EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, MOTIVATION TO WORK AND PREVALENCE OF WORK-RELATED CONFLICTS: A MIXED METHOD APPROACH

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Abstract

This study aimed to evaluate emotional intelligence (EI), motivation to work and prevalence of work-related conflicts among workers in a beverage manufacturing company. The study was enthused by the pertinence of EI, motivation to work and workplace conflicts in improving organizational performance. A mixed method approach was adopted, where employees participated in a mixed method survey. Construct measures for EI, motivation to work and work-related conflicts were analyzed using Spearman's rank-order correlation, logistic regression and principal component analysis, respectively. Findings show that employees are more comfortable managing emotional challenges with colleagues and specialists. Statistically significant positive relationships exist in how employees perceived, understood, used and managed EI in the workplace. Motivation to work was significantly predicted by employee's department and way of managing emotional challenges, χ2 (11) = 47.097, p < .000. Analysis of work-related conflicts identified two dimensions, aligning with Mayer and Salovey's model on using, managing, perceiving and understanding EI. The study provides an in-road towards understanding relationship among EI constructs, predicting motivation to work, ascertaining the dimensions of prevalent work-related conflicts. This is the first empirical evidence on organizational EI, motivation to work and prevalence of work-related conflicts in the beverage manufacturing industry. Organizations can increase productivity, motivate employees and reduce work-related conflicts by paying adequate attention to their psychosocial wellbeing at work and outside the workplace. Also, recognizing the relationship between different EI constructs makes it easier for organizations to deploy mechanisms that enhance motivation to work, while effectively dealing with work-related conflicts.
Key words: Emotions; Behavior; Employees; Work; Organization

Introduction

Researchers have recently focused on emotional intelligence (EI) due to its importance to employees' motivation and the prevalence of work-related conflicts (Khosravi et al., 2020; Mustafa et al., 2023; Yawson & Lewis, 2023). In the same vein, research has demonstrated the role motivation to work plays in facilitating organizational productivity (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Van den Broeck et al., 2010). Assessing prevalent work-related conflicts not only helps in identifying their dimensions but also facilitates how best to deal with these conflicts in the workplace (Chinawa et al., 2020). Also, the manufacturing of consumer goods like beverages involves a lot of interaction between individuals with varying backgrounds and personalities, which may lead to anomalies in the workplace. On that note, there are apprehensions as regards EI, motivation to work, and the prevalence of work-related conflicts (Carmeli & Josman, 2006; Serrat, 2017). This is mainly due to plethora of incompatibilities plaguing many workplaces in different sectors across the globe (Cowie, 2009; Mento et al., 2020; Olukayode, 2017). To this end, it is necessary to explicate pertinent research gaps by presenting a brief theoretical context with a concise review of relevant literature.

Mayer and Salovey's theoretical model of emotional intelligence (EI) has four dimensions: perceiving, understanding, using and managing (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Salovey & Grewal, 2005). Perceiving emotions depends on the stimuli that humans respond to (Cowie, 2009). Understanding as a dimension of EI looks at how individuals are able to differentiate between the different emotions they feel from time to time based on their personal and social capacities

(Serrat, 2017). Using and managing EI involves the capability of analyzing and regulating one's emotions (Salovey & Grewal, 2005). Being emotionally intelligent means that one is motivated to overcome numerous challenges that may arise in relating with other people, especially in challenging work environments (Trigueros et al., 2020). Using a problem-solving approach, Jordan and Troth (2004) identified significant relationships between employees' EI and overall team performance, which was also pertinent to how conflicts are resolved. According to Carmeli and Josman (2006), EI management, perception, understanding and use in the workplace enhance productivity and organizational citizenship behavior. Khosravi et al. (2020) researched EI and employee project performance and determined that a positive relationship between several EI constructs, indicating that emotionally intelligent employees are usually associated with better organizational performance.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): There are statistically significant relationships in how employees perceive, understand, use and manage EI in the workplace.

Motivation to work can be intrinsic when employees have the drive to carry out their duties at work not necessarily because they are rewarded for their efforts (Oh & Roh, 2022). However, ensuring that employees are satisfied with working conditions may depend on factors like work hours, location and relevant demographics (Gilbert et al., 2018). More so, motivation to work has been significantly predicted by factors like employee department, workplace settings and job fulfilment (Basalamah & As'ad, 2021). A mixed approach using cross-sectional survey and longitudinal design in purpose-driven organizations found out that employees' motivation to work was predicted by age, gender and type of employment, with significant variations in the long term (van Tuin et al., 2020). Also, motivation to work has been found to be significantly predicted by demographic factors, as well as employee's generation and position within an organization (Deal et al., 2013).

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Employees' age bracket, level of education, department and way of managing emotional challenges can significantly predict motivation to work.

Assessment of work-related conflict has identified verbal abuse and confrontations as very prevalent (Chinawa et al., 2020). Also, workers face a lot of challenges in dealing with family and friends as a result of work issues affecting them, because those who worked longer hours were more likely to experience workplace conflicts (El Ghaziri et al., 2014). Incompetence and insubordination in the workplace may be attributable to inadequate qualification and poor communication skills of supervisors, which can result in work-related conflicts (Olabode & Rufus, 2020). In the same vein, employees operating in a dynamic work environment have been identified as experiencing more work-related conflicts like physical violence and verbal attacks (Akume & Abdullahi, 2013), which are attributable to high occupational stress (Makkar & Basu, 2017). Also, factors like gender, cultural affiliation, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation are pertinent in determining whether or not an employee is a perpetrator or a victim of conflict within an organization (Motsei & Nkomo, 2016).

Research Objectives and Conceptual Framework

Literature shows that studies including EI, motivation work, and workplace conflicts in the beverage industry have not been thoroughly researched. Furthermore, previous research has not used a mixed method approach to analyze relationships that exist among EI constructs, evaluate motivation to work using factorial predictions, and measure the prevalence of work-related conflicts among employees. In the present study, a mixed method approach was adopted because it provides a broad outlook that makes it easier to understand concepts and constructs that are have not been exhaustively investigated (Ajaegbu, 2020). Furthermore, a mixed method approach provides more robust empirical evidence that facilitates in-depth explication of EI, motivation to work and conflict management during beverage manufacturing. Due to the complex dynamics that affect organizational performance in any manufacturing company, a mixed method involving collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data enhances the research findings with significant contributions to the body of knowledge on psychosocial issues in the workplace.

This study is very significant because many years of economic sluggishness in Nigeria worsened by high inflation may significantly affect the emotional wellbeing of employees, dwindle motivation to work and increase the prevalence of work-related conflicts. In Nigeria, the beverage manufacturing industry is a key part of the fast moving consumer goods (FMCGs) sector which is a significant employer of labour in a country with high youth

unemployment (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). The work environment in beverage manufacturing is usually fast-paced and involves as lot of iterative processes which can substantially contribute to stress among employees, thereby leading to emotional instability. In addition, emotional instability affects employee EI which in turn reflects on their motivation to work. Also, lack of EI and low motivation to work can lead to the prevalence of work-related conflicts in the beverage manufacturing industry in particular and FMCGs sector in general. Hence, it is important to assess EI, motivation to work and prevalence of work-related conflicts in beverage manufacturing, which will serve as point of reference for top management in other sectors who are also affected by prevailing economic and psychosocial challenges in Nigerian workplaces. Therefore, the study evaluates EI, motivation to work and work-related conflicts among employees in a beverage manufacturing company. The study objectives are to: (1.) assess relationships in how employees perceive, understand, use and manage EI in the workplace; (2.) predict motivation work based on employees' age bracket, level of education, department and way of managing emotional challenges; (3.) determine the dimensions of prevalent work-related conflicts in the workplace.

In testing the first hypothesis, eleven constructs (EI-1: Anger, EI-2: Indifference, EI-3: Tears, EI-4: Violence, EI-5: Feeling, EI-6: Analysis, EI-7: Desire, EI-8: Profit, EI-9: Reputation, EI-10: Safety, EI-11: Sanctions) (see Figure 1). In determining these constructs, the four-dimension EI model (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Salovey & Grewal, 2005) was interpreted and modified to fit with commonalities applicable to a beverage company.

Figure 1
Proposed Conceptual Framework for H1
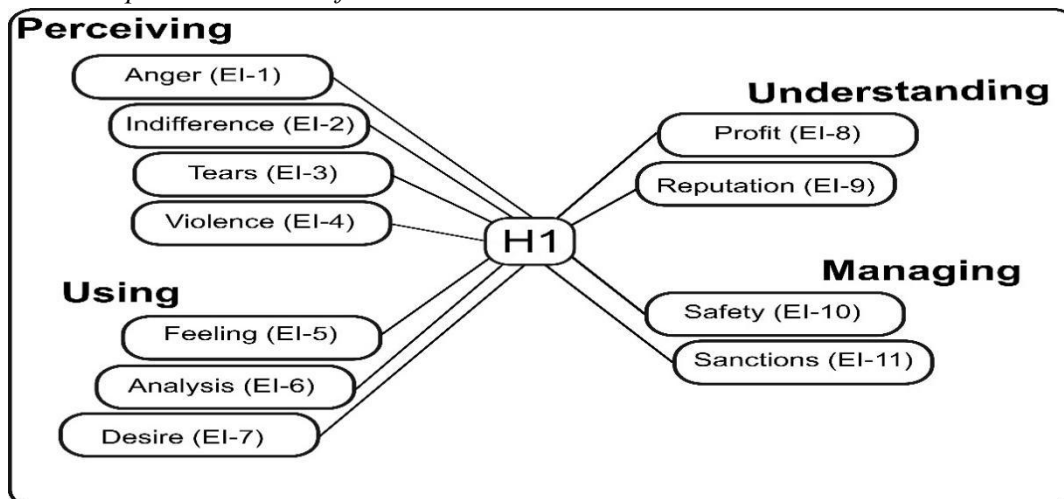
For the second hypothesis (see Figure 2), four major categories of independent variables were used to predict the likelihood of being motivated to work despite workplace challenges: age (18-35, 30-50, more than 50), level of education (Informal, Primary, Secondary, Degree), employees' department (Human resource, Production, Sales, Technical) and ways of managing emotional challenges (Colleagues, Family, Friends, Specialist). These variables were selected because previous studies have applied them to predict motivation to work (Basalamah & As'ad, 2021; Deal et al., 2013; Motsei & Nkomo, 2016; van Tuin et al., 2020).

Figure 2
Proposed Conceptual Framework for H2
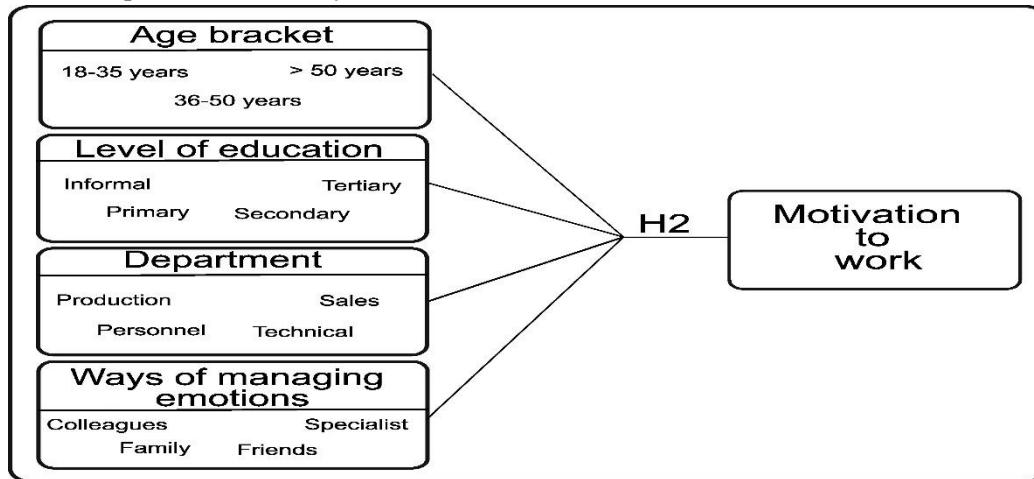
In assessing the prevalence of work-related conflicts, eight variables (physical violence, verbal confrontations, insubordination, incompetence, cultural conflicts, religious conflicts, gender conflicts, and sexual conflicts) were selected for analysis. These variables were deemed appropriate due to their relevance in literature (Akume & Abdullahi, 2013; Chinawa et al., 2020; Trigueros et al., 2020).

Methodology

Mixed method approach was applied where a self-administered survey (using a structured questionnaire) and personal in-depth interviews (IDI) were used for data collection. Furthermore, quantitative and qualitative data were applied in order to complement and validate results from both methods. Population of the study comprised workers in a beverage company located in Owerri industrial estate, Nigeria. The company specializes in the production, packaging and distribution of non-alcoholic beverages (fizzy drinks and fruit juices). There are four departments in the company: sales, production, human resources and technical. Field visitations and interactions with company officials determined that there are about 450 employees in the company, including contract and casual workers. Mathematically, the sample size was calculated with the following formula:

$$\text{Sample size} = \frac{\frac{z^2 * p\,(1-p)}{e^2}}{\left(\frac{z^2 * p\,(1-p)}{e^2 N}\right)}$$

Where: N = study population; e = margin of error; z = z-score; p = population proportion

On that note, a sample size of 120 was determined from the calculation. Random sampling technique was used in determining the sample size of 120 workers, based on a population proportion, representing 20% of the study population (Oyeka, 2013). Out of the sample size of 120 for questionnaire administrations, 112 mail questionnaires were retrieved and used for analysis. Socio demographic characteristics of respondents to the study are shown in Table 1. For the qualitative data of the study, eleven (11) in-depth interviews were conducted. Interviewees were selected based on the number of respondents administered with survey questionnaires from each of the company's four departments. They include: four workers from the production department, three from the sales department, two from the human resources department and two from the technical department. Also, each age bracket had at least one interviewee while all interviewees had been working for the company for a minimum of two years. Questions asked during the interviews were open-ended and semi-structured; selected and modified from the quantitative questionnaire. The main aim for conducting interviews was to compare and contrast the interview results with those from quantitative survey. Qualitative data collected for the study were analyzed using content analysis method (Ajaegbu, 2020). In doing this, qualitative results were considered based on the themes of the study objectives, thereby linking them to the quantitative results.

Spearman's rank-order correlation was applied in analyzing the eleven EI constructs. Since Spearman's correlation analyzes relationship between variables, it was applied in the present study because we are trying to ascertain if the eleven EI constructs are related, as posited in hypothesis 1 (H1). Moreover, all the eleven EI constructs are ordinal in measurement scale, making Spearman's rank-order correlation suitable for the analysis. On that note, EI-1 to EI-4 examines how respondents perceive their emotions in the workplace (the questions: 'To what extent do you perceive emotional intelligence as anger, indifference, tears, violence?' EI-5 to EI-7 measures how respondents use their emotions in the workplace (the questions: 'How would you rate your use of emotions as feelings/analysis/desire?' EI-8 and EI-9 look at how respondents understand their emotions in the workplace; (the questions: 'To what extent do you understand your emotions as a way of enhancing company profits, your reputation?' EI-10 and EI-11 evaluate how respondents manage their emotions in workplace (the questions: 'To what extent do you manage your emotions due to fear of employer sanctions or safety for yourself and your colleagues?').

Binomial logistic regression was applied in forecasting the likelihood of being motivated to work despite workplace challenges, which is the dependent variable with a dichotomous response (Emetumah & Okoye, 2022). Hence, the question that the logistic regression model predicted was: 'Are you motivated to do your job effectively despite challenges in the workplace?' Response: Yes (1) or No (0). In addition, principal component analysis (PCA) was used in analyzing the prevalence of eight work-related conflicts. The essence of PCA was to determine the dimensions of work-related conflicts' prevalence in the beverage manufacturing company. In terms of collecting data from respondents on work-related conflicts, the following question was asked for each of the eight selected variables: 'How can you rate the prevalence of these work-related conflicts in your organization?' Response: very high (4), high (3), low (2), very low (1).

In validating the study instruments, a pilot study was initially conducted during one of several visitations to the company. The essence of the pilot study was to have a feel of the responses and make further corrections. Data collection was mainly during break hours and at the end of respective shifts, given that the company operates a two-shift system. Questionnaire distribution and retrieval, as well as personal interviews were carried out over a period of about seven months, between December 2021 and June 2022. Concerns with respect to informed and voluntary consent, non-injury, and confidentiality were fully observed during data collection. Also, ethical approval for study was gotten from a Departmental Research Ethics Committee.

Socio-demographics
Table 1 shows socio-demographic information of respondents that participated in the study. In terms of age bracket, more than 80 percent of the workers surveyed were older than 35 years, while about 51 percent were between the ages of 36 and 50 years. Information on level of education indicates that more than 90 percent of workers surveyed had secondary level as their highest level of education, while only about 6 percent of them had degrees. About 52 percent of survey workers were in the production department while sales workers, technical workers and human resources workers accounted for 18.8 percent, 15.2% and 14.2 percent respectively.

Table 1: *Respondents' Socio-Demographic characteristics*

	n	%	Mean	S.D
1. Age bracket				
18-35 years	19	17		
36-50 years	58	51.7	2.1429	.68256
More than 50 years	35	31.3		
2. Highest level of education				
Informal	16	14.3		
Primary	43	38.3	3.1429	.88894
Secondary	46	41.1		
Degree	7	6.3		
3. Department				
Human Resource	16	14.2		
Production	58	51.8	1.9286	1.12877
Sales	21	18.8		
Technical	17	15.2		

Results

In terms of how surveyed workers manage emotional challenges (see Figure 3), 41.1 percent of them manage emotional challenges through colleagues while 34.8 percent of them manage emotional challenges through a specialist. While 18.8 percent manage emotional challenges through friends, only 5.4 percent manage emotional challenges through family.

Figure 3: *Management of emotion challenges encountered in the workplace*
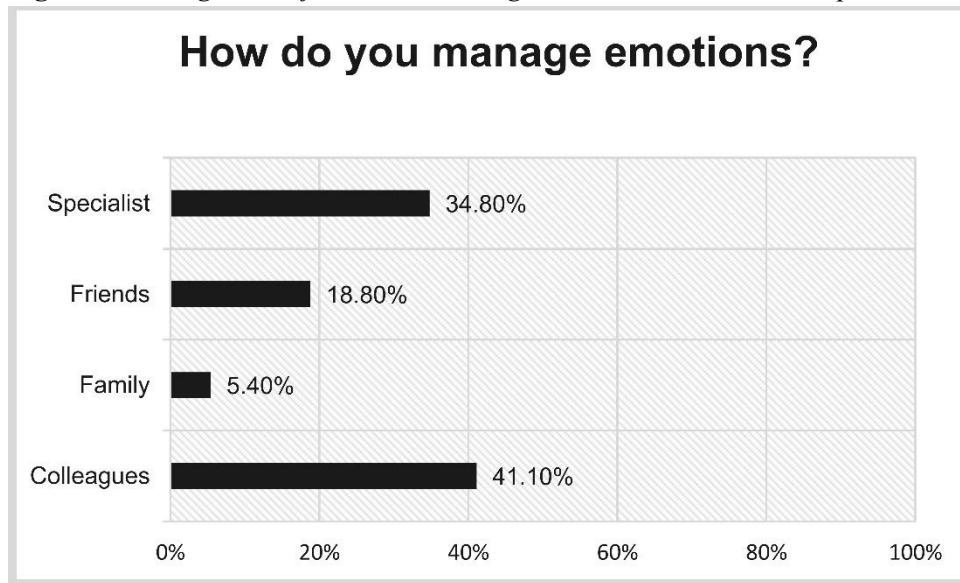
Data from interview results also aligned with these percentages. A respondent from production department said:
"I manage emotions through colleagues in our workplace. We talk about the poor salary because the salary is not enough for us…things in Nigeria now are very costly. Every time we sit together, we discuss about our salary and how poor it is".
Another respondent in the technical department said something similar:
"I discuss with my colleagues; we say to ourselves that we are not well paid. They also complain that they are not happy about the salary. Even so many of our colleagues have resigned. The payment is not good enough. The workload is too much for us".

Relationships in how employees perceived, understood, used and managed EI
Correlation of eleven EI variables produced a total of fifty-five correlations (See Table 2). Overall, there were forty-one significant inter-correlations, with thirty-one significant correlations at .01 level. Four variables (EI-2, EI-3, EI-5 and EI-7) were significantly correlated with EI-1 (Anger). EI-2 (Indifference) was significantly correlated with four variables (EI-4, EI-5, EI-6 and EI-7). EI-3 (Tears) was significantly correlated with five variables (EI-6, EI-8, EI-9, EI-10 and EI-11). With seven significant correlations (with EI-5, EI-6, EI-7, EI-7, EI-8, EI-9, EI-10 and EI-11), EI-4 (Violence) has the highest number of significant correlations (all at .01 level). The six variables (EI-6, EI-7, EI-8, EI-9, EI-10 and EI-11) significantly correlated with EI-5 (Feeling) were all at .01 level. Under EI-6 (Analysis), the five correlations (EI-7, EI-8, EI-9, EI-10 and EI-11) had positive coefficients which were all significantly correlated at .01 level. The four variables (EI-8, EI-9, EI-10 and EI-11) under EI-7 (Desire) had positive coefficients, which were all significant at .01 level. Under EI-8 (Profit), the three variables (EI-9, EI-10 and EI-11) had positive coefficients which were all significantly correlated at .01 level. Both variables (EI-10 and EI-11) under EI-9 (Reputation) had positive coefficients which were significantly correlated at .01 level. The correlation coefficient between EI-10 (Safety) and EI-11 (Sanctions) was positive (.603) and also significant at .01 level.

Table 2: *Correlation results of relationships between EI variables*

Var.	EI-1	EI-2	EI-3	EI-4	EI-5	EI-6	EI-7	EI-8	EI-9	EI-10	EI-11
EI-1	1.000										
EI-2	.211*	1.000									
EI-3	.229*	.103	1.000								
EI-4	.025	.212*	-.113	1.000							
EI-5	-.268**	-.246**	.080	-.456**	1.000						
EI-6	-.091	-.224*	.198*	-.354**	.749**	1.000					
EI-7	-.192*	-.332**	.080	-.536**	.714**	.616**	1.000				
EI-8	-.014	-.053	.257**	-.352**	.304**	.313**	.325**	1.000			
EI-9	-.008	-.081	.271**	-.361**	.333**	.294**	.382**	.684**	1.000		
EI-10	.031	-.126	.203*	-.247**	.233*	.233*	.644**	.552**	.644**	1.000	
EI-11	-.097	-.182	.285**	-.274**	.455**	.419**	.407**	.546**	.547**	.603**	1.000

Var. = Variable; * = significant; $p \leq 0.05$; ** = significant; $p \leq 0.01$.

Factorial prediction of motivation to work
In predicting motivation to work, four sets of independent variables (1. Age bracket, 2. Education, 3. Department, 4. Ways of emotional management) were used. Logistic regression results in Table 3 indicate that overall model was statistically significant, $\chi2\ (11) = 47.097$, $p < .000$.

Table 3: *Parameter estimates of the Regression Model*

Variable	Coefficient (B)	Standard Error (S.E)	Odd Ratio (Exp (B))	Exp (B) 95% C.I. Lower	Exp (B) 95% C.I. Upper	*p*-value
Age (Ref: > 50 years)			1			.464
18-35 years	.807	.792	2.241	.474	10.592	.308
36-50 years	.614	.564	1.848	.611	5.588	.276
Education (Ref: Higher/Tertiary)			1			.575
Informal	-1.277	1.020	.279	.038	2.060	.211
Primary	.340	.843	1.405	.269	7.342	.687
Secondary	-.272	.583	.762	.243	2.388	.641
Department (Ref: Technical)			1			.008*
Personnel	-2.326	.903	.098	.017	.573	.010*

Productions	-.080	1.083	.923	.111	7.707	.941
Sales	-1.634	1.034	.195	.026	1.480	.114
Mgt. of Emotions (Ref: Specialist)			1			.001*
Colleagues	1.426	.585	4.163	1.323	13.092	.015*
Family	-.922	1.136	.398	.043	3.688	.417
Friends	-1.761	.769	.172	.038	.776	.022*

Overall model fitness: Chi-square = 47.097, df = 11, p-value < .000
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test: Chi-square = 9.926, df = 8, p-value = .216
-2 Log likelihood = 104.577; Cox & Snell R^2 = .343; Nagelkerke R^2 = .463

 * = significant (p < 0.05)

Parameter estimates in the regression model (See Table 3) indicate that none of the categories under "age bracket" and "level of education" were statistically significant. Two out of the four categories under "Employee's Department" (Personnel: p = .010 and Technical: p = .008), as well as three out of the four categories under "Ways of managing emotions" (Friends: p = 0.22, Colleagues: p = .015 and Specialist: p =.001) were statistically significant. Under ways of managing emotions, the odds of employees who manage their emotions through colleagues being motivated to work despite workplace challenges, are 4.163 (95% CI, 1.323 to 13.092) times more than those who manage their emotions through a specialist.

Prevalence of work-related conflicts
Results on the prevalence of eight (8) work-related conflicts are shown in Table 5. The rotated component matrix that produced the straightforward structure derived in agreement with the interpretability criterion, was facilitated by Varimax rotation. Rotated components that are strongly loaded to components 1 and 2 are highlighted in Table 4. The values of the rotated component matrix for the prevalence of cultural, religious, gender and sexual related conflicts are strongly loaded (with the values of .613, .844, .980 and .868 respectively) to component 1.

Table 4: *Rotated Component Matrix for work-related conflicts*

Variable (Work-related conflict)	Components		Communality
	1	2	
Verbal confrontations	.127	**.831**	.707
Physical violence	.436	**.568**	.514
Insubordination	-.024	**.855**	.732
Incompetence	.273	**.718**	.590
Cultural conflicts	**.613**	.580	.713
Religious conflicts	**.844**	.323	.816
Gender conflicts	**.908**	.163	.851
Sexual conflicts	**.868**	-.004	.753

Similarly, IDI result on these four variables aligned in terms of respondents' views on them. According to a respondent in the Human Resources department:
"We usually work together despite cultural differences within the company. We are allowed to worship our God how we want. We do not have conflicts whether you are a man or woman, you are allowed to do their work. We don't have sexual harassment within the company. It is not allowed".
Another respondent in Production also stated:
"Religious freedom is practiced in our company. We don't have problems in terms of religion. We don't have gender conflicts in our company. For instance, we have women working in the loading bay…we have women working in offices, we have admin who are women, likewise auditors".
An employee in Human resource department stated:
"We don't have cases of sexual harassment among our employees. It is against our regulations. Even they happen, it may be in secret…parties involved will be sanctioned as soon as it is discovered".

On the other hand, prevalence of verbal confrontation, physical violence, insubordination and incompetence are the variables strongly loaded (with the values of .831, .568, .855 and .718 respectively) to component 2. IDI results on incompetence and physical violence also support low prevalence of both variables. A respondent in Production said:
"We are not allowed to fight or involve in physical conflict…when there is any fight, those involved will be instantly sacked. We don't fight because of losing our job. If any persons have conflicts, they will quarrel but they will go and fight outside the plant".

A respondent in the Technical department said:
"Incompetence is not common…if you are not perfect to operate any machine under your care, they will tell you to go and learn about the machine very well before you resume work".

Another respondent in the Production department supported this position:
"Maybe a person is employed as forklift operator and the person is identified as being unqualified, he will be relieved of duties. Incompetent workers can damage company property".

Verbal confrontation and Insubordination have the highest communalities for variables strongly loaded to component. Results from IDI also support a prevalence of both conflict variables. According to a respondent in Human resources department:
"Verbal quarrels are commonplace in our workplace. You can only use your mouth to quarrel and embarrass somebody but no fights usually take in the plant".

Another respondent in the Sales department also corroborated this position:
"We have verbal confrontations from time to time. It is very common for colleagues to argue from time to time but we don't touch each other".

In terms of insubordination, a respondent in Production Department said:
"When you instruct your junior and he fails to heed, it becomes a problem. We have cases when a foreman will give directions to one or two persons under him and they will not follow very well. When this happens, I have the right to report to a senior officer who can issue a query".

Discussion

The conceptual model showing EI relationships, motivation to work and work-related conflicts is illustrated in Figure 4. Study results revealed that workers manage emotional challenges mainly through colleagues and specialists. Workers may share emotionally challenging experiences with colleagues because they understand themselves and are also more empathetic towards each other's sufferings. Spearman correlation of eleven EI variables indicates that anger is most correlated with feelings, pointing towards the importance of feelings in anger management. Workers having more feelings may help them lessen their irritation in dealing with challenges like poor salaries, heavy workload and inadequate breaks, identified in the IDI results. Indifference was most significantly correlated with desire and the coefficient was also negative, indicating that workers may display more indifference towards their emotional challenges because they have less desire to leave their jobs. High unemployment in Nigeria (PwC, 2020) implies that employees may endure attendant challenges at work, because they are afraid of losing their jobs (Akume & Abdullahi, 2013). Moreover, IDI results show that workers are discouraged from violent conduct due to likelihood of sack, engaging in verbal confrontations instead. Chinawa et al. (2020) also identified a prevalence of verbal abuse in a physical health facility, as opposed to physical violence. Correlation coefficients between feeling and both analysis and desire were the highest coefficient values in the entire Spearman results. This could be because both feelings and analysis are ways of displaying emotions, in reaction to distressing circumstances (Scarantino & De Sousa, 2018).

Figure 4 : *Conceptual Model*

The non-significance of age bracket and level of education in predicting motivation to work may be attributable to respondents' predominant education status (over 80% only have primary and secondary education) and age bracket (about 60% are below 50 years). Previous studies have shown that employees are less inclined to get involved in workplace conflicts because the cons of submitting to challenges faced at work, may clearly outweigh the pros (Akume & Abdullahi, 2013; Chakraborty & Biswas, 2021). 'Colleague' had the most significant regression coefficient; IDI results also show that many interviewees discuss emotional challenges mainly with colleagues. This is not surprising given that they may feel more relaxed and communicative with colleagues than with family and friends. Health workers in East Africa also faced similar challenges with family and friends as results of setbacks in the workplace (El Ghaziri et al., 2014). In addition, results show that employees in the technical department had the highest likelihood in terms of motivation to work. Other studies have also identified that motivation to continue working despite having a difficult work environment portends towards employees being emotionally intelligent (Trigueros et al., 2020).

Variables under the first component of the PCA (cultural, religious, gender and sexual conflicts) align with 'using' and 'understanding' dimensions of Mayer and Salovey's EI model (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Salovey & Grewal, 2005), since they mainly involve interaction with others. Cultural conflicts had the lowest factor loading out of the four variables under the first component, indicating that cultural conflicts may not be prevalent in the present study; this is also in line with the IDI results. The four variables under the PCA's second component (verbal confrontations, physical violence, insubordination and incompetence) align with 'perceiving' and 'managing' dimensions of Mayer and Salovey's model of EI (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Salovey & Grewal, 2005) because they are expressions of emotional manifestations as reported by Hancil (2009). Violence had the bottommost factor loading among variables under the second component, indicating that it was not as prevalent as other variables considered, in line with IDI results.

Limitations
Due to the study's mixed methods design, constructs used in measuring EI and work-related conflicts may not provide the robustness required. A mixed methods approach was used in the present, implying that respondents all work for the same organization. Making inferences based on the study's findings may have been more concretized and reliable if the sample size was larger and respondents sampled from several organizations. Findings of the study may have also been affected by social desirability biases which could be inherent among study respondents.

Conclusion
The study has shown that there are statistically significant relationships in how employees perceived, understood, used and managed EI in the workplace. Motivation to work despite workplace challenges can be significantly predicted in a logistic regression model by employees' age bracket, level of education, department and way of managing emotional challenge. PCA of work-related conflicts identified two dimensions: the first dimension aligns with 'using' and

'understanding' dimensions of Mayer and Salovey's conceptual model of emotional intelligence while the second dimension aligns with 'perceiving' and 'managing' dimensions of Mayer and Salovey's conceptual model of emotional intelligence. The study has demonstrated that organizational efficiency can significantly improve when it becomes clear that workers can comfortably share workplace emotional challenges with colleagues and specialists because they are more attentive and uncritical. Therefore, discerning EI relationships among employees helps in managing work-related conflicts through commensurate reward for excellence and diligence. When EI use, understanding, perception and management are recognized within an organization, dealing with the pernicious effects of gender, cultural, religious and sexual conflicts becomes less tedious. Also, prevalence of violence in the workplace depends on the extent to which workers are willing to risk their employment in expressing their frustrations with challenges they face at work.

In line with findings of the study, mandatory psychological evaluation of employees should carried out from time to time. This counseling approach will significantly help employees to share emotional challenges more openly. In order to boast employee confidence, better incentives should be provided in terms of bonuses and compensations for performance and quality service delivery. This will go a long way in making employees feel appreciated and ready to make sacrifices for the organization. Due to the exploratory case study approach adopted in the present study, a more elaborate study needs to be carried out where a larger sample size can be drawn from several organizations operating in the different areas and settings, thereby providing more robust inferences.

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