

## Relationship Management: A Critical Organizational Success Factor among Hotels in Rivers State.

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**ABSTRACT:** Building a good relationship with an employee is the best way to close the employee's productivity gap. The Relationship Management set of competencies includes essential Social Skills. Developing others involves sensing people's developmental needs and bolstering their abilities—a talent not just of excellent coaches and mentors, but also out-standing leaders. The purpose of this paper therefore is to examine Relationship Management: A Critical Organizational Success Factor among hotels in Rivers State. The population of this study consisted of all registered and functional 3-Star Hotels in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Thus, our target population comprised of only 3-Star Hotels that are registered with the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (PHCCIMA) Rivers State branch. These hotels are also registered in the latest Rivers State Yellow Pages Directory 2013/2014. Preliminary investigation revealed that there are 269 registered Hotels in Rivers State (Yellow Pages Directory, 2013/2014) out of which 14 are 3-star hotels. 42 managers constituted the respondents of the study. Findings revealed a significant positive relationship between relationship management and organizational success factor and thus recommends that hotel management need to nature team spirit by clarifying roles and responsibilities, encouraging respect for each other's differences, spending time out together as a team, sharing plans, common goals and avoiding the blame game.

**KEYWORDS:** Relationship Management, Organizational Success, Hotels

### I. INTRODUCTION

Employees are the central point in the triumph of every organization. If the employees work together and carve up a good relationship with employers they can attain their tasks much quicker. Managing employee relationship is imperative and precious to the organizational success and achieving spirited benefit. The need to manage the relationships that exists between the employers and employees has been at the forefront ever since the beginning of industrial revolution. Effective employee relationship management is vital to the workplace, whether at the time of recruitment, during an employees' tenure or at the time of separation (Rose, 2008). Maintaining healthy employee relationship through effective management is a pre-requisite for organizational success. High job satisfaction is achievable with great working relationships between labour and management (Boyle, 2006).

Employee relationship management is an art which effectively monitors and manages the relation between individuals either of the same team or from different teams. Employee relationship management activities helps in strengthening the bonds among the employees and ensures that each one is contented and enjoys a healthy relation with each other in the organization. Improvements in the management of employee relationships in organizations brings more positive aspects to the firm than just increased employee motivation (Grant, 2007; Gegax & Grimme, 2006) and promises employees greatest possible satisfaction of their individual needs; while to the employers, it promises increased attraction, retention, motivation and performance of employees (Schweitzer & Lyons, 2008; Wargborn, 2009) and improves employee morale (Harrison et al. 2001). However, the effectiveness of such relationship management practices is perceived differently between employees and employers. Employees generally may be less constrained in their criticism of workplace relations than managers who are more directly responsible for them. This paper seeks to examine the essence of relationship management and its critical nature to organizational success.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Relationship Management

This refers to evaluating our values and norms in relation to those of other people around us for its impact on them. Our behaviors, actions, decisions and words on the people we leave and work with could either make or destroy our relationship with them (Goleman *et al*, 2002). Cheok and O'Higgins (2011) discussed relationship as "the ability to use awareness of one's own emotions and the emotions of others to manage interactions successfully. This includes clear communication and effectively handling conflict. Successful relationship building sets a safe backdrop for emotions and feelings to be aired and explored between workers and service users (Ingram, 2013). Since social awareness is about understanding others, relationship management is the means of relating with others in order to improve their performance and life (McPheat, 2010). Dakin and Taplin (2014) states that having people to talk is very good – you can learn from colleagues.

Effective employee relationship management requires cooperation between managers, representatives and employees (Clark, 2001). This calls for development of policies that help to maintain fairness and efficiency in the work place. Corporate culture provides a benchmark of the standards of performance among employees: it provides clear guidelines on attendance, punctuality, concern about quality, and customer service. Moreover, the management style of line managers directly affects employee relations, since line managers are crucial links to the human resource function and orchestrate the distinctive skills, experiences, personalities, and motives of individuals. Good management of employee relations in any business unit ensures schemes for rewards and recognition, transparent communication system and proper care towards employee grievances.

### 2.2 Effects of Relationship Management on Organizational Success

#### 2.2.1 Enhanced Influence

In context of emotional intelligence, influence refers to the ability to influence the decision making process of others around us for their very own good and this is made possible due to the possession of years of experience in varied fields, honesty, integrity, rich knowledge, leadership and having good intentions for them (McPheat, 2010). The sole purpose of influence is to enable followers achieve their goals and objectives and only emotional intelligence and social awareness can stop us from manipulating these people (McPheat, 2010). Jonas (2013) stated that becoming more influential entails gathering or learning rare, unique and highly on demand talent that companies are dying to have as part of their system and be a positive example to followers and use discretionary efforts wisely to enables other do the same thing to arrive at improved productivity and profitability for the company. Effective leaders need to be multipliers in order to bring out the best not only in themselves but also in those they are leading by portraying positive behaviors. The analysis of the people we hope to influence and how they make us feel gives a much clearer idea on how to approach them (Larsson and Wilde-Larsson, 2012). The choice of power source, communications skills, body language, assertiveness and building rapport are crucial for effective influence (Sturgess and Higson, 2013).

#### 2.2.2 Improved Leadership

Leadership in this sense is regardless of the position but can be at any level in the organization and top leaders have always been those with very high and strong emotional intelligence due to the ability to understand others, work with them, share the credit and so on. Though in relation to emotional intelligence, leadership refers to the ability to manage the emotions of others in order to have an effective employee performance (McPheat, 2010). Having a good understanding of what is good for others is a critical factor for the ability to successfully lead them to achieve goals and objectives (Schofield, 2014). Hogan (2014) argues that strong and effective leaders recognize the importance of every one of their followers and work closely with them by clarifying objectives so that they all can work towards a unified direction. But then, goals and objectives regardless of the project ought to be very clear to each and every one involved, so that they are aware of what they working towards and that deliverables are bound to change from time to time. Hogan further argued, that for leadership to be effective especially in teams, leaders need to beware of group think and identify and recognize the differences we all come with to work places such as profession, conceptual skills, background, communication abilities and so many more hence they need to turn this differences into organizational strength and opportunities.

Manmohan (2015) argues that since organizations are a group of people that require effective leadership, leaders need to be objective to their followers by understanding their situations and issues as it is, and not as it ought to be, so that they then have the right information at hand for choosing the right kind of leadership to implement because different situations warrant different solutions. Manmohan further mentioned that Autocratic, laissez faire, democratic, situational leadership styles are some of the styles at the disposal of effective leadership after identifying and understanding the situations face with. To decide on the best leadership style, leaders can engage followers in deciding together since they are involved and this can be treated as positive feedback from them and then the best style can be arrived at as mentioned by (Schofield, 2014).

### 2.2.3 Developing Others

The intention of developing others is also a way to develop ourselves through constructive feedbacks, more responsibility assignments, more achievable and challenging work, mentoring, coaching, effective leadership and so on as a result of our very own believe in our abilities and capabilities (McPheat, 2010). (McPheat, 2010) further contends that, this is only possible if we are not threatened by the positive progress of others, and only see it as a win-win situation for our own success, hence, the need to invest in others to build a sense of belonging and team work. As humans, all over the world we like to belong and be valued by others and not the valuable assets that we buy thus explaining why many organizations, religious affiliations, gangs, political parties, teams and so many more and therefore is very important that leaders recognize the efforts of employees and value them as important part of the organization which in turn improves their productivity, effectiveness and even themselves.

Manmohan (2013) posits that employees join organizations with prior set of skills, knowledge, experience and ideas and it is simply proper to train them on how do their work better in different organizations since every organization has unique ways of doing things and policies, rules and objectives differ and this initial training is internal, and training and development is not limited to the newly employed but even existing employees need it since technology is constantly changing, distribution channels are ever increasing, market competition is real. Manmohan (2013) further states that trainers need to understand trainees to gather knowledge about their understanding speed rate, and it should be left open to all and not selective and could be through active training, craft training, standing in for others at higher positions, off job training and so on

Hogan (2014) states that organizational citizenship yields smooth project management, happier and motivated teams that are very willing to go the extra mile and see the projects they are involved in through to the completion stage but then this is only possible if effective leaders and people around work towards empowering employees, colleagues and subordinates by working towards creating a dream work environment rich in information sharing, trust, recognition so that employees are able to deliver with minimum supervision. Hogan (2014) further states that creating this kind of environment entails several activities such as sharing goals, effective communication, delegation, trusting team members, encouraging participative contribution of ideas and constantly supporting and mentoring the team.

### 2.2.4 Effective Communication

Communication is appropriate in everything we do or plan to do, thus communication is a very vital skill in daily life interactions. Regardless of the form of communication, it is what enables us to gather information about and from others by understanding their reactions to issues which in turn enables us take the most appropriate and effective actions but then we have the task of being effective listeners (McPheat, 2010). Doulas (2013) states that we often make the mistake of thinking that other people see the exact picture we are seeing which is a big myth because unless we make it very crystal clear to others what we really want them to do, they will only work on assumptions of what we want, therefore, it is important to clarify tasks as leaders and as followers we need to seek clarity whenever it is not clear to us so that simple but expensive mistakes can be avoided.

Pickerden (2014) mentioned that relationship is either improved or broken through communication. Therefore there is need to give feedback at the right time, regularly, ask for feedback whenever it seems fit, know how to deal with negative response to constructive feedback because the ultimate goal of feedback in work environment is to improve communication thus resulting in better performance result.

### 2.2.5 Facilitation of Conflict Management

McPheat (2010) suggests that conflict management entails having emotional intelligence, because people must understand the views of parties involved without hurting their feelings. This is possible by gaining enough knowledge about the root cause of the issue at hand and then guide the parties involved towards an amicable resolution by ensuring that the parties understand each other's view in relation to the objectives and goals so as to have a win-win result. McPheat (2010) further mentions that as long as employees work in teams, the environment is constantly evolving and employees come from different backgrounds, culture, beliefs, values in that conflict cannot be avoided whether good or bad thus the need to master the art of conflict resolution and experience has always been the better teacher.

From time to time employees get into disagreements, heated arguments and this have both positive and negative effects on employees hence, effective leaders need to take actions to arrive at equitable solutions by recognizing the major needs of humans and finding a way for proper communication in order to positively influence the conflict resolution process without taking any sides and more importantly a win-win result for all (Doulas, 2013). It is very important to leave personality attack in times of argument but rather focus on the issue at hand.

Employees need not adamantly insist on being right at all times because they could be wrong some times, however, there is need to involve *emotional literacy* the arguments and not be too egoistic and then you will be able to either minimize conflict or keep it under control (Crystal, 2013).

### 2.2.6 Facilitation of Teamwork and Collaboration

Teams need attention from members in other for it to work well .This will entail respecting the views of others in the team, team culture and using collaboration to build better team relations and a friendly work and performance environment (McPheat, 2010). (McPheat, 2010) further mentions that for this to work well, tasks and relationships are important, information and resource sharing are paramount, friendship and cooperation needs encouragement, individual strengths needs unification, team identity and pride needs to be fostered, support and help from each member of the team is a must and then finally there is need to identify opportunities to enhance teams ability. Hogan (2014) suggests that People work faster and smarter if they feel that they are really part of the team.

As mentioned by McPheat (2010), Just like the common saying “no man is an island”, no one indeed works in isolation because whatever we do is in some way connected to what others are doing. To this end therefore, teams are daily becoming even larger and leaders need to know how to handle them especially in their various stages ranging from forming to adjourning and as employees we need to find appropriate ways in fitting in this groups and relating with others with sole purpose of team effectiveness. Once there is clear knowledge of how to handle the stages of forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning then team formation and performance becomes very easy to deal with for the good of its objectives and purpose (McPheat, 2010).

For teamwork and collaboration to prevail, effective managers need to find a way to either maintain the motivation levels because the environment around us is harsh and it impacts our behaviors and attitudes daily and leaders could do this by recognizing and acknowledging beyond expected performances immediately and publically, know every member of the team by recognizing each and everyone’s strengths, involve the team in planning, be the first one to feel enthusiastic about team assignment so that the rest of the members follow suit, conduct regular interactive project review meetings and be very flexible with team members in order to accommodate both personal and organization issues and still be able to achieve the desired set goals within the acceptable time (Hogan, 2014).

Hogan (2014) also states that usually we are often faced with very unique situations that we have never faced before, lack the skill for doing something that we really want to do, want to work with someone with either better or acquire greater knowledge of things. Thus we need to collaborate with others in order to bridge this gap and be able to produce desire results and this could be through tools such as social media, video conferencing, virtual work stations, team and so many more. He further mentioned that with the continuous developing universe, collaboration has had better and wider impact than solo intervention, the world is becoming more and more interconnected and organizations have discovered that they can benefit much more through collaboration than being independent and this explains the collaboration between competitors thus we need to only be careful with who we choose collaborate with but of paramount importance are stakeholders, knowledge holders, your professional institute and its members and then crowd sourcing.

### 2.3 Relationship Management: A Critical Organizational Success Factor

According to Victoroff and Boyatzis (2012), people with improved relationship management are able to turn around poor performance into a desired one through their wide and positive influence on management, followers and all stake holders which then empowers them to have all the necessary resources at their disposal to enhance their output. They further stated that the more senior or more experienced employees and colleagues are in better position to guide, orient, direct and pull their juniors to do the right things through the vast experience and time length in a particular fields that the new entrants are trying to pursue and even teams become more functional when its comprised of people with high relationship management because they know how to relate with peers and colleagues and benefit from their different skills, competences and knowledge.

As much as being influential is very important to achieving organizational goals and objectives, not everyone with great influence will have desired outcomes but rather “it depends on situational diagnosis to select the proper type of influence tactic or strategy, as well as the interpersonal style and savvy to deliver the influence attempt in properly calibrated ways so that the execution results in the desired outcomes (Treadway, Breland, Williams, Cho, Yang& Ferris, 2013). Therefore this calls for the astuteness to read both people and situations to analyze and understand them in order to give us headway on how to approach and influence people and the situations that surround us in a more acceptable and effective manner (Treadway *et al*, 2013).

Job performance can be presented and used in such a way that it can end up influencing the followers to boost their view and perception of achievement and their impression of hard work in line with the organizations strategy. Therefore there is need to strategically posture, present, and leverage performance information in effective ways that lead to interpersonal power acquisition for the purpose of improving employee performance and achieving improved staff motivations (Treadway *et al.*, 2013.). Good relations with clientele, stake holders and colleagues result in improved business returns, employee satisfaction and happy stake holders which is a good thing for the reputation of the organization and competitive advantage (Agnes, Christine and Darryn, 2013).

The Relationship Management set of competencies includes essential social skills. Developing others involves sensing people's developmental needs and bolstering their abilities—a talent not just of excellent coaches and mentors, but also out-standing leaders. Competence in developing others is a hallmark of superior managers; among sales managers, for example, it typifies those at the top of the field (Spencer *et al.*, 1993). Although this ability is crucial for those managing front-line work, it has also emerged as a vital skill for effective leadership at high levels (Goleman, 2000b).The essence of the influence competence is practiced when handling and managing emotions effectively in other people, and so are persuasive.

The most effective people sense others' reactions and fine-tune their own responses to move interaction in the best direction. This emotional competence emerges over and over again as a hallmark of star performers, particularly among supervisors, managers, and executives (Spencer *et al.*, 1993). Star performers with this competence draw on a wider range of persuasion strategies than others do, including impression management, dramatic arguments or actions, and appeals to reason. At the same time, the Influence competence requires them to be genuine and put collective goals before their self-interests; otherwise what would manifest as effective persuasion becomes manipulation. Creating an atmosphere of openness with clear lines of communication is a key factor in organizational success.

People who exhibit the Communication competence are effective in the give-and-take of emotional information, deal with difficult issues straightforwardly, listen well and welcome sharing information fully, and foster open communication and stay receptive to bad news as well as good. This competence builds on both managing one's own emotions and empathy; a healthy dialogue depends on being attuned to others' emotional states and controlling the impulse to respond in ways that might sour the emotional climate (Muriuki and Gachunga, 2013).Data on managers and executives show that the better people can execute this competence, the more others prefer to deal with them (Goleman, 1998b). A talent of those skilled in the Conflict Management competence is spotting trouble as it is brewing and taking steps to calm those involved (Cherniss &Goleman, 1998). Here the arts of listening and empathizing are crucial to the skills of handling difficult people and situations with diplomacy, encouraging debate and open discussion, and orchestrating win-win situations.

Effective Conflict Management and negotiation are important to long-term, symbiotic business relationships, such as those between manufacturers and retailers. In a survey of retail buyers in department store chains, effectiveness at win-win negotiating was an accurate barometer of the health of the manufacturer-retailer relationship (Ganesan, 1993). Those adept at the Visionary Leadership competence draw on a range of personal skills to inspire others to work together toward common goals. They are able to articulate and arouse enthusiasm for a shared vision and mission, to step forward as needed, to guide the performance of others while holding them accountable, and to lead by example.

Outstanding leaders integrate emotional realities into what they see and so instill strategy with meaning and resonance. Emotions are contagious, particularly when exhibited by those at the top, and extremely successful leaders display a high level of positive energy that spreads throughout the organization. The more positive the style of a leader, the more positive, helpful, and cooperative are those in the group (George & Bettenhausen, 1990). The emotional tone set by a leader tends to ripple outward with remarkable power (Bachman, 1988).

The acceleration of transitions as we enter the new century has made the Change Catalyst competence highly valued. Leaders must be able to recognize the need for change, remove barriers, challenge the status quo, and enlist others in pursuit of new initiatives. An effective change leader also articulates a compelling vision of the new organizational goals. A leader's competence at catalyzing change brings greater efforts and better performance from subordinates, making their work more effective (House, 1988). The Building Bonds competence epitomizes star performers. Outstanding performers with this competence balance their own critical work with carefully chosen favors, building accounts of goodwill with people who may become crucial resources down the line. One of the virtues of building such relationships is the reservoir of trust and goodwill that they establish; highly effective managers are adept at cultivating these relationships, whereas less effective

managers generally fail to build bonds (Kaplan, 1991). The Collaboration and Teamwork competence has taken on increased importance in the last decade with the trend toward team-based work in many organizations.

Teamwork itself depends on the collective emotional intelligence of its members; the most productive teams are those that exhibit emotional intelligence competencies at the team and Collaboration is particularly crucial to the success of managers. A deficit in the ability to work cooperatively with peers was, in one survey, the most common reason managers were fired (Sweeney, 1999). Team members tend to share moods, both good and bad with better moods improving performance (Teuchmann, Totterdell & Parker, 1999). The positive mood of a team leader at work promotes both worker effectiveness and retention (George & Bettenhausen, 1990). Finally, positive emotions and harmony on a top-management team predict its effectiveness (Barsade & Gibson, 1998).

### III. METHODOLOGY

The population of this study consisted of all registered and functional 3-Star Hotels in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Thus, our target population comprised of only 3-Star Hotels that are registered with the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (PHCCIMA) Rivers State branch. These hotels are also registered in the latest Rivers State Yellow Pages Directory 2013/2014. Preliminary investigation revealed that there are 269 registered Hotels in Rivers State (Yellow Pages Directory, 2013/2014) out of which 14 are 3-star hotels (Cleartip, 2018). Preliminary investigations revealed that all the 3-star hotels have at least three (3) managers who are responsible for carrying different tasks. However, due to the nature of the variables of our study, and considering the fact that the population of study is not too large, the researcher used studied the whole population as a census, hence sampling was not used. Thus 42 managers constituted the respondents for the study.

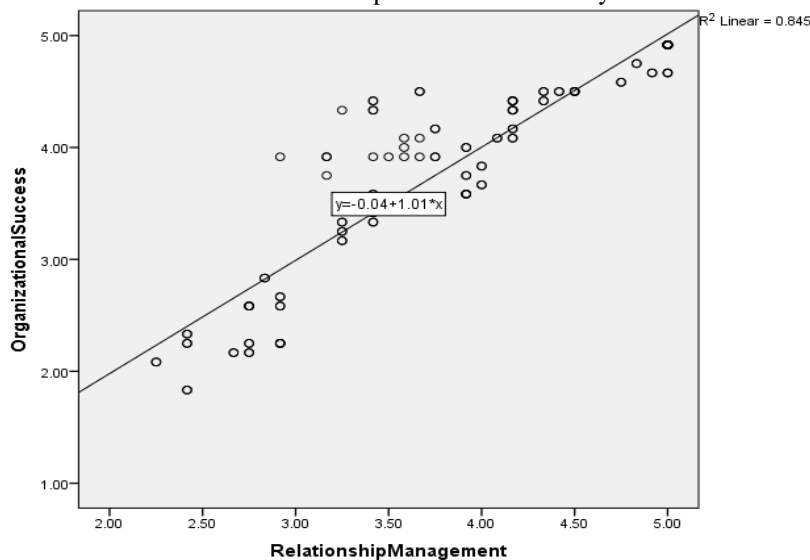


Figure 1 scatter plot relationship between relationship management and organizational success

The scatter plot graph shows at  $R^2$  linear value of (0.593) depicting a very strong viable and positive relationship between the two constructs. The implication is that an increase in relationship management simultaneously brings about an increase in the level of organizational success. The scatter diagram has provided vivid evaluation of the closeness of the relationship among the pairs of variables through the nature of their concentration.

Table 1 Correlation for the relationship between relationship management and organizational success

			Relationship management	Organizational Success
Spearman's rho	Relationship management	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.781**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	36	36
	Organizational Success	Correlation Coefficient	.781	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	36	36

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the result in table 1, it is obvious that there is a positive relationship between relationship management and organizational success of hotels in Rivers State. The *rho* coefficient 0.781 indicates that the correlation is strong and it is significant at  $p < 0.000 < 0.05$ . Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected. Thus, there is a significant relationship between relationship management and organizational success of hotels in Port Harcourt.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Relationship management requires definite line of authority which is a vital factor in information; it also aids good listening ability and encourages sharing of knowledge and accepting good and bad news (Goleman, 1998). Employees prefer to work with those managers who possess strong competency for relationship management. (Goleman, 1998).

The study makes the following recommendations:

- i. Hotel management need to nature team spirit by clarifying roles and responsibilities, encouraging respect for each other's differences, spending time out together as a team, sharing plans, common goals and avoiding the blame game.
- ii. Organizations needs to absorb the relationship component in its recruitment process and staff and training policy because relationship management abilities of staff result in improved staff performance and organization achievement the organizations goals and objectives.

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