



BOTTOM POWER: FEMALE SEXUALITY AND IMPLICATIONS ON WORKPLACE COLLEGIALITY IN NIGERIA DEPOSIT MONEY BANKS

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Abstract

Female sexuality has been traced to have serious implication on workplace collegiality especially in deposit money banks in Nigeria. Female sexuality, which is expressed through appearance, verbal and non-verbal communications and interpersonal behaviors like flirting, engaging in sexual conversations, or sexual relationship have seen to have been as a result of female attractors like waste-hip ratio in females. These physical attractors have affected the workplace in a typical money deposit bank in Nigeria, where those who are favourably disposed to such physiques are unduly favoured by the male managers or decision makers. This has not only brewed envy and jealousy but has also promoted many work place deviance, decreased productivity and negatively affected collegiality in the workplace. This study was aimed at finding out if sexually-appealing female bank employees have undue preference above their colleagues who do not possess such and specifically to ascertain if sexual appeals affect workplace deviance and collegiality due to resentment of female workers who do not see themselves as the preferred ones. The study adopted a cross sectional and correlational quantitative design, complemented with a non-participant observation, from 400 female employees (aged 18 to 40) distributed in 10 banks in urban cities of Aba, Umuahia, Owerri, Okigwe and Enugu of Southeast Nigeria. Findings revealed that sexually appealing female staffs enjoy preference from male managers in deposit money banks and female workers with low sexuality resent those with high sexuality which have created environment for workplace deviance and promoted lack of team work. It is therefore recommended that more women should be included in the decision making process of these banks.

Keywords: sexuality, preference, resentment, workplace collegiality, workplace deviance, deposit money banks

Introduction

It is a generally held belief in many societies that women are considered affectionate, attractive and sexually appealing to men than the opposite. Based on morphological attractors, some women are sexually appealing than others and this sexual appeal is an asset which may be utilized to gain preference in the society. Baumeister and Vohs, (2004:340) opined that “Cultural systems tend to endow female sexuality with value, whereas male sexuality is treated by society as relatively worthless”. In many societies, women regard their body as assets which may be harnessed and exchanged for desirable opportunities through false advertisement that is geared towards gaining the attention of higher-status men. This false advertising is an indirect invitation to higher status.

From the arguments of Baumeister and Vohs (2004), one can identify a clear difference between sexuality and promiscuity. Sexuality which involves developed feelings, attractions and behaviours towards other people, does not imply sexual occurrences. From their argument, sexuality is the use of sexual teasing, flirting, seduction and false advertisements to influence, control and manipulate others. Sexuality is expressed through appearance, verbal and non-verbal communications and interpersonal behaviors including (but not limited to) flirting, engaging in sexual conversations, or sexual relationship (Williams, Giuffre & Dellinger, 1999).



Baumeister and Vohs (2004) and Hakim (2011) opined that sexuality includes physical characteristics utilized to gain attention for the furtherance of personal objectives. Shively and De-Cecco (1977) supported the above assertion by arguing that sexuality includes physical affections and sexual preferences for relationship with opposite sex. Hakim (2011) opined that female sexuality is a behavior initiated by women with sexual undertone for the purpose of achieving desired goals. He further stressed that this behaviour may be sexual or non-sexual.

In several societies, male and female sexual and non-sexual relationships are in most cases transactional and determined by the social status of men, which means that a woman will engage in sexual or non-sexual relationship with a man based on perceived benefits which may be monetary or non-monetary (Udeh, Uduka & Mbah, 2019). Williams et al (1999) supported the above argument that, attractive lower-status women exchange their beauty for some form of benefits from men of higher socio-economic status. This exchange is made possible through false advertisement of their physical attractors in order to gain preference from men who in their context are in decision-making position. In organizations, preferentialism occurs when managers assign tasks, makes recommendations for promotions, training and career development opportunities, create informal access to official information or permit subordinate female employees to influence the decisions of their male bosses.

Several studies on workplace sexuality have been critiqued by this paper due to the fact that they focused majorly on the discriminations against women, with less emphasis on how women utilize their sexual attractors to gain preference from their male managers. This study, therefore, advances the argument that workplace sexual relationship is not always negative as often portrayed and it is also neither sexual discrimination nor sexual harassment. Rather, it is the deliberate and voluntary sexual manipulation used as a tool to gain favour in the workplace as argued by (Udeh et al 2019). Workplace sexuality which sometimes appears as deviance, arises from the interplay of employees' unequal access to bureaucratic powers and authorities. These clarifications prove that female sexuality in the workplace is neither sexual discrimination nor sexual harassment, but a woman's willful use of her physical attractors to gain preference from workplace colleagues, especially those in decision making positions.

The nexus between preferentialism and collegiality was drawn from explanations by Ogunleye, Osagu, and Oluwajuyitan (2014) who defined preference as the bias given to a person on racial, ethnic or gender consideration. In the workplace, sexual preferentialism occurs when male managers show manifest or latent favouritism to female employees' especially subordinate female staff as a result of their personal, sexual and non-sexual relationship. Preference affects workplace collegiality because it creates the feeling of under-appreciation of non-favoured staff. Underappreciated or ill-motivated workers may become hostile to work environment and exhibit all manners of work-place deviance, if they feel that their chances of career success depends on personal relationship with managers. This often results to strife and mistrust which weaken workplace relationship.

On the other hand, Padgett (2013) defined collegiality as relationships enabled by mutual assistance, reciprocity of tolerance and non-interference behaviours which enable individual workers to take decisions that promote organizational success. Morphological attractors may therefore have a nexus on preference enjoyed by women at the workplace. Although these attractors vary among individuals and societies, the ideal morphological attractor among females was clarified by Singh and Young (1995) and Dixon, Grimshaw, Linkand Dixon (2011) who explained that physical characteristics such as narrow waist, long legs and medium



large breasts are attractors in female evaluation. Burk (2015) averred that traditionally, an ideal attractive woman is thought to be fair skinned, tall with light hair. This conception is central to the ideal European female beauty and noted for female obsession with meeting social expectations of beauty. Therefore, the level of attention given to a woman and the attention she elicits depends on her physical attractors such as waist size, hip size, legs and breast size.

However, among Africans, a woman is culturally perceived to be endowed with terrestrial beauty when she possesses the required curves, good hips, moderately large breasts, good and flaunting legs and facially attractive to the men even to the acknowledgement of fellow females. No wonder the female sexuality has become the brand icons of items that have no relationship with *femininity* on our media. Studies conducted by Singh & Young (1995) and Garza, Heredia and Cieslicka (2016) shows that the essential female physical attractor is the measurement of Waist-Hip-Ratio (WHR). Waist-Hip-Ratio (WHR) is the major reason for preference of varying physical shapes and sizes, which is more desirable to men than women. WHR and breast size are morphological traits which are associated with female attractiveness, and WHR is the ratio of waist circumference to the hips. It is calculated as: waist measurement divided by hip measurement, which is the size of a woman's waist in relation to her hips, including her buttocks. Therefore, the smaller the waist in comparison to hips, the more physically attractive a woman is. WHR is a major female physical attractor, hence the Nigerian parlance, *bottom power*. Therefore in the context of this study, bottom power has to do with the sexuality of women which involves their body physique characterized with their anatomical build-up which appeals to the opposite sex, facial beauty and physical carriage that motivates them to flaunt such endowments in order to attract favours from men in decision-making positions of the organization in line with the description of Singh and Gaza et al. Based on attractor standards outlined by Singh and Young (1995) and Bovet and Raymond (2015), this study examines the implications of female sexuality on workplace collegiality.

Problem and Justification for the Study

The financial sector is the heartbeat of a country's economy and the success of the banking sector is central to its performance. The banking sector is highly competitive in two major ways. Firstly among various industry actors, and secondly among employees striving to stay ahead of each other. To get more customers, Nigerian banks are reputed for employing women whose sexual appeal is a tool to lure depositors and these sexual appeals are needed to attract and retain such customers. Female sexual attractors do not go unnoticed by male supervisors and managers who also take corporate decisions that affect staff welfare, career growth opportunities and job retention of staff. Hence, decision makers are also attracted by morphological composition of these attractive female employees.

It is also believed that the female anatomy such as breasts, buttocks and legs are valuable assets worthy of male consideration (Plous & Neptune, 1997). Other physical attributes like beauty, sex appeal, social skills and good dress sense enable them to get men's attention for the purpose of enjoying preferential relationship and patronage (Hakim, 2011). Unfortunately, workplace collegiality and organizational success are usually on the decrease whenever managers evaluate employees based on emotional preference influenced by the sexuality of such staff rather than established evaluation standards. The absence of collegial indices such as altruism, conscientiousness, collaborations, and courtesy in the workplace generate dissension among coworkers. Dissension create hostile work environment between preferred female employees with desirable attractors and their colleagues, especially those with undesirable sexual attractors. This situation often reduces job commitment among employees because the derisive



message is that sexuality and emotional attachments are crucial for positive ratings from male supervisors.

Lower job commitment negates collegiality and corporate or organizational success because employees show commitment to their jobs when they realize that potentials for career growth, recognition, and job security are based on merit rather than female sexual appeal. When staff evaluation is influenced by sexual and emotional considerations instead of objective performance assessment methods, female employees who do not have the desired (WHR, breast and leg) shape required to get the attention of their male managers, (or those female workers who chose to abstain from sexual and quasi-sexual relationship with male managers), will feel uninvolved in their job. Employees who exhibit low job involvement will not commit their time, energy, capital and knowledge to the pursuit of organizational goals because, dissatisfaction lowers commitment, decreases turnover and causes loss of job-specific skills of valuable employees (Alam & Asim, 2019). Shah (2012) and Padgett (2012) argued that lack of workplace collegiality hinders organizational commitment and success and have the tendency to increase workplace deviance.

Therefore, in the commercial banking sector of Nigeria, the female sexuality consideration has become the yardstick for recruitment into this sector for easily meeting deposit-money targets by the marketing staff of these banks, promotion on the job, transfer to branches that can generate enough cash deposits from potential customers, as well as access to certain high-net-worth individuals who can deposit huge amounts of money in the banks. This study is therefore relevant because it sought to find out the preference of the female sexuality by the male managers and decision makers in the deposit money banks which has made them preferred above others and is seen to have a negative effect on the workplace collegiality and has therefore created a thriving environment for certain deviant behaviours like aggressiveness, abuse of process, mismanagement of funds, diversions through conspiracy and cover ups, financial crimes, and many more.

Theoretical Framework

The sexual economic theory and social exchange theory were employed in this study. Sexual economic theory was advanced by Baumeister and Vohs (2004). They analyzed sexual relationship in market terms by regarding female sexuality as an asset which can be utilized by women to gain political, socio-cultural and economic control in social relationship. The theory assumes that sexual advances are preserves of sellers (women) which may be patronized by buyers (men). Symons (1979:253) opined that, "everywhere, sex is understood to be something females have that males want". To remain relevant and ahead of other female rivals, women strive to enhance their physical appearances by showing off their sexual charms and dieting to attain the desirable morphological shape. Female competition is individualistic while men tend to compete in groups. Implicitly, female employees will seek to improve their attractors to gain the attention of male managers in order to advance their prospect. This desire for sexual and emotional relationship forms the basis for ensuing connection between men and women in the workplace.

The major psychological assumption of sexual economic theory is that, there is a disparity in sexual desire between men and women; men want sex more than women, and women will utilize available strategies to engage in both sexual and non-sexual relationship for self-benefit (Baumeister, Reynolds, Winegard & Vohs, 2017). Men (buyers) typically demand sex than women, while women (sellers) have greater control in the transaction, and can request that the



other person improves the deal by offering additional incentives or concession (Waller & Hill, 1951). This request may be for promotion, transfers to viable branches, access to official information, influence over managers' decisions and other benefits. Since morphological compositions are believed to be female asset (Plous & Neptune, 1997; Dixson, et al, 2011), women with desirable attractors including narrow waist, long legs and medium large breasts may develop easier relationship with male managers in order to gain undue favour at the workplace. This relationship may be sexual or non-sexual. That is, while male managers develop emotional attachment towards females, female employees may offer sex or affection in return in order to have undue advantage.

Sexual Economic theory complements George Homan's Social Exchange theory propounded in 1958. Social exchange theory treats human interaction as series of social transactions (Mitchell, Cropanzano & Quisenberry, 2012). Social exchange explains that interactions between persons bring about exchange of resources which could be material or non-material. The theory posits that resources are bartered through a process of reciprocity. In this sense, flirting, and conspicuous display of attractors may be regarded as an attractive offer from female subordinates to male managers or decision makers. In fact, male managers react to the actions of female subordinates based on their interpretations of these offers. Social exchange contains at least three parts – an initiating action, a relationship between parties, and a reciprocating response. An initiating action may be the display of female sexual and non-sexual behaviors, especially those that reveal physical attractors. A sexual or non-sexual relationship may ensue and a male manager may offer positive recommendation and subtle privileges for sexual gratification or affection to certain female workers without recourse to standard organizational procedures. After all, that is the essence of preferentialism.

Objectives of the Study

This study is specifically aimed to uncover whether sexually appealing female workers enjoy preference from male managers in deposit money banks; and if female sexuality affects team working deposit money banks; and to also ascertain if female workers with low sexuality resent those with high sexual appeal in deposit money banks.

Hypotheses

1. Sexually-appealing female workers do not get preference from male managers in deposit money banks.
2. Female sexuality has no significant effect on teamwork in deposit money banks
3. Female workers with low sexuality do not resent their colleagues with high sexual appeal in deposit money banks.

Methodology

The study is a cross sectional and correlational quantitative research conducted with the aid of non-participant observation, while data were generated with the aid of a 4 scale likert questionnaire. The target population were female employees (aged 18 to 40) distributed in 10 banks in urban cities of Aba, Umuahia, Owerri, Okigwe and Enugu of south east Nigeria. Judgmental sampling method was utilized for the study based on the morphological composition of respondent's using 0.7 WHR, breast size and leg shapes. Stratified sampling technique was employed to divide respondent's into 2 strata. The first stratum was made up of female workers who have the ideal WHR of 0.7 and below while the second stratum was made up of female employees with WHR of 0.8 and above. The quantitative data was processed with



the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20.0 while Chi-square (χ^2) was used to test the hypotheses in order to obtain the relationship between sexuality and collegiality among bank workers.

Research Results

Hypothesis 1: Female Sexual Appeal and Preference from Male Managers

Respondents	SD	D	SA	A	Total
HS	2 (2.67)	1 (1.67)	4 (1.67)	3 ()	10
LS	5 (2.67)	3 (1.69)	1	1	10
MW	1	1	2	6	10
	8	5	7	10	30

HS: High sexuality; LS: Low Sexuality; MW: Male Workers

Since $10.65 < 12.59$, we accept the (H_i) which states that sexually appealing female bank workers enjoy preference from male managers in deposit money banks.

Hypothesis 2:Female Sexuality and Teamwork

Respondents	SD	D	SA	A	Total
HS	4 (1.67)	3 (1.67)	1 (1.67)	2 (5)	10
LS	1	1	2	6	10
MW	0	1	2	7	10
	5	5	5	15	

HS: High sexuality; LS: Low Sexuality; ME: Male Workers

Since $9.986 < 12.59$, we accept the (H_i) which states that female sexuality affects teamwork among deposit money bank employees.

Hypothesis 3:Female Workers with Low Sexuality and Resentment

Respondents	SD	D	SA	A	Total
HS	6 (5)	3 (3)	0 (1)	1 (1)	10
LS	4	3	2	1	10
MW	5	3	1	1	10
	15	9	3	30	30

HS: High sexuality; LS: Low Sexuality; ME: Male Workers

Since $2.40 < 12.59$, we accept the (H_i) which states that female workers with low sexuality resent those with high sexuality in deposit money bank employees.

Discussion of Findings

From the above finding, it has been ascertained that sexually appealing female bank workers enjoy preferences from male managers and decision makers in deposit money banks in South east Nigeria. This finding corroborates the views of Singh et al(1995) who argued about the attractors in women that give them more edge than their counterparts who do not possess such attractors especially in work environment like the banking sector. The findings further validated the assumptions of the social economic theory of Baumeister and Vohs (2004) who opined that the female sexuality serves as the negotiating power for women’s socio-economic interactions with the men in any given society. The implications of this finding is premised on the ground that the *bottom power* of women which is characterized by their attractive body anatomy has granted many females unmerited preferences which have resulted in certain favours like influencing managers ‘decisions, having access to high net worth individuals who are major patrons of these banks through the referrals of managers who present these females to such individuals as marketing officers who can manage their deposits and transactions with the bank, as well as showing overt affections to these female workers to the detriment of those



who are perceived not to possess such “bottom power” due to their anatomical physiques. It is a common occurrence that even during downsizing of workers of these banks, the males and the not-too-sexually-appealing female workers are mostly affected while those who are perceived to possess this anatomy using the WHR indices of Singh et al are retained.

Furthermore, the second objective which sought to find out the effect of female sexuality on team work of deposit money bank employees also validated the hypothesis that the female sexuality affects the teamwork among workers. With a high figure of 12.59 calculated chi-square against the 9.986 tabulated value, female sexuality shows a high level of significance on team work of employees of deposit money bank in Nigeria. This finding supports the view of Shah (2012) and Padgett (2012) who argued that lack of workplace collegiality hinders organizational commitment and success and may have the tendency to increase workplace deviance. Since those with preferred sexual appeals receive more attention, affection, favours and other workplace incentives from the managers and decision makers, it goes to show that those who do not possess such hardly see the others as team mates based on the findings of this study and in the process, fail to put in their best in the workplace because they do not fit into the expected standard of ideal work mate. Non-participant observational findings from the 10 banks studied revealed that most of the female workers who do not fit into the sexually appealing “bottom powered” female workers with no attractive facial beauty were predominantly in the operations’ departments of the banks, thereby validating the views of Symons (1979: 253) who stressed the importance of female sexuality and for some women to remain relevant and ahead of other female rivals, women strive to enhance their physical appearances by showing off their sexual charms and dieting to attain the desirable morphological shape.

Therefore, those who do not possess such seem to be withdrawn, focus more on their job without actually anticipating any undue advantage from managers but focus basically on their merit and hardly perceive such female colleagues who have appealing sexuality as team players. Due to this lack of team work between the sexually-appealing and non-appealing female employees of deposit money banks in Nigeria as observed in this study, those with low sexuality resent those with high sexuality as validated in the third hypothesis of this research. This comes in the form of lack of advice, failure to assist when having difficulty with certain tasks, lack of cooperation on a collectively-assigned task, high level of individualism and general resentment. This perception and conception of having “Abraham as a Father” to assist a sexually-appealing colleague out of difficulty, where *Abraham* in this context is the manager or decision maker is common in the banks studied. This in sum affects the workplace collegiality and breeds a good ground for work place deviance.

Summary and Conclusion

From the above findings, it has shown that female sexuality has high level implications on workplace collegiality in most Nigeria deposit money banks. Such implications like preferential treatments, undue attention, favouritism, unhidden affection, negative effect towards building teamwork and consensus as well as high level of resentment have been attributed to the *bottom power* of the females who possess certain physical attractors like well-rounded hips, good legs, moderately large breasts, facially beautiful, good dress sense, sexually appealing and general good body anatomy or female sexuality. These attractors which are termed as the female bottom power have affected the workplace decisions, because the male managers and decision makers are attracted to these features which have been a predominant



feature of the Nigeria deposit money banks. However, the collegiality of the workplace has been on a downward nose-diving and workplace deviance has had its roots due to this social fact. It therefore indicates that merits, standard workplace procedures in the banks are many a times thrown above board because the sexuality of some of the female employees takes centre stage in many activities of these banks.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. There is need for banks to review supervisors' prerogatives in the areas of staff recommendation, and replace them with clear cut performance appraisal as indices for career growth opportunities especially in the areas of promotion.
2. Management of banks should prioritize regular transfer of male supervisors. This is to avoid the occurrence of informal relationships that may blossom into sexual consideration and undermine formal workplace expectations.
3. Unachievable and unrealistic money deposit targets which influence the female employees' conception of looks that the bank supervisors set for their female employees should be discouraged.
4. Deposit money banks in Nigeria should increase the promotion and inclusion of women into decision-making cadre like their male counterparts so as to de-emphasize the development of female physical attractors which affect workplace collegiality and deviance.

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