Emotional Intelligence and Performance Among Nursing Professionals in Tertiary Hospitals in Benue State of Nigeria

Dr Saasongu Ezekiel Nongo
Dept. of Business Management, Benue State University, Makurdi

1. Introduction

Intelligence is the ability to utilize knowledge and skills to solve societal problems. There are various types of intelligences. Studies however have shown that rational intelligence is no longer seen as a good predictor of employee' effectiveness. It is believed in recent times that emotional intelligence is a better predictor in determining employees' effectiveness (Goleman, 1995; Mayer & Salovay, 1995; Gorji &Moghin, 2012; Schneider, Lyons & Khazan, 2013).

Emotional intelligence relates to understanding, appreciating and relating effectively with other human beings so as to solicit commitment, motivation and cooperation in achieving organizational or individual goals. In the words of Pope and Singer (1990 p.25) emotional intelligence is the "intelligence of applying affection and emotion to guide the behavior, thoughts, effective communication with colleagues, supervisors, customers and the use of time in the course of doing work for improving results". It means that intelligence is seen from the perspective of organizational relationship. Goleman (1998 p.16) define emotional intelligence "as the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships". This definition has simplified the elements and scope of emotional intelligence and so made it easier to be understood.

Research in management and organisation show that people with high levels of emotional intelligence are more effective in organizational commitment, performance and team leadership (Aghadasi, Kiamaneshb & Ebrahimb, 2011; Gholami, Shams &Amoozadeh, 2013), enjoy a sense of job satisfaction (Wong & Low, 2002; Ayub & Rafif, 2011; Seyal & Afzaal, 2013) and more adaptable to stressful events (Guy, Newman & Ganapati, 2014).

Emotional intelligence is operationalized in terms of self-awareness, self-management, empathy, social awareness and social skills

Performance is operationalized in terms of task performance, contextual performance, adaptive performance and counter work behavior. This study is concerned with the contextual aspect of performance. Contextual performance is defined as behaviours that support the organization social and psychological environment in which the technical core must function. Behaviours used to describe contextual performance include demonstrating effort, facilitating peer and team performance, cooperating and communicating (Koopmans, Bernards, Allard & Henrica, 2013).

Nursing profession is an integral part of the health care system that encompasses the promotion of health, prevention of illness, and care of physically ill, mentally ill and disable people of all ages in all health care and other community settings.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Quite a number of studies (Goleman, 1995; Chaudhry & Usman, Sy, Tram & Ohara 2006; Chaudhry & Usman, 2011; Follesdal & Hagtvet, 3013; Madahi, Javidi & Samadzadeh, 2013) have been carried out globally on Emotional Intelligence and how it relates with several spheres of organizational life, thereby signalling that it may be worth the effort for the Nigerian health care sector to explore the extent of applicability of caring for sick clients with various physical and or psychological conditions which implies the heavy presence of emotions in the service delivery process. Salovey & Mayer (1990) posited that our emotions can either enhance or inhibit our interactions with people; they further posited that negative emotions can disrupt processes which implies that Emotions and Emotional Intelligence may affect the satisfaction enjoyed in the service delivery process and also enhance or inhibit the chances of performing contextually which involves going beyond the basic expectations on the job.

This study seeks to evaluate the relationship between Emotional Intelligence components and contextual performance with regards to the peculiarity of the Nigerian health care system, using nursing professionals in tertiary hospitals in Benue State of Nigeria.

1.2 Objective of the study

To assess the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and contextual performance of nursing professionals in tertiary hospitals in Benue State of Nigeria.

1.3 Research question

To what extent does Emotional Intelligence relate to contextual performance of nursing professionals in tertiary hospitals in Benue State?

1.4 Research hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence, and contextual performance of nursing professionals in tertiary hospitals in Benue State of Nigeria

1.5 Significance of the study

This study stands to be of benefit to academics since it is an empirical work with definite results regarding the relationship between the variables under study. It will hopefully lead to other areas of research on Emotional Intelligence especially within the Nigerian organizational context. The study stands to be of benefit to hospital managers and owners because a clear understanding of the relevance of Emotional Intelligence to nursing professionals will be useful in improvement of service quality. This study will also enable organizations understand the relevance of emotions in organizational life of the humanitarian services so that certain policies with regards to emotional labour can be enacted. The nursing profession also stands to benefit significantly from the study because it will bring to bear some salient realties about nursing practice in Nigeria. This study will also be of benefit to the general community, ultimately being the recipients of care from the professionals under study. The implication to the community is that any study that can enhance the quality of health care service received by the community is an effort worth making.

1.6 Scope and limitation of the study

This study targets population of nursing professionals in tertiary hospitals in Benue State of Nigeria. There are two tertiary hospitals in Benue State all located in Makurdi, the administrative headquarters of Benue State. The tertiary hospitals are Federal Medical Centre, and Benue State University Teaching Hospital, all located in Makurdi. The choice of nursing professionals is predicated on the need to understand why despite several efforts of organizations and the government, there seem to be problems with service quality received from Registered Nurses (RN) with five (5) years and above experience, because the nurse-patient ratio is high due to excessive patronage.

Even though the composite reliability was used to get more robust reliability figures for the factors under the variables, the research didn't consider the component of the dependent variable that had initial low Cronbach Alpha figure, even though it was boosted after computation of the composite reliability. It has however been recommended that such components be considered in a future study in this area.

An obvious limitation of the study is the fact that the population was limited to Benue State which suggests the results may not be generalized in larger context across the cultures of other countries and business environments which may give a different result on the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Contextual Performance.

2. Literature Review

Several scholars have written on the concept of Emotional Intelligence lending their wealth of knowledge to the development of the field, but it was when Goleman, in 1995 published his book 'Emotional Intelligence' that the concept became popular. Today, researchers have linked Emotional Intelligence to various organizational outcomes making Emotional Intelligence not only relevant for personal success but also for attainment of organizational outcomes like performance and job satisfaction. Scholars increasingly believe that an individual with high Emotional Intelligence practices self-motivation which leads to attainment of satisfaction and also a tendency for increased performance levels.

Researchers increasingly suggest the importance of Emotional Intelligence in predicting success in life and resilience to stress (Goleman, 1995; Gorji & Moghim, 2012; Schneider, lyons & Khazon, 2013). Research in management and organization also show that people with high levels of Emotional Intelligence are more effective in organizational commitment, performance and team leadership (Aghdasi, Kiamaneshb & Ebrahimb, 2011: Behbahani, 2011; Alavi, Mojtahedzadeh, Amin & Savoji, 2013; Corcoran & Tormey, 2013; Gholami, Shams & Amoozadeh, 2013), enjoy a sense of job satisfaction (Wong & Law, 2002 ; Ayub & Rafif, 2011; Seyal & Afzaal, 2013) and more adaptable to stressful events (Guy, Newman & Ganapati, 2014).

The pioneers of Emotional Intelligence posited that problem solving and wise decision making required both thought and feelings or logic and intuition. They further asserted that certain individuals possess the ability to carry out sophisticated information processing of emotions and use the emotions as a guide for thinking and behaving more effectively than others (Husin, Santos, Ramos & Nordin, 2013; Saeed & Rabiee, 2013). The facts of everyday life; when inspected critically indicate that a man has not same amount of one kind of intelligence, but varying amounts of different intelligence. His ability to think with numbers may be great; his ability to think

with words small. He may be a successful student of history and a failure at learning physics. No man is equally intelligent for all sorts of problems. Intelligence varies according to the life situation on which it works. For ordinary practical purposes, however, it suffices to examine for three "Intelligence", which we may call mechanical intelligence, social intelligence and abstract intelligence.

According to Goleman (1998) rational intelligence is not enough to succeed in life. In fact, it is Emotional Intelligence rather than Intelligence Quotient which has recently captured public attention. Research has shown that, it is no longer considered a good predictor of how effective an employee will be in work and life; rather it suggests that it is a better predictor in determining employee outcomes such as Authentic Leadership, Organisational Productivity, Management of Job Stress and Mental Health (Kiyani, Saher, Saleem & IIqbal, 2013; Lindebaum, 2013; Yusoff, Khan & Azam, 2013; Rangrazian, Ghorbanshiroodi & Khalatbari, 2014).

Emotional Intelligence is a concept that evolved out of the recognition that social emotional competencies are an important part of performance effectiveness and measures of professional success. It is conceptualized as the ability to identify emotions accurately in self and others, use emotions to reason, understand emotions and manage emotions in self and emotional situations (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Goleman (1995 p.12) described Emotional Intelligence as "another type of intelligence. This intelligence includes the identification of emotions of one's self and application of it to make suitable decisions in life. It is the ability to appropriately manage character and mental attitude and to control impulses; a factor stimulating the individual and inspiring hope in the person at the time of failure; empathy, which is the awareness of the emotions of individuals around you; social skills, which is coping well with people and controlling the emotions of oneself towards others and the ability to encourage and lead them". Goleman's definition is a broad one that covers many aspects of emotional management but is too long. The length of the definition makes it difficult to process all its components and make good sense out of it. It will take a more analytical mind to understand the definition.

Pope & Singer (1990 p.23) define Emotional Intelligence as "the intelligence of applying affection and emotion to guide the behaviour, thoughts, effective communication with colleagues, supervisors, customers and the use of time in the estate of doing work for improving results". Pope & Singer link the concept of Emotional Intelligence with intra organizational relationship. They give insight into areas that Emotional Intelligence can be very useful in increasing productivity in organizations.

Goleman (1998 p.33) further defined Emotional Intelligence as "the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships". Goleman's latest definition is concise and describes Emotional Intelligence in a very simple and understandable manner, so that at a glance an individual can understand what it is all about and gets interested in the subject matter. All the definitions of Emotional Intelligence outlined above state the fact that managing emotions is key in the management of our relationships with people. This easily relates to how we manage our workplace relationships. It is important for negative emotions to be curtailed so that they do not interfere with the attainment of organizational goals and objectives.

According to Mayer & Salovey (1993), many intellectual problems contain information that must be processed differently from non-emotional information. They posit that Emotional Intelligence could have been named "Emotional Competence" but they chose "Emotional Intelligence" so that they could link their framework to a historical literature on intelligence. They also said personality traits such as extraversion involve dispositions towards behaviour; intelligence involves people's abilities to behave. Although a trait such as extraversion may depend on social skills or result in it, a trait is a behavioural preference rather than ability. Knowing what another person feels, in contrast is a mental ability, hence Emotional Intelligence being defined as involving a series of mental abilities qualifies it as a form of intelligence.

According to Mcpheat (2010), inability of dealing appropriately with our emotions could lead to social, mental and even physical consequences, since our emotions are a way our body can talk to us. Not only will ignoring our emotions ensure unhappiness, it can lead to physical illness and even early death. He states that those with high levels of Emotional Intelligence tend to experience a healthy balance of feelings like motivation, friendship, focus, fulfilment, peace of mind, awareness, balance, self-control, freedom, Autonomy, contentment, appreciation, connection and desire. But those with lower levels of Emotional Intelligence tend to feel loneliness, fear, frustration, guilt, emptiness, bitterness, depression, instability, lethargy, disappointment, obligation, resentment, anger, dependence, victimization and failure. Emotional Intelligence has also been seen to be very relevant to organizational employee outcomes like authentic leadership, decision making, job satisfaction, stress and performance (Jorfi, Yaccob & Shah, 2011; Kiyani, Saher, Saleem & Iqbal, 2013; Shiri, Dehqani & Tara, 2013; Ybarra, Kross, Lee, Zhao, Dougherty & Burks-Sanchez, 2013; Papathanasiou & Siati, 2014).

According to Mayer & Salovey (1997), one of the significant benefits of regulating emotions is to improve on negative emotions and nurture positive and pleasant emotions. They emphasized that those who try to develop the skill of regulating their emotions are more able to compensate for negative emotional states which they may encounter in the course of discharging their duties as employees.

According to Barbuto & Story (2010) and Hess & Bacigalupo (2011), every individual and organization shares the goal of enhancing the quality of decision making and the application of Emotional Intelligence skills can assist in attainment of that goal. They assert that decision makers who are aware can accurately and honestly assess their strengths in comparison to others in the organization.

2.1 Concept of Performance

Job performance has been defined as the overall expected value from employees' behaviours carried out over the course of a set period of time (Motowidlo, Borman & Schmidt, 1997). In business, to perform means doing a job efficiently with maximum productivity. Performance can also be defined as the ability of an employee to reach the measurable goals and standards effectively and efficiently (Bing, Davison, Minor, Novicevic & Frink, 2011), attaining agreed results as being motivated by pay and other benefits (Boer, Hooft & Bakker, 2014). Kappagoda (2012) opines that when an individual experiences a sense of satisfaction with the job, there is impact on both task and contextual performance of such an employee. The rewards are often associated with the performance (Downey, Roberts & Stough, 2011; Diskiene & Gostautas, 2013). Individual performance is of high relevance for organizations and individuals alike. Showing high performance when accomplishing tasks results in satisfaction, feelings of self – efficacy and mastery. Moreover, high performing individuals get promoted, awarded and honoured (Busali, Baci & Kok, 2013). Career opportunities for individuals who perform well are much better than those of moderate or low performing individuals (Van Scotter, Motowildo & Cross, 2000). The outlined definitions opine that performance is property of behaviour or plainly stated, what people do at work; also that an employee's behaviour adds expected value to the organization that is, an employee's behaviour may be distinguished as helping or hindering an organization.

According to Motowildo, Borman & Schmidt (1997), performance can further be broken down into two distinct types:

Task Performance: These are the actions that contribute to transforming raw materials to goods and services, the things that are typically included in job descriptions. Examples include selling clothes, drilling holes or teaching a class.

Contextual Performance: These are the behaviours that contribute to overall effectiveness through supporting the social and psychological climate of the workplace. Examples include cooperating with teammates, diffusing conflicts and cleaning up the conference room (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993).

Contextual Performance can be seen as work behaviours that contribute to organizational effectiveness in ways that shape the organizational, social and psychological context that serves as the catalyst for task activities and processes (Bakr & Safaan, 2012).

3. Research Design

This research employed a survey design due to the fact that the researcher has no control over the independent variable that determine the value of the dependent variables.

3.1 Population of the study

The population of this study is made up of nursing professionals in the two teaching hospitals within Benue State of Nigeria. Federal Medical Centre, Makurdi has a nursing professionals population of 198 and Benue State University Teaching Hospital with a nursing professionals population of 147.

3.2 Sample size

Sample size of nursing professionals was drawn from the population using the Bartlett, Kotrlik & Higgins (2001) Table. The sample size as drawn from the Table is 240. The sample size of 240 is made up of 198 for Federal Medical Centre, Makurdi and 108 for Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi.

3.3 Sampling technique

To ensure effective sampling the Probability sampling procedure (Random sampling method) was used by the researcher, because it involves sample selection in which the elements are drawn by chance.

3.4 Instruments for data collection

Emotional Intelligence: The instrument which was used to assess the group was Schutte's Emotional Intelligence Scale (SEIS). The assessment was carried out on the basis of a 5 – point Likert like Scale (Schutte, 1998).

Performance: Was evaluated using the Individual Working Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) so as to test contextual performance (Koopmans, Bernards, Allard & Henrica, 2013). This study makes use of the contextual performance component of the questionnaire. It is used to test the performance of the professionals especially within the context of the behaviours that enhance the kind of service they render.

3.5 Data analysis
SPSS version 20 was used for processing of data. Descriptive statistics including mean and standard deviation was obtained before analysing the data obtained for the study.

The hypothesis was tested using Pearson's correlation. This method was used so as to describe the results in details for clear understanding of the relationships between the variables. The Pearson's correlation displayed the relationship or lack of it between the variables.

4. Data Presentation, Analysis, and Findings
4.1 Relationship between, Emotional Intelligence and Contextual Performance
The research was able to prove from Table 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 that there is a positive correlation between Emotional Intelligence, and contextual performance.

4.2 Theoretical findings of the study
This study found empirical evidence for the theoretical relationships posited in this research framework. This study found empirical evidence for the trait/mixed model of Emotional Intelligence. The mixed or trait-based model, takes a narrow approach to Emotional Intelligence combining emotional abilities with elements of personality, motivation and social skill (Goleman, 1998).

Results of this study have shown significant links between these trait based components of Emotional Intelligence and contextual performance. In summary, this study provides evidence to show partial support for significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and contextual performance of nursing professionals in tertiary hospitals in Nigeria.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations
5.1 Conclusion
In general, the data showed partial support for variables of the study with Emotional Intelligence taking centre stage in relationship with contextual performance of the nursing professionals under study. This study concludes that Emotional Intelligence is very relevant for nurses' team performance, openness to co-workers and patients while on the job.

Management of emotions, is of paramount importance to the nursing professionals even if his/her emotions conflicts with organizational objectives and goals. A nursing professional that manages emotions well enough will suppress the feeling of disappointment and hurt and still find a way of performing the job effectively and efficiently.

5.2 Recommendations
Based on the findings and conclusion of this research, the following recommendations are made:
1. Managers of Federal Medical Centre, Makurdi and Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi should invest in training nursing professionals on Emotional Intelligence since it has been found to be relevant for nursing practice. Training on Emotional Intelligence will reduce incidences of transferred aggression on patients and colleagues at work.
2. Emotional Intelligence should be a critical requirement for recruiting nursing professionals by Management of Federal Medical Centre, Makurdi and Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi. Emotional intelligence test should be administered to prospective nursing professionals. In addition Management of the studied hospitals should train and retrain existing nursing professionals to always learn to understand what patients are passing through and also understand that people around them too may be undergoing stress. This will help them perform better.
3. The Management of Federal Medical Centre, Makurdi and Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi should ensure that they coach nurses on the impact that working with others without bickering can impact on their individual work experience. Nurses should be encouraged to be open about their feelings on the job. This has been seen as a factor that can contribute significantly to increased contextual performance on the job.
4. The Management of Federal Medical Centre, Makurdi and Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi should ensure equity pay for the nursing professionals and also ensure that they enjoy fair chances of promotion on the job to avoid frustrations that could lead to transfer of aggression especially on patients. Managers need to create conducive working environments for these professionals. This will hopefully bring out the best in them.

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Biography:

Dr. Saasongu Ezekiel Nongo, became a Member of Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM) in 2005 and an Associate Professor of Management in 2015. He is a Nigerian, born in Agasha (Benue State) on the 21st January, 1969. His educational background, include;

Secondary School Education: Government College, Makurdi   -1986

Post-secondary education and degrees:

BSU Makurdi, Benue State, Makurdi. Nigeria – Ph.D. Management - 2011

ABU Zaria, Kaduna State, Zaria, Nigeria – Master of Business Administration – 1999

ABU Zaria, Kaduna State, Zaria, Nigeria – B.Sc. Busines Administration – 1991

ABU Zaria, Kaduna State, Zaria, Nigeria – Diploma in Accounting - 1988

Table 4.1 Descriptive statistics of Responses to the Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire

	N	RANGE	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
EI	240	4	1	5	4.39	1.164
EI2	240	4	1	5	4.45	.822
EI3	240	4	1	5	4.53	.839
EI4	240	4	1	5	4.17	1.048
EI5	240	4	1	5	3.40	1.374
EI6	240	4	1	5	4.54	.910
EI7	240	4	1	5	3.67	1.400
EI8	240	4	1	5	3.56	1.495
EI9	240	4	1	5	4.15	1.036
EI10	240	4	1	5	4.33	.964
EI11	240	4	1	5	3.77	1.218
EI12	240	4	1	5	4.20	. 963
EI13	240	4	1	5	4.05	1.127
EI14	240	4	1	5	4.52	.927
EI15	240	4	1	5	4.14	1.096
EI16	240	4	1	5	4.40	.919
EI17	240	4	1	5	4.55	.852
EI18	240	4	1	5	4.39	. 890
EI19	240	4	1	5	4.28	1.000
EI20	240	4	1	5	3.96	1.121
EI21	240	4	1	5	3.99	1.215
EI22	240	4	1	5	3.85	1.296
EI23	240	4	1	5	2.45	1.613
EI24	240	4	1	5	2.99	1.458
EI25	240	4	1	5	4.17	1.060
EI26	240	4	1	5	4.06	1.291
EI27	240	4	1	5	3.99	1.243
EI28	240	4	1	5	3.68	1.167
EI29	240	4	1	5	4.16	1.018
EI30	240	4	1	5	4.42	.857
EI31	240	4	1	5	4.19	1.042
EI32	240	4	1	5	3.72	1.288
Valid N (List wise)	240					

EI (Emotional Intelligence)
Source: *Field Work (2017)*

Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics for Response on the Contextual Performance Questionnaire

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
WP1	240	4	1	5	4. 36	.874
WP2	240	4	1	5	4. 49	.776
WP3	240	4	1	5	4. 44	.794
WP4	240	4	1	5	4. 28	.866
WP5	240	4	1	5	4. 37	.858
WP6	240	4	1	5	4. 34	.810
WP7	240	4	1	5	4. 44	.863
WP8	240	4	1	5	4. 27	.877
WP9	240	5	1	5	4. 20	.953
WP10	240	4	1	5	4. 21	.981
WP11	240	5	1	6	4. 56	.806
WP12	240	4	1	5	4. 16	1.130
WP13	240	4	1	5	4. 50	.907
WP14	240	4	1	5	4. 39	.905
WP15	240	5	1	6	4. 35	.867
WP16	240	5	1	6	4. 37	.977
Valid N (Listwise)	240					

Source: *Field Work, 2017*

Test of Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Employee Contextual Performance.

Table 4.3 Correlations

		Emotional Intelligence	Contextual Performance
Emotional Intelligence	Pearson's Correlation	1	.654***
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	240	240
Contextual Performance	Pearson's Correlation	.654***	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	240	240

Source: *Field Work, 2017*