

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND CAREER PERFORMANCE OF THE POLICE IN BENUE STATE

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Abstract

Designed to find out the relationship between emotional intelligence and the career performance of Benue State Police Command, this study used the survey design to specifically examine the components of emotional intelligence, namely, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management, and the career performance of the Police in Benue State Police Command. A sample of 1,067 policemen and women was randomly selected from a population of 7,216 Police personnel in the study area. Data was collected using questionnaires, titled 'Emotional Intelligence Scale and Police Career Performance Scale' (EIS/PCPS). Five hypotheses were formulated and tested, using correlation coefficient. The study established that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and the career performance of the Police in the study area. The researchers recommended, among others, that emotional intelligence should be made an integral part of requirements for Police recruitment and training, counselling structures should be put in place to cater for police emotional needs, and police officers should be trained in relationship management.

Introduction

The Police are a civil force of a federal, state or local government for the prevention and detection of crime and the maintenance of public order. The Police are the leading security agency in countries all over the world. In Nigeria, the Police Act and Decree No.23 of 1979 stipulates specific functions for the Police Force. These functions include the prevention and detection of crime, apprehension of offenders, the preservation of law and order, the protection of life and property and the due enforcement of laws and regulations with which they are directly charged. The Police are also mandated to perform such military duties within or outside Nigeria as may be required of them by, or under, the authority of this or any other Act.

The history of the Nigeria Police can be traced to April, 1861, when the British Consul enlisted 30 men to assist in the maintenance of law and order; with the objective of sustaining her political, economic and religious interests in the then Lagos colony. These men were groomed for the purpose of carrying out such duties as waging war against local chiefs, who refused to cooperate with British officials especially in the collection of taxes and other duties. It is from this humble beginning that the Police have undergone several changes in terms of their mandate and numbers in line with changes in socio-economic and political realities of the times to their present status of a national civil force.

The main objectives for establishing the Nigeria Police in 1861 by the British consul clearly indicate that the force was intended to protect the interests of the establishment, i.e., the powers that be at the moment and not to safeguard law and order as well as security for the citizens of the country. Yusuf (2008) lamented that the attitude adopted by Policemen and women to their functions and leadership due to this orientation has continued, in spite of the changes in the socio-political set up of Nigeria. The

British were not interested in having a humane Police Force, and so appropriate personality traits for positive social interaction were not considered in the recruitment and training of police personnel in Nigeria. It is, however, instructive to hold that if the Police are intended to serve the purpose of maintaining law and order in society, they should first of all be able to relate with the people who make up the society and for whom the laws are meant. This is because the Police are expected to operate among the people so as to be able to identify the needs, aspirations, feelings and threats of the people in order to effectively protect them.

Therefore, the Police should possess appropriate emotional intelligence skills. Emotional intelligence refers to the individual's ability to understand, monitor and interpret both his own and other people's feelings or emotions. This basic understanding affects the way people relate peacefully and effectively on their jobs as well as in other spheres of life. This compatibility of persons, which is engendered by emotional intelligence, has been identified as a key factor for success, effectiveness and efficiency in job performance. Experts in this field, such as Mayer and Salovey (1993), Baron (2000), Goleman (2001) Obanya (2003) and Akinboye (2003) opine that components of emotional intelligence skills include self awareness, self management, social awareness and relationship management.

Members of the public have persistently complained about the aggressiveness, bribery, corruption and general inefficiency of Police personnel. This study, therefore, aims to establish the relationship between emotional intelligence and the career performance of the Police in Benue State.

Statement of the Research Problem

The Police Force is expected to maintain and ensure peaceful co-existence in the country. The print and electronic media, as well as personal observations, however, reveal that the image and integrity

of the country as a whole and policemen in particular has been stained due to negative perception arising from the misconduct of officers and men of the Nigeria Police. This negative image is indirectly an indictment on the Nigeria Police force.

Based on people's perception of the Police, it is, therefore, not surprising that the public throughout the world appears to be sceptical about the security they provide (Awake, 2008). Yusuf (2008) laments that, rather than maintaining law and order, activities of some members of the Police tend to break down law and order; rather than defend the public, Police officers and men are often seen attacking the public; and rather than being friends of the public, the Police have tended to portray themselves as enemies of the public. The cumulative effect of this is that it encourages the breakdown of law and order in the society, as witnessed in many mob actions on our streets, especially during political campaigns, communal crises and other situations, when the citizens take the law into their hands to use jungle justice to settle scores, such as in cases of suspected armed robbery or witchcraft. According to Emewu (2005), killings of innocent citizens from 1999 to 2005 claimed over 3,200 people.

Unable to handle these situations and contain such crises, the Police are often quick to blame their inability on lack of weapons and other logistics. This study, therefore, looked into the issue of the emotional intelligence of the Police and sought how this could improve Police job performance.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to find out the relationship between emotional intelligence and the career performance of Police in the Benue State Police Command. Specific objectives of the study include:

- To identify the relationship between self awareness and career performance of the Police in Benue State;

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- To determine the relationship between self-management and career performance of Police in Benue State;
- To find out the relationship between social awareness and career performance of Police in Benue State;
- To determine the relationship between relationship management and career performance of the Police in Benue State;
- To determine the relationship between predictive level of self awareness, self management, social awareness and relationship management and career performance of police in Benue state.

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses have been formulated for this study:

1. There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and the career performance of Police in Benue State.
2. There is no significant relationship between self awareness and the career performance of Police in Benue State.
3. There is no significant relationship between self management and the career performance of the Police in Benue State.
4. There is no significant relationship between social awareness and the career performance of the Police in Benue State.
5. There is no significant relationship between relationship management and the career performance of the Police in Benue State.

Significance of the study

This study is expected to establish the relationship between the emotional intelligence of members of the Police Force and their career performance. This will help Police authorities to evolve reliable criteria for selection, recruitment and training of men and women, who will be most efficient and productive in the force.

Police training institutions will find this work useful in helping them to redesign their curricula to include components of emotional intelligence. This will help to improve the performance of graduates of such training institutions. Also, the individual policemen and women will find the work very instructive in helping them to manage their emotions and relationships effectively, so as to improve their individual productivity. Finally, this research will add useful literature on this important subject of emotional intelligence and its impact on productivity in various aspects of human endeavour.

Scope of the study

This study investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and career performance of the Nigeria Police with particular focus on the Benue State Police Command. The study specifically examined how self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management and career performance are related. The study also examined the extent of predictive level of relationship between all the aforementioned aspects of emotional intelligence to career performance of the Police in the Benue State Command.

Research Procedure

The survey design was adopted to carry out this study. The population of the study was 7,216, comprising 506 female and 6710 male police personnel. The sample for the study was 1,067

and this consisted of policemen and women drawn proportionately from the three Police Area Commands in the State, namely, Makurdi, Gboko and Otukpo. The researchers developed the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) and Career Performance Scale of the Police (CPSP). The two instruments contained 31 and 18 items respectively. The response format was a four point modified likert scale. The instrument was validated by experts in research methods and statistics in the Faculty of Education, Benue State University, Makurdi. The reliability of the instrument was determined through a pilot study, which was carried out on 120 respondents. The pilot study yielded Cronbach alpha levels of 0.87 and 0.70 respectively for the two instruments used to collect data for the study.

Data Analyses and Results

Data collected for this study were analysed using the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS). The test statistics employed for the analyses were the correlation coefficient and step-wise multiple regression at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 1.1 shows correlation coefficient between emotional intelligence and career performance of the Police in Benue State Police Command.

Table 1.1: *Relationship between emotional intelligence and career performance of the Police in Benue State.*

<u>Aspects of emotional intelligence</u>	<u>Career performance</u>
Emotional intelligence	0.221**
Self awareness	0.199**
Self management	0.177**
Social awareness	0.150**
<u>Relationship management</u>	<u>0.152**</u>

**correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and career performance of Police in Benue State. This implies that the null hypotheses 1-5 are rejected and their respective alternative hypotheses accepted, thereby establishing that there is significant relationship among emotional intelligence, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management and career performance of the police in Benue State Command.

Discussion of findings

Results of data analyses for this study have shown that there is a significant relationship among emotional intelligence and career performance of Police in Benue State. This finding agrees with that of Jae (1997), Stein (1997), Goleman (1998) and Chemiss (2000). These researchers found in their separate studies that emotional intelligence was twice more important in job performance than intelligence quotient.

The study also found a significant relationship between self-awareness and the career performance of the Police. This finding also agrees with those of Boyatzis (1982), Kelly (1998) and Baron (2000), who reported in their studies that accurate self-awareness is a key to realizing one's own strengths and weaknesses. Individuals that have abilities to identify their own emotions are aware of their abilities and limitations, learn from their mistakes, know where they need to improve and when to work with others who have complementary strengths.

The analyses also indicate a significant relationship between self-management and career performance of the Police. This result is in agreement with Spencer and Spencer (1993) and Barrick and Mount (1993), who reported that counsellors and psychotherapists, who could use their emotions positively were able to respond calmly to any kind of angry attack by their clients and patients.

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It has also been found from the data analysed in this research that a significant relationship exists between social awareness and the career performance of the Police in Benue State. This result agrees with the findings of Nygren and Ukeritu (1993), William (1994), McClelland (1998) and Rosenthal and his associates in Cherniss (2000). They reported that physicians, who are better at recognizing emotions in patients were more successful than their less sensitive colleagues. Social awareness has, thus, been identified as critical for superior job performance whenever the focus is on interactions with people. These skills are essential to the work of the Police because they interact with the public.

Findings from the data analysis have also shown a significant relationship between relationship management and career performance of the Police in Benue State. This is in agreement with findings of William (1994), McClelland (1998), Lee and Bernard (1999) and Goleman (2003). These researchers had found in their studies that leaders with emotional intelligence perform 15-20% more than leaders without emotional intelligence abilities. Hence, leadership style is very important in organization and performance at work.

The fact that findings of this research seem to be in agreement with those of different researchers of western culture is probably because emotional intelligence is a universal phenomenon and its applicability cuts across cultures. In any environment of an individual's operation, one's ability to understand, monitor, and interpret emotions and feelings of people one relates with seems to be viewed in the same perspective and tends to affect performance in any establishment.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this research, it can be concluded that emotional intelligence is significantly related to the career performance of Benue State Police Command. This result requires

urgent attention by all concerned, especially the Police Service Commission. To ensure effectiveness on the part of Police when discharging their duties, the following recommendations are made:

1. Trained counselling psychologists should be employed into the Police Force to cater for emotional needs of the Police.
2. There should be a Counselling Unit in every Police Area Command throughout Nigeria.
3. Courses on emotional intelligence and social psychology should be integrated in the Police training curriculum.
4. Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) should include emotional intelligence skills in its curriculum so as to train future counsellors on how to assist individuals with low emotional intelligence skills.
5. Provisions should be made for Police generally to further their education because the findings showed that 91.7% of them have only the secondary school qualification. With additional qualification, Police officers are more likely to improve on their emotional intelligence skills.
6. Tests on emotional intelligence should be administered to the police during recruitment exercises, as it is done in the United States of America, so as to enhance their performance.
7. The Police should ensure frequent interaction with the public through the media. This would enable the public to know their rights and limitations. Issues that concern the welfare of the public should also be discussed. It is hoped that knowledge of emotional intelligence will enable police to strike a balance between the demands of their duties and public explanation of their operations and, therefore, operate more meaningfully when discharging their functions and responsibilities to the public.

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