sustain beneficial future interactions.

Level of employees' job performance in the study areas

Results in Table 3 showed the level of employees' performance in the study area. The result revealed that the respondents scored higher in interpersonal contextual performance (\bar{x} =4.76) and lowest in counterproductive work behaviour (\bar{x} =2.69). From the result on interpersonal contextual performance, respondents accept and learn from feedback (\bar{x} =4.81), cooperates with others (\bar{x} =4.81) and have the initiative to start new tasks at the completion of old tasks (\bar{x} =4.71) as they effectively communicate ideas and intentions (\bar{x} =4.71). Furthermore, on organisational contextual performance, the result revealed that respondents are customer oriented (\bar{x} =4.61), and creative in finding solutions to new problems (\bar{x} =4.61) while they also accept extra responsibilities (\bar{x} =4.52) and seek new challenges at work (\bar{x} =3.96).

Table 2: Perceived likeability traits of superiors in the study area

Statements	\bar{x}	SD
Expertise	4.63	
My superior is intelligent.	4.83	0.37
My manager is knowledgeable	4.73	0.44
My superior is talented	4.64	0.48
My superior is an expert	4.54	0.50
My superior is competent.	4.39	0.49
Attractiveness	4.21	
My superior is modest.	4.54	0.50
My superior is genuine	4.39	0.49
My boss is friendly	4.29	0.46
My superior is approachable	4.19	0.60
My superior is warm-hearted	4.19	0.39
My superior is likeable	4.10	0.30
My superior is amiable	3.75	0.76

Source: Computed from data obtained from field survey, 2021. **Note:** SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U= Undecided, D=Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree, = Mean, SD= Standard Deviation

On task performance, respondents used to plan to finish assigned work on time ($\bar{x} = 4.81$) as they cautious of time management ($\bar{x} = 4.37$) and possess result-oriented attitudes ($\bar{x} = 4.17$). In addition, respondents consistently set priorities ($\bar{x} = 3.83$) and are efficient at work ($\bar{x} = 3.83$). On adaptive performance, respondents in the study area experience job knowledge upgrade ($\bar{x} = 4.29$), bridge individual skill gap ($\bar{x} = 4.10$), and possess the ability to cope with stress, difficult situations and adversities ($\bar{x} = 3.91$). Moreover, respondents adjust work goals, when necessary ($\bar{x} = 3.85$), effectively handle unsure and unpredictable work situations ($\bar{x} = 3.75$) and use creativity to solve difficult problems ($\bar{x} = 3.25$). The result implies that the performance of employees in the study area were more contextual. This may affect the overall performance of the employees in the study area. The result of further categorisation of the level of respondents showed that 80.9% of the respondents had high performance level score while 19.1% had medium performance level score. This is in line with the study that suggests that there are some evidences that contextual performance influences overall performance ratings (Van Scotter and Motowidlow, 1996 cited in Oladipupo, 2019). Moreover, contextual performance contributes unique variance to overall ratings (Van Scotter and Motowidlow, 1996; cited in Oladipupo, 2019).

Table 3: Level of employees’ job performance in the study areas

Statements	\bar{x}	SD
Contextual performance – interpersonal	4.76	
Acceptance and learning from feedback	4.81	0.39
Cooperation with others	4.81	0.39
Initiative, to start new tasks at the completion of old tasks	4.71	0.46
Effective communication of ideas and intentions	4.71	0.46
Contextual performance – organizational	4.43	
Customer-oriented	4.61	0.67
Creative solutions for new problems	4.61	0.49
Acceptance of extra responsibilities	4.52	0.80
Seeking new challenges at work	3.96	0.76
Task performance	4.20	
Planning to finish assigned work on time	4.81	0.39
Time management	4.37	0.48
Result-oriented attitude	4.17	0.59
Consistent setting of priorities	3.83	0.83
Efficient at work	3.83	0.83
Adaptive Performance	3.86	
Job knowledge upgrading	4.29	0.46
Bridging of individual skills gap	4.10	0.30
Ability to cope with stress, difficult situations and adversities	3.91	0.54
Adjustment of work goals when necessary	3.85	0.85
Effective handling of unsure and unpredictable work situations	3.75	0.63
Creativity to of solving difficult problems	3.25	0.63
Counterproductive Work Behaviour	2.69	
Complaint about minor work-related issues	3.17	1.05
Focussing on negativity of situation at work instead of positivity	2.79	1.36
Exposing negativity of work to colleagues	2.79	1.36
Problem exaggeration	2.54	0.81
Exposing negativity of work to outsiders	2.15	0.85

Source: Computed from data obtained from field survey, 2021.

Note: Very High=VH, High=H, Moderate=M, Low=L and Very low=VL, = Mean, SD= Standard Deviation

Factors affecting the performance of employees within the study areas

Table 4 shows the factors identified to affect employees job performance in the study areas, these factors were categorized into positive or negative factors. Considering the positive factors, the result revealed that there are “clear definition of roles of workers of the organisation” (\bar{x} =4.44), “availability of adequate training and development (\bar{x} = 4.38)” and “enabling work environment” (\bar{x} =3.94) to be dominant factors perceived to cause a higher level of job performance in both organisations. Furthermore, on the negative factors, results also revealed

that “ineffective dissemination of information” ($\bar{x} = 3.73$), “accumulation of stress at work” ($\bar{x} = 3.41$) and “a remuneration system that is not satisfactory” ($\bar{x} = 2.99$) are silent factors having negative effects on employees’ job performance in the study areas. Kemal (2017) and Kalu *et. al.*, (2018) viewed performance as a major multidimensional construct aimed to achieve results and has a strong link to strategic goals of organisation. Management style depicts the personality or image of the organisation. Managers tell employees how things should be done and what is important in the organisation. When managers develop consistent and articulated pattern of basic assumptions, they tend to have strong teamwork.

Table 4: Factors affecting the performance of employees within the study areas.

Statements	\bar{x}	SD
Positive Factors	3.48	
Clear definition of roles of workers of the organization	4.44	0.50
Availability of adequate training and development	4.38	0.76
Enabling work environment	3.94	0.52
Availability of promotion opportunities	2.58	1.57
Availability of adequate monetary compensation	2.08	1.14
Negative Factors	3.06	
Ineffective dissemination of information	3.73	0.78
Accumulation of stress at work	3.41	0.91
Remuneration system in my organisation is not satisfactory	2.99	1.27
Poor employee-management relation	2.77	0.85
Poor arrangement for transportation of employees to work and fro	2.38	1.50

Source: Computed from data obtained from field survey, 2021.

Note: SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U= Undecided, D=Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree, = Mean, SD= Standard Deviation

Hypotheses Testing: Testing the association between the socio-economic characteristics of the employees and their job performance in the study area:

The Chi-square analysis presented in Table 5 showed that there is significant association between Sex ($\chi^2=43.783$, $df = 1$), Educational level ($\chi^2=43.783$, $df =3$), Religion ($\chi^2 = 89.492$, $df =2$) and job performance. The null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_A) is accepted. This implies that there is a significant association between the socioeconomic characteristics and employees’ job performance in the study area. This finding supports Oso, Adebayo and George (2017) who opined that researchers with higher qualifications are more satisfied. Furthermore, there is no reason to believe, however, that preferences towards likeability in one’s manager are independent of other characteristics of that manager.

Table 5: Test for association between Socio-economic characteristics and employees' performance

Variables	Value	Df	Sig. level	Remark
Sex	43.783	1	0.000	S
Marital Status	0.019	1	0.892	NS
Religion	89.492	1	0.000	S
Educational Level	43.783	1	0.000	S
Rank	6.622	1	0.010	S

Source: Computed from data obtained from field survey, 2021.

Note: NS: Not Significant; S: Significant

Test for relationship between socio-economic characteristics and employees' performance:

The result of PPMC presented on Table 6 showed that there was no significant relationship between the age ($r= 0.038$) and the income ($r= 0.020$) of employees and their performance.

Also, the result showed a significant but inverse relationship between years of experience ($r= -0.478$) of employees and their performance, hence the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that as the years of experience on the job increases, their performances decrease. This may be because they grow too confident on the job as they assume to already know enough to carry out the job and by so doing, develop a lackadaisical attitude towards efficiency on the job.

Table 6: Test for relationship between socio-economic characteristics and employees' performance

Variables	Value	Sig. level	Remark
Age	0.431	0.641	NS
Income	0.020	0.803	NS
Years of Experience	-0.478	0.000	S

Source: Computed from data obtained from field survey, 2021.

Note: NS: Not Significant; S: Significant

Relationship between likeability traits of superiors and employees' performance in the study area:

The result of the PPMC test presented in Table 7 showed that there is a significant but inverse relationship between likeability of superiors ($r= -0.691^{**}$) and employees' performance, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. This showed that the likeability of superiors or leaders in the study area does influence the performance of the employees in the organisation. The results

imply that as the likeability of superior increases, the performance of employees in the study area decreases and vice versa. The result opined that as good as it is to develop and maintain interpersonal relationship with subordinates; it can lead to reduction in performance. This may happen when boundaries are not recognised in being friendly or likeable to the subordinates. Subordinates may develop unpleasant behaviours leading to poor performance in the organisation. In the same vein, attractiveness and expertise traits significantly influence employees' performance. Attractiveness trait of superiors had an inverse but significant ($t = -24.600$; $p < 0.01$) influence on employees' performance. That is, the more the subordinates perceive the attractiveness traits in the superior, the less the level of their performance and *vice versa*. Also, the expertise trait ($t = 4.239$; $p < 0.01$) of superiors had a direct influence on employees' performance; which implies that the more subordinates perceive the expertise traits in his or her superior, the better the level of their performance in the organisation.

Table 7: Test for relationship between likeability traits of superiors and employees' performance

Variable	r-value	Sig. level	Remark	
Likeability traits of superiors against employees' performance	-0.691**	0.000	S	
Result of regression analysis of likeability traits of superiors and employees' performance				
Predictor	Coefficients	t	Sig	Remark
Attractiveness	-0.917	-24.600	0.000	S
Expertise	0.158	4.239	0.000	S
R²	0.798			

Source: Computed from data obtained from field survey, 2021.

Note: ** = significant at $p < 0.01$; S = significant

Dependent Variable: Employees' job performance.

Test of significant difference in likeability traits of superiors and their job performance between the selected organisations

Results in Table 8 showed the significant difference in the likeability traits of superiors and the level of job performance between the organisations under study, that is, Ogun Oshun River Basin Development Authority (OORBDA) and Animal care konsult. The result also revealed that a significant but inverse difference existed in the likeability traits of superiors in both OORBDA ($t = -3.449$, $p < 0.01$) and Animal care konsult ($t = -3.744$, $p < 0.01$). Also, there was significant difference in the level of job performance of respondents in OORBDA ($t = 8.418$, $p < 0.01$) and Animal care konsult ($t = 9.106$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a difference in the between likeability traits exhibited by the superiors as well as

the level of performance of employees in the study area. This is expected because of the difference in ownership of both organisations; OORBDA been a public-owned organisation while Animal care Konsult being a private agricultural organisation.

Table 8: Test of significant difference between the likeability traits and job performance in the selected organisations

Variables	Organisations	Mean	S.D	t	p-value	Decision
Likeability Traits	OORBDA	53.556	4.275	-3.449	0.000	S
	Animal Care	51.812	0.393	-3.744		
Job Performance	OORBDA	90.639	6.764	8.418	0.000	S
	Animal Care	97.435	1.180	9.106		

Source: Computed from data obtained from field survey, 2021.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that most of the socio-economic characteristics of employees in OORBDA and Animal Care Konsult Ltd did influence the performance of employees. Also, expertise traits of likeability were perceived more in superiors in the organisations. Likeability of superiors influenced the performance of employees. The implication therefore, is that organisations will function effectively when the management possess expertise traits so far the management does not become too slack in her approach to enforcing rules and other measures during optimal performance.

Considering the major findings and the conclusion of the study, these recommendations become important to engender effective employees’ performance which organisations should embrace:

1. Superiors should focus and improve on their expertise by engaging in trainings that improve their level intelligence, knowledge as well as competence as managers.
2. The roles of employees should be clearly defined to avoid overlapping of roles.
3. An enabling work environment is a *sine qua non* for effective job performance of employees.

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