

The impact of emotional intelligence on workers' behaviour in industrial organizations

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The study investigated the influence of emotional intelligence on workers' behaviour in industrial organizations. This was for the purpose of determining the appropriate management strategies that could foster improved job performance, job involvement, satisfaction and commitment among the workforce in Nigeria. The study adopted ex-post facto research design. A total of 652 respondents were selected for the study using proportionate stratified sampling technique. A set of questionnaires with five sub-scales was utilized for data collection. The hypotheses generated for the study were tested at 0.05 alpha level using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and t test statistics. The findings of the study revealed that there was a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and workers' job performance, job satisfaction, job involvement and organizational commitment. The study recommended that organizational support system should be encouraged in order to foster commitment, job involvement, improved job performance, satisfaction and commitment among the workforce. Labour and management education that could incorporate psychological issues that can enhance emotional intelligence such as burnout, stress, interpersonal relations and conflict management should be organized for workers on a continuous basis, in order to foster workers' retention and development.

Key words: Emotional intelligence, job performance, organization, workers' behaviour

Introduction

Scholars tend to view emotional intelligence as a factor with a potential to contribute to more positive attitudes, behaviour and work outcomes. This appeal probably fuelled the claim that emotional intelligence is a key foundation of successful job performance (Joseph & Newman 2010). Several researchers have tried to define or describe emotional intelligence, for instance, Ciarrochi, Chau and Caputi (2000) conceptualized it as an ability, while Schutte and Malouff (1999) viewed it as a personality trait. Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2000), however, asserted that emotional intelligence is a competency that is expected to augment positive attitudes toward work and drives positive behaviour towards better outcomes. Bar-on and Parker (2000) viewed emotional intelligence as non-cognitive intelligence which is defined as an array of emotional, personal and social abilities and skills that influence an individual's ability to cope effectively with either environmental demands or pressures. The current study adopted the concept suggested by Salovey and Mayer (1997), that emotional intelligence is a subset of social intelligence which involves the ability to monitor one's own feelings and emotions as well as that of others; discriminate among them and use such information to guide one's thinking and actions.

Although some research has suggested that there has been little empirical evidence to support the importance of emotional intelligence in the workplace, with most claims unproved (Ashkanasy, Hartel, & Daus 2002; Zeidner, Matthews, & Roberts 2004); there are studies that showed the role emotional intelligence plays with regard to job performance (Bachman, Stein, Campbell and Sitarenios 2000; Tischler, Biberman, & Mckeage 2002), management performance (Langhorn 2004), and turnover (Goleman 1998).

Job satisfaction, which has been described as a complex of emotional reactions to the job, has been linked both to situational and personal factors; that is, sociological and psychological perspectives. According to Heller, Judge and Watson (2002), situational factors include job-related conditions such as pay, opportunities for promotion, and working conditions and job characteristics, while personal factors include personality disposition, traits, self-esteem, motivation, and emotions (Dormann & Zapf 2001). To Adewoyin (2006) job satisfaction is a feeling or affective response to facets of a

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work situation. As Okedara (1995) found positive associations between job satisfaction and the construct of emotional intelligence; similarly the study by Alam (2009) showed that job satisfaction and dimensions of emotional intelligence are positively related. Alam (2009) then suggested that for firms to improve perceived job satisfaction among its employees, such a firm should ensure that employees are not only aware of their emotional intelligence but encouraged to make use of it. Researchers (such as Afolabi, Awosola & Omole 2010; Carmeli, Yitzhak-Halevy, & Weisberg 2009; Ghoniem, ElKhouly, Mohsen, & Ibrahim 2011; Sofian, Salim, Nasir, Arip, & Mustafa 2012; Wong, Wong, & Law 2007) found some evidence that emotional intelligence is related to job satisfaction from sample of participants ranging from police officers to teachers.

According to Rathi and Rastogi (2009), organizational commitment is an important determinant of organizational effectiveness. The concept organizational commitment has been constructed as incorporating: affective, continuance, and normative aspects. Continuance commitment is defined as the extent to which employees feel committed to their organizations by virtue of the costs that they feel are associated with leaving (Akintayo 2009). Affective commitment is positive feelings of identification with, attachment or/and involvement in the work organization (Allen & Meyer 1996). Employees with strong affective commitment will remain in an organization because they want to; employees with strong continuance commitment remain because they need to; employees with strong normative commitment remain because they feel they ought to do so (Akintayo 2009). Emotional intelligence has been shown to be an important predictor of organizational commitment, for instance researchers (such as Cichy, Cha, Kim, & Singerling 2007; Guleryuz, Guney, Aydin, & Asan 2008; Mohamadkhani & Lalardi 2012; Rathi & Rastogi 2009; Sarboland 2012; Velmurgan & Zafar 2010) revealed that emotional intelligence was significantly and positively related to organizational commitment. In this study, we examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and two forms of organizational commitment – affective and continuance. Emotionally intelligent individuals are optimistic, a trait that enable them to focus on the resolution rather than the reasoning.

Job involvement is a belief descriptive of the present job and tends to be a function of how much the job can satisfy one's present needs (Kanungo 1982). Employees do not get involved in the job only for self-relational interest fulfilment; they also get involved in the job because they let their emotions play a role. Becoming highly involved in the job is often a response to emotional rather than rational needs. Ashforth and Humphrey (1995) quote a cook discussing the centrality of being emotionally involved in the job: "I just love the activity ... I concentrate totally, so I don't know how I feel ... it's like another sense takes over." People are social who, through job involvement, fill the need for emotional experiences. Teaching work is often complex and challenging and seasoned teachers with a high emotional intelligence often get extremely involved in challenging experiences and complex situations that may not occur elsewhere. Seasoned teachers, for example, often remain beyond the required working hours even teaching students free of charge or without anticipating any immediate reward. They do this not for economic reward, but because it allows them to cope with those complexities that yield an intense emotional experience (George 2008).

Evidence supports a positive effect of emotional intelligence on the success of the individual at work (Goleman 2007). This is particularly important if we believe that management skills lie at the heart of leadership (Whetten & Cameron 2001), and specifically recognize the need to develop and acquire skills for teaching pupils and that emotional intelligence may have a critical role in the creation of effective leadership. A notable study conducted by George (2008) showed how the aspects of emotional intelligence – arousal and expression of emotions, use of emotion to enhance cognitive processing and decision making, knowledge about emotions and management of emotions – contribute to effective leadership. Carmeli's (2003) study indicated that emotionally intelligent employees develop emotional attachments to their organizations and thus become more committed to them. For the purpose of this study, it is important to note that although it is theoretically significant to show how each aspect affects performance behaviour, it is more accurate to recognize that skills come in groups and clusters, and that they support one another (Action Society Trust 1996).

The previous studies reviewed in this study focused on emotional intelligence as it affects the success of an individual in the workplace with specific emphasis on each worker's behaviour in isolation, mostly in developed countries of the world. The present study is designed to focus on emotional intelligence as it impacts on multiple workers' behaviour. Also, most of the findings reported in the previous studies required further empirical verification in order to establish the possibility of being generalized across races, regions, and countries. The premises of workers' behaviour in this study include job performance effectiveness, job involvement, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The reason for exclusion of other phenomena, such as efficiency, work-family conflict, withdrawal intention, industrial accidents, and productivity are in the main those of convenience. It was felt that to include these would have expanded the scope of research to a proportion which would have been unmanageable within the limit set by time and resources.

Against this background, the study investigated the impact of emotional intelligence on workers' behaviour in industrial organizations in Nigeria. This was for the purpose of determining appropriate management strategies, using

emotional intelligence, that could foster commitment, improved performance on the job, cooperation and compliance among industrial workers in Nigeria.

1.1 Research hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested for the purpose of the study:

- There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and workers' behaviour (job performance, job satisfaction, job involvement and organizational commitment)
- There is no significant difference between the behaviour of respondents (job performance, job satisfaction, job involvement and organizational commitment) from public and private organizations on the basis of emotional intelligence
- There is no significant difference between the behaviour of male and female respondents (job performance, job satisfaction, job involvement and organizational commitment) on the basis of emotional intelligence.

Methodology

The ex-post-facto research design was adopted to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and the workers' behaviour in industrial organizations in Nigeria.

The target population consists of all workers who had spent at least three years in the industrial organizations under study. The study was conducted at the premises of First Bank of Nigeria Plc., Nigeria Breweries Plc., Power Holding Nigeria Plc., United Africa Companies Plc., Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation and Nigerian Telecommunication Plc. A total of 652 respondents were selected to represent the two strata of public and private organizations using proportionate stratified sampling technique. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents, who had spent at least three years in the organizations under study. 398 (61%) of the respondents were male, while 254 (39%) were female. The age range of the respondents is between 25-60 years, with mean age of 25.82 and standard deviation of 11.61. However, 374 (57.4%) and 278 (42.6%) respondents were respectively selected from public and private organizations.

A set of questionnaire titled 'Emotional intelligence and workers' behaviour scale', which was made up of five sub-scales, was utilized for data collection. Section A of each of the sub-scales contains the socio-demographic information of the respondents, which include: Name of organization, age, sex, marital status, educational qualification, duration of membership of organization, etc.

Regarding job performance scale, Black and Porter (1991) scale was used as a measure. This measure contains five items (overall performance, ability to get along with others, completing tasks on time, quality of performance, and achievement of work goals) that were assessed on a five-point scale (ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). On the scale, a high score indicates a high reported worker's score. The instrument had a co-efficient alpha of 0.87. For the present study, the researcher reported a Cronbach reliability co-efficient of 0.89

Job involvement scale was based on a 10-item scale developed by Kanungo (1982). Sample items are: The most important things that happen to me involve my present job, Most of my personal life goals are job oriented, My active participation in planning and organizing organizational activities is recognized by my boss, etc. The measure was assessed on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The Cronbach's alpha value for this scale was 0.82, but for the present study, the researcher reported Cronbach reliability co-efficient of 0.85

Organizational commitment scale was based on the scale developed and validated by Allen and Meyer (1990). Sample items are: 'I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own', 'I do not feel like a part of the family at my organization', etc. The measure was assessed on a five-point scale (ranging from 1 = strong disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The Cronbach's alpha value for this scale was 0.73; for the present study, the researcher reported a Cronbach reliability co-efficient of 0.76.

Job satisfaction scale measure was based on a 6-item scale developed and validated by Tsui, Thomas and Edward (1992). Sample items: How satisfied are you with the nature of the work you perform, considering everything, How satisfied are you with your current job situation?, etc. The measure was assessed on a five-point scale (ranging from 1 = very dissatisfied to 5 = very satisfied). The Cronbach's alpha value for this scale was 0.68. For the present study, the researcher reported a Cronbach reliability co-efficient of 0.72

As far as emotional intelligence scale is concern, we measured self-report measure of emotional intelligence developed by Schutte and Malouff (1999) for several reasons. The measures used in this study consist of 33 items. Samples are: I know when to speak about my problem to others; I am aware of my emotions as I experience them (appraisal and expression of emotion); I present myself in a way that makes a good impression on others; and I have control over my emotions (regulation of emotion); when I feel a change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas,

and I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles (utilization). The measure was assessed on a five-point scale (ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The Cronbach's alpha value for this scale was 0.90; for the present study, the researcher reported Cronbach reliability co-efficient of 0.89.

The questionnaires were administered to the respondents at the premises of First Bank Nigeria Plc., Nigeria Breweries Plc., Power Holding Nigeria Plc., United Africa Companies, and Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation. Workers from various departments in the selected organizations in Nigeria participated in the study. The researcher, with permission from the personnel managers of the selected organizations, approached the respondents individually. The researchers explained the purpose of the study to the respondents. The questionnaires were administered through the heads of department in selected organizations. The respondents were assured of their anonymity and the confidentiality of any information being provided. However, of the 675 copies of the administered questionnaire, only 652 completed filled copies were collated and analysed statistically for the purpose of the study.

Results

From the analysis of the data collected, and of the stated hypotheses, the following results were obtained:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and workers' behaviour (job performance, job satisfaction, job involvement and organizational commitment).

Table 1 summary of Pearson product moment correlation showing the relationship between emotional intelligence and workers' behaviour (job performance effectiveness, job involvement, job satisfaction and organizational commitment)

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r	Sig
emotional intelligence	652	20.45	13.01		
job performance	652	20.21	10.23	.241	.001*
job involvement	652	23.51	9.73	.117	.421
job satisfaction	652	24.33	10.52	.123	.421
organizational commitment	652	21.87	11.41	.117	.001*

*significant $p < .001$

The results in Table 1 indicate that emotional intelligence had a significant positive relationship with job performance, $r = .241$, $p < 0.001$. Thus hypothesis one was not confirmed. Table 1 also revealed that a significant relationship exists between emotional intelligence and workers' job involvement, $r = .117$, $p > 0.05$. The hypothesis was not confirmed. Moreover, the finding showed that emotional intelligence did not have a significant influence on workers' job satisfaction, $r = .123$, $p > 0.05$. Thus hypothesis three was confirmed. Besides, the findings revealed that emotional intelligence has a significant relationship with organizational commitment, $r = .177$, $p > .05$. Thus hypothesis one was not confirmed.

Ho2: There is no significant difference between the behaviour of respondents (job performance, job satisfaction, job involvement and organizational commitment) from public and private organizations on the basis of emotional intelligence.

Table 2 Mean standard deviation and t-test-on variables by type of organization

Variable	Organizational type	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Sig
Job performance	Public	374	21.33	12.56	650	15.81	.000**
	Private	278	24.11	10.41			
Job involvement	Public	374	26.29	9.82	650	13.21	.231
	Private	278	26.14	8.77			
Job satisfaction	Public	374	27.34	11.23	650	9.90	.000**
	Private	278	28.54	10.67			
Organizational commitment	Public	374	28.38	13.39	650	11.36	.01*
	Private	278	34.46	12.16			

**significant $p < .000$

*significant $p < .01$

Table 2 shows that the respondents from private organizations were found to be demonstrating higher job performance effectiveness than respondents from public organizations, $t(650) = 15.81$, $P < .05$. Also, the result revealed that

respondents from both public and private organizations were found to be demonstrating the same level of job involvement, $t(650) = 13.21, P > .05$. Table 2 revealed further that respondents from private organizations were found to be higher on the job satisfaction scale than respondents from public organizations, $t(650) = 9.90, P < .05$. This finding could not be attributed to emotional intelligence. The organizational commitment was found to be higher among respondents from private organizations than those from public organizations, $t(650) = 11.36; P < .05$. The findings showed that there was a significant relationship between the behaviour of the respondents from private and public organizations except for job involvement.

Ho3: There is no significant difference between the behaviour of male and female respondents (job performance, job satisfaction, job involvement and organizational commitment) on the basis of emotional intelligence.

Table 3 Mean Standard Deviation and t-test-on variables by gender.

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	Sig
Job performance	Male	398	22.45	11.23	650	8.43	.432
	Female	254	21.17	10.87			
Job involvement	Male	398	18.67	10.34	650	6.47	.367
	Female	254	18.02	9.56			
Job satisfaction	Male	398	22.34	12.14	650	10.12	.631
	Female	254	21.78	11.39			
Organizational commitment	Male	398	20.46	12.68	650	7.57	.543
	Female	254	19.87	12.16			

Table 2 shows that the male and female respondents were found to be equally demonstrating job performance effectiveness, $t(650) = 8.43, P > .05$. Also, the result revealed that male and female respondents demonstrated the same level of job involvement, $t(650) = 6.47, P > .05$. Table 2 revealed further that both male and female respondents were equally found to be higher on the job satisfaction scale $t(650) = 10.13, P > .05$. This finding could not be attributed to emotional intelligence. The organizational commitment was found to be high among both male and female respondents, $t(650) = 7.57, P > .05$. The findings showed that there was a significant relationship between behaviour of the males and females.

Discussions

Hypothesis one postulates that there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and workers' behaviour (job performance effectiveness, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement). The hypothesis was not upheld. The finding indicates that emotional intelligence is related to the likelihood of respondents to be mostly effective and efficient on the job. In essence, emotional intelligence in either a public or private organization could positively influence job performance effectiveness among the workers. The findings verify Adewoyin (2006), Akintayo (2009), Baron and Parker (2000), George (2008), Mohamadkhani and Lalardi (2012), Rathi and Rastogi (2009) and Sarboland (2012), who reported that efficiency on the job among the workers has been found to be positively influenced by emotional intelligence. The finding of the study implies that emotional intelligence tends to afford workers the opportunity to perform their duties with ease without much supervision. This indicates that the poor performance and inefficiencies on the job from which the idea of productivity bargaining relationship derives is not an entirely adequate one for the present study. However, the finding disagrees with Action Society Trust (1996), which reported that no significant correlation was found between job performance effectiveness and emotional intelligence.

As revealed by the findings of the present study, the hypothesized research question, which stipulated that there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job involvement, was not confirmed. From the results, it was observed that the higher the emotional intelligence of the workers, the higher the level of job involvement. In essence, the measure of job involvement in an investigation of this kind is often day-increased productivity as a percentage schedule to be worked per week or year. However, the respondents on this ground have made objections to be used for this measure in that, in the case of job involvement it was due to genuine emotional intelligence, which may often be quite lengthy and thus dissipate the levels of job involvement, especially in private organizations. The finding agrees with the research of Allen and Mayer (1990) and Ashforth and Humphrey (1995), which reported that emotional intelligence tends to motivate workers toward utilization of the emotional skills at workplace even in a complex situation.

The findings further showed that as the level of job involvement is being used as an indicator of high emotional intelligence or low emotional intelligence; evidence compiled from short deliberate and low job involvement may be the

best measure of determining the level of job performance effectiveness in any work organization. The findings further indicate that bureaucratic control in public organizations are likely to be more stringent than in private organizations concerning low job involvement scale; consequently individual workers in the private organizations may have to seek opportunity from the superior manager to be more saddled with enriching jobs. The findings imply that it is quite possible that some public organizations will have quite a low level of job involvement compared to private organizations.

The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. The finding revealed that the two variables are not correlated. The findings imply that emotional intelligence coupled with structure and a reward system invariably tends to influence satisfaction among the workers. The finding corroborates Goleman (2007), Salovey and Mayer (1997), who submitted that as the emotional intelligence increases, the percentage of workers understanding themselves and of the incentive payment scheme decreases; and that this could affect interpersonal relations and the level of workers' satisfaction with the system. The findings imply that job satisfaction among the workers is not a function of their emotional intelligence; but rather affected by the task structure, group relationship and reward system.

Furthermore, the findings showed that there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational commitment. The hypothesis was not confirmed. The findings of the study indicate that male and female respondents were both committed to organizational goal achievement, even on the basis of emotional intelligence. The findings of the study tally with Okedara (1995), Allen and Mayer (1990) and Akintayo (2008), who reported a direct association between emotional intelligence and organizational goal achievement resulting from positive identification and loyalty to the organization, especially in private organizations. The positive association between emotional intelligence and organizational commitment might be due to the fact that employees with high emotional intelligence are better able to recognize, manage, and use their emotions.

Hypothesis three stated that there is a significant difference between the behaviour of the respondents (job performance effectiveness, job involvement, job satisfaction and organizational commitment) from public and private organizations on the basis of emotional intelligence. The findings revealed that the respondents from the private organizations were found to be demonstrating performance effectiveness on the job better than respondents from public organizations. The finding tallies with the studies of Adewoyin (2006), George (2008), Whetten and Cameron (2001), who reported higher effectiveness on performance scale in private organizations than in public organizations.

Besides, the result shows that poor performance on the job is more pronounced in public than in private organizations. The findings indicate that the more an organization is increasing in worker development, the more the frequency of improved performance and productivity. The findings of the study corroborate George (2008) and Goleman (2007) who submit that private organizations tend to experience higher levels of job performance effectiveness resulting from organizational structure, reward system and task structure than public organizations. The authors posit further that public organizations will have quite a low level of job performance effectiveness, job satisfaction, job involvement and organization commitment when compared to private organizations.

Moreover, the findings of the study revealed that respondents from private organizations experienced more job satisfaction than the respondents from public organizations, resulting from high technological innovation and high incentive payment schemes. The finding implies that as the emotional intelligence of the work group increased, the percentage of workers' understanding of the incentive payment schemes increased, and this could lead to an improved level of workers' satisfaction with the system, job performance, job involvement and organizational commitment to organizational goal achievement among the workforce.

Furthermore, the results showed that the respondents from private organizations demonstrate more affective and continuance commitment to organizational goal achievement than respondents from public organizations. The finding implies that respondents from private organizations tend to be more committed to goal achievement and demonstrate more emotional intelligence than respondents from the public organizations since the organizational structure of the former tends to foster compliance, supportiveness and cooperation on the part of the workers. The findings of the study are in line with Akintayo (2008) and Bar-on and Parker (2000), who posited that private organizations, where work is less divided, displayed a relative harmony between workers and employers that tends to induce commitment to organizational goals. It is only in public organizations that this relationship and organizational commitment is in an unhealthy state. In essence, organizational commitment (affective and continuance) is visible among workers in private organizations more than in the public organizations, resulting from the bureaucratic structure of the public organizations, compared to the organic structure of private organizations.

Conclusion

The study established that emotional intelligence has significant contributions to workers' behaviour, with corresponding implications for organizational goal achievement in work organizations in Nigeria. The study further submits that emotional intelligence is significantly correlated with workers' behaviour with peculiar patterns in public and private organizations. Thus, effective management of people and other resources in an organization requires consideration for effective behaviour that could be of consequence to emotional intelligence and the task structure of an organization. Also, centralization and co-ordination of the task structure of an organization with implications on goal achievement require high emotional-oriented task performance vis-à-vis the reduction of tension and work-induced stress in work organizations.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the contentions of Goleman (1995) that emotional intelligence should become increasingly valued in the workplace so as to retain talented and knowledgeable employees, the following recommendations are made:

- Training programmes, which are capable of incorporating some psychological issues that are work-oriented, such as: burnout, stress management, occupational safety, conflict management and inter-personal relations; and that intend to enhance emotional intelligence should be organized for workers and managers on continuous basis in both public and private organizations. This will definitely lead to improved performance, cooperation, commitment and satisfaction with work condition on the part of the workforce.
- Equally, recruitment of workers process should embrace conduct of aptitude test on emotional intelligence using standardized test and ensure that those candidate(s) that are high on emotional intelligence scale are considered for final employment. This will possibly guarantee effective job performance, job involvement, and foster commitment and compliance among the workforce.
- Similarly, organizational structure that could encourage equitable reward system should be encouraged in organizational management; in order to foster workers' job satisfaction, job performance effectiveness, job involvement and organizational commitment and virtually guarantee efficient and effective management of organizational resources for results.

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