

# Enhancing Employee's Commitment of Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State through Affiliative Managerial Humor Practices

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between affiliative humor practices and employee commitment (affective, continuance and normative commitment) of deposit money banks in Rivers State, Nigeria. A survey design was adopted for the study using questionnaire as the research instrument which was distributed to 285 employees working in the banks. The generated data were analyzed through the use of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient in order to test the relationship between the variables of the study through the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Windows version 22 within a significance level of 0.05. The findings showed that affiliative humor practices has significant influence on employee commitment vis-à-vis affective, continuance and normative commitment respectively, hence we recommended that managers in deposit money banks should apply affiliative humor practices so as to enhance their employees,' commitment.

*Keywords:* Humor; Affiliative Humor Practices; Employee Commitment

## INTRODUCTION

The current business environment has become very difficult due to increased competition and globalization which has prompted organizations to embrace more now than ever, value creation (Teehan, 2008). In today's highly competitive business environment, every organization is been confronted with new challenges in respect to how to sustain productivity and develop a workforce that is committed because no organization can achieve its vision, mission and objectives unless the employees in the organization are committed. The greater an employee is committed to his or her work the more he or she is likely to do more to deliver exceptionally on any given task (Zeynep, 2014). However, high rate of employee withdrawal behaviours within organizations generally and Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) specifically has become the order of the day which over the years has negatively impacted on employee commitment of those organization (Martin, 2004).

Furthermore, employees in today's contemporary world look forward to pursuing more than just a job. They often look forward for employment opportunities that promise an extension of their interests, personality and abilities. They want a variety of things from their jobs besides a pay cheque and a few fringe benefits and the ability of the organization to satisfy these needs will determine their degree of commitment to the organization (Agba, 2004). Employee commitment is very important to the achievement of the organizational goal. No matter how beautiful an organization's visions, missions, objectives, policies and strategies are, they need not just employees but committed ones for them to be achieved. In other words, employees are very important to the organization, hence managers of organization must provide environment full of excitement and conducive enough that will enhance their commitment. Thus, Romero and Arendt (2011) observed that humor practices such as the affiliative managerial humor practices in the organization can enhance employee commitment by providing lively organizational climate. Humor practice is an important tool of interaction and has been identified as a critical characteristic that is sought in employees, managers and leaders within organizations which is considered vital to organizational commitment (Teehan, 2008).

More so, Duncan, Smelzer and Leap (1990) expressed that a more playful work business environment that encourages the practices of humor brings about happier, healthier and improved social interactions among managers and employees which enable them to be more committed. Though it is commonly assumed that a manager's application of humor practices might have a significant influence on employee commitment however, moderately inconsiderable empirical proof has been accumulated that plainly back up this assertion according to Mesmer-Magnus, Glew and Viswesvaran (2012). Hence, there is need to study the connection between managerial humor practices specifically affiliative managerial humor practicesand employee commitment vis-à-vis affective, continuance and normative commitment of DMBs in Rivers State. This study would be of significance in the sense that it would expose the level of influence of managerial humor practices on employee commitment in Rivers State, Nigeria. It would help managers reap the benefits of committed workforce in the organization by providing guidelines for understanding and measuring employee commitment, and for designing and implementing effective commitment initiatives and policies. Based on this, the result of this research work would provide theories that would assist organizations, especially managers to apprehend the importance of managerial humor practices on employee commitment.

#### **Research Questions**

The research questions that guided this research work are stated as follows:

- i. What is the relationship between affiliative managerial humor practices and affective commitment of DMBs in Rivers State, Nigeria?
- ii. What is the relationship between affiliative managerial humor practices and continuance commitment of DMBs in Rivers State, Nigeria?
- iii. What is the relationship between affiliative managerial humor practices and normative commitment of DMBs in Rivers State, Nigeria?

## **Research Hypotheses**

The research hypotheses for this work are stated in the null form and they are as follows:

HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between affiliative managerial humor practices and affective commitment of DMBs in Rivers State, Nigeria.

HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between affiliative managerial humor practices and continuance commitment of DMBs in Rivers State, Nigeria.

HO<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between affiliative managerial humor practices and normative commitment of DMBs in Rivers State, Nigeria.

## LITERATURE REVIEW Theoretical Framework

The baseline theory adopted in this research work is the relief theory. The main advocate of this theory is Sigmund Freud in 1960, who opined that humor is applied as a defense means by which an individual maintain positive attitude with his or her environment (Cooper, 2008). Freud proposed that the relief theory focused on how laughter can release tension and psychic energy due to the fact that this energy gradually and constantly accumulates in the body which has no further use; hence it has to be dispensed. The process of releasing this energy is uncontrived (that is natural) and expresses itself in form of laughter. It focused on how laughter is of immense benefit for individual's health and that an individual experiences a pleasant sensation when humor replaces negative feelings like pain or sadness. Thus, when managers applies humor practices such as the affiliative humor style, employees will experience a pleasant sensation that will bring about laughter which is of enormous benefit to their health as a result enhances their commitment to the organization. This is because they will have the tendency to want to continue with the organization since the managers are making them happy.

## The Concept of Affiliative Humor Practice

Affiliative humor practices is a form of managerial humor practices. Bergeron and Vachon (2008) defined humor as a means of communication either verbal or nonverbal, which have the ability or power to invoke or induce laughter in an individual or group of individuals. In other words, humor practices are sent or spoken message or words as well as body languages that has the capacity to makes someone laugh and to feel happy. Furthermore, affiliative humor practices is non-threatening and non-hostile humor applied by managers which helps to lubricate social interactions in the organization. Managers applies this humor so as to make others excited and laugh in order to enhance relationships, minimize conflicts between employees and to make the atmosphere within the organization conducive and inhabitable (Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray & Weir, 2003; Kuiper & McHale, 2009). More so, Vaillant (1977) opined that individual employees who practice this behavior are often liked by other employees and seen as a non-hostile individual. Applying this non-threatening humor, a manager can reduce inter-personal conflict within the organization which helps to build and enhance relationship in the organization (Martin *et al.*, 2003).

This humor practices assist in the improvement of relationships with other employees in the organization. It greases the wheels of communication within the organization and helps to establish social interaction and relations with reduced conflict (Ziv, 1988). Managers using this humor give comic stories to lessen tension between employees and they are mostly liked by other employee which makes them to be non-threatening (Romero & Cruthirds, 2006). This type of humor practice help those in power to enhance their charisma with other individuals, increase the cohesiveness of the group and create positive environment in the organization. Affiliative humor applied by managers can contour strategy designed at enhancing closeness between employees in a way that is beneficial to the organization (Kuiper and McHale, 2009). Furthermore, this type of humor is like a social lubricant that enhances relationship between persons and builds a positive environment which brings people together.

## The Concept of Employee Commitment

Employee commitment has to do with the willingness and the desire of an employee to continue with an organization both now and in the future. It focuses on the belief of the employee in the core vision as well as goals of the organization as well as doing everything within his or capability to ensuring those goals are attained. Commitment is a force that holds an employee to an organization (Meyer, Becker & Van Dick, 2006). Employees with high level of organizational commitment provide a secure and stable workforce which help to provide competitive advantage to the organization. The commitment of employee can be of great benefits to the organization such as improvement in performance, reduction in absenteeism and turnover which leads to sustained productivity. The committed employee is more creative and is likely not to leave the organization as often unlike uncommitted ones. Thus to have a sustained productivity in the organization, the commitment of employee must be considered as an important factor by managers. The measure of employee commitment adopted in this study includes affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997) discussed briefly.

Affective commitment has to do with an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization. It is a state where by an employee attached him or herself with a specific organization's goals and wishes to maintain membership in the organization (Mowday, Richard, Steers & Porter, 1979). Employees with affective commitment continue service with organization because they want to do so. Employees who are committed to their organization emotionally believes in the objectives and values of the organization, works hard for the organization and have continuous intention to stay with it. Furthermore, continuance commitment is a function of the benefit and costs associated with continuing as an organizational member (Reichers, 1985). More so, Kanter (2008) defined continuance commitment as a commitment which takes place when there is a gain or profit related with continued participation of the employee in the organization and a cost related with the employee leaving the organization. In other words an employee will continue to be a member of an organization if he or she knows that the cost of leaving the organization is higher than its benefit. The cost associated with leaving the organization includes the threat of wasting time to get another job, effort spends acquiring another job, disrupt personal relationship within the organization and so on. Normative commitment has to with a feeling of obligation to maintain been a member of an organization. Hence, it is a disposition or willingness to remain with an organization based on the feeling that one ought to remain with such organisation which may be due to personal norms and values. In the same vein, Meyer and Allen (1997) expressed that internalized normative beliefs of duty and obligation make individuals obliged to sustain membership in the organization. In other words, employees who are attached to their organization normatively feel that they ought to remain with such organization and they do so because they should do so or it is the proper thing to do.

#### METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted in this research work is correlational study that examines the relationship between affiliative managerial humor practices and employee commitment. The time frame applied in this work is cross-sectional studies. The analysis unit is on employees in the DMBs in Rivers State; therefore, research survey design was used using questionnaire as the research instrument which consist of four respond choices with 5 Point Likert scales ranging from 1 to 5 indicating strongly disagree, disagree, indifference, agree and strongly disagree respectively. The predictor variable is affiliative managerial humor practices and it is used as a uni-dimensional variable while the criterion variable is employee commitment with three measures (affective, continuance and normative commitment). More so, the reliability of the research instrument indicates a Cronbach Alpha value higher than 0.7 which shows that instrument was reliable; specifically the values for affiliative humor practices = 0.975; affective commitment= 0.979; continuance commitment= 0.977; and normative commitment = 0.978; while face and content validity was used for the validity of the research instrument. The population of the study is made up of 1027 employees of Head office Branches of 17 Deposit Money Banks operating in Rivers State with sample size of 285 derived using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination. Furthermore, out of the 285 questionnaires distributed; 254 representing 89.12% were retrieved while the other 31 (10.88%) questionnaire were not retrieved. Also, 22 of the retrieved questionnaire representing 8.66% were scrapped because they were not filled properly. Hence, 232 (91.34%) of the guestionnaire retrieved were useful, it therefore served as the basis for analysis in this study. The data derived were analyzed through the use of Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient as well as t-statistics was used to test the relationship between the variables of the study through the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Windows version 22 within a significance level of 0.05.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULT

## **Relationship between Affiliative Humor and Affective Commitment**

**Table 1**: Correlations Analysis showing the relationship between affiliative humor and affective commitment

	Correlations			
		Affiliative	Affective	
		Humor	Commitment	
	Pearson Correlation	1	.967**	
Affiliative Humor	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
	Ν	232	232	
Affective	Pearson Correlation	.967**	1	
Affective Commitment	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	Ν	232	232	

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Result, version 22.0

Table 1 show that the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient (r) is 0.967. This means that a very strong positive relationship exists between affiliative humor practices and

affective commitment; hence, an increased use of affiliative humor practices will result in better affective commitment in the DMBs studied. The extent of the effect of affiliative humor practices on affective commitment showing t-value is shown in Table 2 below

Variables	Coef.	t-cal	sig. t	t-tab (0.05 <i>,</i> 228)	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F-cal	F-tab (0.05, 3, 231)	sig f
Constant Affiliative	5.002 .498	11.183 8.429	.000 .000	1.96	0.967	0.935	1195.53	3.07	0.000
Humor									

Table 2: Effects of affiliative humor practices on affective commitment

Dependent Variable; Affective Commitment **Source:** SPSS Result, version 22.0

The result in Table 2 above shows that the correlation coefficient is 0.967. It indicates that a significant and strong relationship exist between affiliative humor practices and affective commitment. The Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ ) = 0.935. It implies that 93.5% variation in affective commitment is explained by variations in affiliative humor practices. This indicates that this model has a good fit. The other 6.5% is elucidated by other variables not captured in this model. The F-calculated of 1195.53 had a corresponding significant F-tab of 3.07; we therefore conclude that the model is useful. Conventionally F-Cal = 1195.53 > F-tab (0.05, 231) = 3.07 hence the decision above is upheld. Also, affiliative humor practices had a calculated t-value of 8.429 and a corresponding Probability Value (PV) of 0.000. From the decision rule, since the t-calculated = 8.429> t-tabulated (0.05, 231) =1.96; then the null hypothesis is rejected and therefore there is a significant relationship between affiliative humor practices and affective commitment of DMBs in Rivers Sate, Nigeria.

#### **Relationship between Affiliative Humor and Continuance Commitment**

**Table 3:** Correlations analysis showing the relationship between affilliative humor and continuance commitment.

	Correlations			
		Affiliative	Continuance	
		Humor	Commitment	
	Pearson Correlation	1	.942**	
Affiliative Humor	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
	Ν	232	232	
Continuance	Pearson Correlation	.942**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
Commitment	Ν	232	232	

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Source:** SPSS Result, version 22.0

Table 3 shows that the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient (r) is 0.942. This means that a very strong positive relationship exists between affiliative humor practices and continuance commitment; hence an increased use of affiliative humor practices will result in better continuance commitment in the DMBs studied. The extent of the effect of affiliative humor practices on continuance commitment showing t-value is shown in Table 4 below:

Variables				t-tab				F-tab (0.05, 3)	,
	Coef.	t-cal	sig. t	(0.05, 228)	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F-cal	231)	sig f
Constant	3.417	7.987	.000						
Affiliative	.312	3.738	.000	1.96	0.942	0.887	1195.53	3.07	0.000
Humor									

Dependent Variable; Continuance Commitment **Source:** SPSS Result, version 22.0

The result in Table 4 above shows that the correlation coefficient is 0.942. It indicates that a significant and strong relationship exist between affiliative humor practices and continuance commitment. The Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ ) = 0.887. It implies that 88.7% variation in continuance commitment is explained by variations in affiliative humor practices. This indicates that this model has a good fit. The other 11.3% is elucidated by other variables not captured in this model. The F-calculated of 1195.53 had a corresponding significant F-tab of 3.07; we therefore conclude that the model is useful. Conventionally F-Cal = 1195.53 > F-tab <sub>(0.05, 231)</sub> = 3.07 hence the decision above is upheld. Also, affiliative humor practices had a calculated t-value of 3.738 and a corresponding Probability Value (PV) of 0.000. From the decision rule, since the t-calculated = 3.738> t-tabulated <sub>(0.05, 231)</sub> =1.96; then the null hypothesis is rejected and therefore there is a significant relationship between affiliative humor practices and continuance commitment of DMBs in Rivers Sate, Nigeria.

## Relationship between Affiliative Humor and Normative Commitment

**Table 5:** Correlations Analysis showing the relationship between affiliative humor and normative commitment

Correlations			
	Affiliative	Normative	
	Humor	Commitment	
Pearson Correlation	1	.939**	
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
Ν	232	232	
Pearson Correlation	.939**	1	
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
Ν	232	232	
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\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **Source:** SPSS Result, version 22.0

Table 5 above shows that the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient (r) is 0.939. This means that a very strong positive relationship exists between affiliative humor practices and normative commitment; hence an increased use of affiliative humor practices will result in enhanced normative commitment in the DMBs studied. The extent of the effect of affiliative humor practices on normative commitment showing t-value is shown in Table 6 below:

**Table 6**: Summary of regression analysis showing the effects of affiliative humor practices on normative commitment

Variables	es		t-tab				F-tab (0.05, 3,		
	Coef.	t-cal	sig. t	(0.05, 228)	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F-cal	231)	sig f
Constant	3.251	7.146	.000						
Affiliative	.408	4.598	.000	1.96	0.939	0.881	1195.53	3.07	0.000
Humor									

Dependent Variable; Normative Commitment **Source:** SPSS Result, version 22.0

The result in Table 6 above shows that the correlation coefficient is 0.939. It indicates that a significant and strong relationship exist between affiliative humor practices and normative commitment. The Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ ) = 0.881. It implies that 88.1% variation in normative commitment is explained by variations in affiliative humor practices. This indicates that this model has a good fit. The other 11.1% is elucidated by other variables not captured in this model. The F-calculated of 1195.53 had a corresponding significant F-tab of 3.07; we therefore conclude that the model is useful. Conventionally F-Cal = 1195.53 > F-tab (0.05, 231) = 3.07 hence the decision above is upheld. Also, affiliative humor practices had a calculated t-value of 4.598 and a corresponding Probability Value (PV) of 0.000. From the decision rule, since the t-calculated = 4.598> t-tabulated (0.05, 231) =1.96; then the null hypothesis is rejected and therefore there is a significant relationship between affiliative humor practices and normative commitment of DMBs in Rivers Sate, Nigeria.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings from data analysis revealed that affiliative humor practices has significant effect on allthe measures of employee commitment vis-à-vis affective, continuance and normative commitment; hence, fun should be basic to organizational work if DMBs must enhance the commitment of their employees. Fun is a very important factor of a highly efficient and effective organization, thus, Hudson (2001) observed that applying and encouraging the use of humor in the organization increases productivity as well as commitment. Also, Ford, McLaughlin and Newstrom (2003) opined that fun at work offers great benefits both to organizations which involves attracting new employees, improving communication among employees, enhance commitment of employee to the organization, reduced employee turnover and improve quality of employee productivity. Managers that practices humor in the organization may have reduced levels of employee absenteeism, higher satisfaction of their job, enhanced productivity and better employee commitment (Wright and Cropanzano, 2004). It

further provides employees with satisfaction, creativity, friendship, organizational citizenship, reduced anxiety, stress and boredom.

Furthermore, Holmes and Marra (2002); Greengross and Miller (2008) opined that affiliative humor practice in an organization help employees to make everyday tasks exciting and to coagulate close relationship between employees which play a vital role to their continuance commitment. The applications of affiliative humor used by managers in the organization abridge social distances, build positive environment in the organization and enhance the relationship between employees to enhance their continuous commitment. This suggest that affiliative humor practices make the working environment of organizations conducive for better work outcome which affect the commitment of the employees because employees will be more responsible to organization that have serene environment. More so, affiliative humor influences individuals' physical, psychological well-being (Greengross & Miller, 2008). This indicates that affiliative humor practices promotes relationships and provide the ability to contend with organizational problems that result in a better commitment.

By using this non-hostile and affirming humor style, managers can amuse others to enhance social interaction and reduce interpersonal tension (Lefcourt, 2001). This can go a long way in attracting and enhancing employee commitment to the organization. In the same vein, Smith and Khojasteh (2014) concur that affiliative humor practices helps to enhance the organizational commitment of employees, cohesion, and organizational effectiveness. More so, the appropriate use of humor can reduce interpersonal conflict and improve communication, and thus can be an effective management tool for managers to motivate their subordinates to be committed to the organization (Lyttle, 2007; Romero & Cruthirds, 2006).

#### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study empirically revealed that a significant and positive relationship between affiliative humor practices and affective, continuance and normative commitment respectively as measures of employee commitment if DMBs in Rivers State, Nigeria. From this findings, it is very clear that for DMBs in Rivers State, Nigeria to enhance the commitment of their employees, its managers must make the bank's environment excite-full and lively by applying affiliative humor practices. This is because affiliative humor practices serves as a form of social lubricant between individual by enhancing inter-personal interaction and provides a positive organizational environment and unites the organization's employees including the relationship between managers and employees. It is therefore, highly recommended that managers in the DMBs in Rivers State should apply affilliative humor practices as it play significant role in improving workers emotional well-being, hence their commitment by providing employees with excitement and comfort especially during boredom.

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