



Emotional Intelligence and its Psychological Impact on the Performance of Employees in Nigeria Health Sector

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Abstract

Purpose- The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which emotional intelligence have a psychological impact on the performance of employees in Nigeria health sector

Design/methodology/approach- A descriptive survey research approach was employed to achieve this goal, and the study's population comprised of 102 nurses and doctors of State Hospital Ijebu Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria. Since nurses and doctors are recognized as the professionals who provide care services to patients in the organization, they make up the population. The Yamane formula was used to determine the sample size of 81, and the convenience sampling technique was used to select the respondents

Finding- Out of the questionnaire distributed 72 was completed and returned, yielding 89% response rate. The analysis's showed that emotional intelligence has a 52% variance in employee performance, with a R square value of 0.520. Additionally, it was discovered that employee performance was significantly and favorably impacted by the emotional intelligence predictor variables of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management with a β values of 0.341, 0.411, 0.217, and 0.381, respectively

Original/value- An organization cannot experience improved performance or a sustained competitive advantage if its human resources are not managed efficiently. This is because human resources are the only resources within the organization that possess thoughts, feelings, and hopes. The study results would help managers in the health sector increase awareness of emotional intelligence's value within their workplaces as doing so would benefit both the employee and the organization.

Keywords- Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Management, Emotional Intelligence, Employee Performance.

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1. Introduction

The human resource is been referred to as a valuable asset since employees perform the majority of the work required to achieve the organization's goals, and their success in doing so is crucial to the organization's ability to develop and survive (Raj, 2021). With this, firms have recognized the significance of employees' physical and mental well-being as a critical factor in determining the organization's performance. In order for the organization to achieve good performance, human resources must provide good and quality services to the organization with regard to the fulfillment of their roles and responsibilities in the various departments and units of the business (Bianchi, Schonfeld and Laurent, 2019).

The health sector is one of the most significant industries in every nation. since of the nature of their work, interactions between nurses or other caregivers and their patients are crucial since they form the core of the organization and necessitate emotional intelligence on the part of the staff. The healthcare professionals (nurses and doctors) are among the most stressful because of the close relationship they have with patient safety (Ahmed, Ata and Metwally, 2019). Patients often express negative emotions to their caregivers, such as sadness, hostility, distress, and discomfort, which makes caregivers work long shifts and wears them out physically (Ramadan et al. 2020). Should these caregivers in this position be unable to regulate their emotions, they will be unable to keep their composure when interacting with the patient in various contexts and to make sound decisions in emergency situations (Rakhshani et al. 2018).

As a result of the increasing patient demand in the healthcare industry, medical personnel are physically and emotionally overworked, and the rising number of patients who are seriously ill also contributes to their burnout (Kiishi, 2024). The reasons behind psychological impacts like stress and burnout in health professionals and the various consequences they bring about, including the person quitting the health environment or doing less well (Akanni, Obi and Oduaran, 2022). Emotional intelligence is therefore a highly valuable skill for health professionals because it can be said that managing and understanding patients' emotions enhances the level of safety that

is guaranteed to a patient in areas like communication, the quality of patient-centered care, patient satisfaction, and worker performance (Kwajaffa et al. 2020).

Humans are made up of both emotions and reason. While reason allows humans to be logical, emotions give them the capacity to identify and feel emotions, which is what defines them as human (Obaide, 2022). While emotional intelligence is said to improve a person's professional development, adaptability, well-being, and performance, it has been asserted in the health sector that emotions are a major factor in why healthcare staff lose control over their patients (Rayan, Sisan and Baker, 2019). Additionally, numerous studies in Nigeria have demonstrated that the psychological effects of their occupations, such as stress and burnout, are numerous, and that their incapacity to manage these effects has an impact on the efficacy and efficiency of their services (Kiishi, 2024; Phina, Patrick and Nwabuike, 2022). This has been a major problem for the health sector, particularly in Nigeria where there are insufficient resources and facilities for the medical personnel. For this reason, this study aims to determine the psychological impact that emotional intelligence has on the work performance of Nigerian health sector employees. The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. How does self-awareness affect the performance of employees in Nigeria health sector?
- ii. What is the effect of self-management on performance of employees in Nigeria health sector?
- iii. Does social awareness have an impact on performance of employees in Nigeria health sector?
- iv. To what extent does relationship management have an effect on performance of employees in Nigeria health sector?

2. Research Theoretical Literature

2.1. Emotional Intelligence

Salovey and Mayer first coined the term "emotional intelligence" in 1990 and defined it as the capacity to effectively assess and communicate one's own emotions as well as those of others. Emotional intelligence, according to Salovey and Mayer (1990), is the basis of human vigor,

motivation, and ambition. This definition has been widely accepted by academics because it recognizes that emotions influence people's behaviors and can control their actions. As such, emotions should be handled carefully, particularly when an individual is confronted with extremely difficult circumstances (Hrefish and H.H., 2020). According to Goleman (1996), emotional intelligence is the capacity of an individual to identify and manage their own emotions since it plays a major role in how well they are able to relate to others' emotions as well as their own.

Emotional intelligence, according to Lee and Chelladurai (2018), is the capacity of a person to successfully relate to and comprehend people, as well as to be adaptable enough to successfully manage the demands of their environment. According to Raj (2021), emotional intelligence is the capacity a person possesses to recognize, communicate, integrate, and comprehend emotions—both their own and those of others—and how this affects their behavior, either positively or negatively. Miao, Humphrey and Qian (2020) used three models—the skills model, personality model, and mixed mode—to further describe emotional intelligence. The personality model relates to an individual's fixed personality, the skills model explains EI as their cognitive capacity, which is subject to change, and the mixed model combines their cognitive ability and personality qualities.

2.2. Employee Performance

Phina, Patrick and Nwabuike (2022) explained employee performance as the outcome of labor in terms of the caliber and quantity of people performing their tasks in line with the ones that have been allotted to them. Employee performance, according to Akanni, Obi and Oduaran (2022), is the way a worker in an organization carries out its primary responsibilities and duties while also adhering to the standards, criteria, and measurements that the company has established. According to Merkusi and Aini (2020), an employee's performance is determined by how much they contribute to the organization's goals, objectives, vision, and mission as stated in the strategic objective of the company.

Employee performance, according to Yan et al. (2018), is the total productivity of the workforce inside the company. This may be assessed using a variety of important metrics, including output,

quality, quantity, effectiveness, efficiency, and many more. In a similar spirit, Mukokoma (2020) define employee performance as the extent to which a worker is able to fulfill tasks set by the company or achieve its objectives. The quality of an employee's work inside the company, their efficacy or contribution to the decision-making process, their degree of interaction with managers or other employees, and their aptitude for problem-solving are all considered aspects of employee performance (Kiishi, 2024). Employee performance, according to Vrontis et al. (2021), is a person's ability to use organizational resources effectively and efficiently as well as their capacity to help the organization achieve its stated goals.

2.3. Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence

Self-Awareness - According to Liu et al. (2023), self-awareness is a person's natural sense of intuition, preference, and ability. This goes beyond simply having the essential and sufficient knowledge about a given subject; rather, it refers to a person's capacity to both understand and apply that knowledge to more advanced study. An individual who possesses the capacity for self-awareness and that of others is always at an advantage over those who do not, as only knowledge of others provides the experience necessary to manage situations (Yan et al. 2018). According to Rezvani and Khosravi (2019), someone who is self-aware is able to recognize and comprehend the emotions of others as well as control their own and others' emotions as they arise and respond to them in a way that would lead to a positive conclusion.

Arousal and attention, sensory and motor, psychosocial, and cognitive are the four main distinguishing stages that Phina, Patrick and Nwabuike (2022) used to explain self-awareness. According to Phina, Patrick and Nwabuike (2022), arousal and attention refer to a person's capacity to notice emotions as they arise, while the sensory and motor stages are characterized by a person's capacity to articulate their feelings at that specific moment. The cognitive stage, the final step of self-awareness, is the abstract reasoning and the urgent need the person has to solve the problem, whereas the psychosocial stage is the ongoing realization of one's own skills.

H1: Self-Awareness has no significant effect on employee performance in Nigeria health sector

Self-Management- According to [Salovey and Mayer \(1990\)](#), self-awareness is the continuous process by which a person evaluates and regulates both their own and other people's behavior to make sure that the best conduct is demonstrated and that positive relationships are built. This is also achieved by routinely reminding people of the customs, values, and surroundings that surround their place of residence. Instead of shifting the blame elsewhere, the individuals take ownership of their acts, learn from their failures, and make sure that their conduct keeps improving ([Srivastava et al. 2021](#)). According to [Vrontis et al. \(2021\)](#), self-management is the adoption of a technique that enables a person to arrange their behaviors in accordance with those of their surroundings. By doing this, they are able to create goals, efficiently manage their time, and make wise judgments.

According to [Schlaegel, Engle and Lang \(2022\)](#), persons who are able to use self management to make sure that their activities and behaviors are guided and controlled so as to ensure that their desired goal is reached are known to be proactive. Within the company, cognitive and functional exercises are used to help individuals learn how to control their behavior and make sure that everything they do is directed toward improving performance. This can take the shape of activities that are either work-related or unconnected as long as the employees know what is expected of them and are given the opportunity to take charge of their circumstances, which is a requirement for achieving the required performance ([Vetbuje and Olaleye, 2022](#)).

H2: Self- Management has no significant effect on employee performance in Nigeria health sector

Social Awareness- According to [Phina, Patrick and Nwabuike \(2022\)](#), social awareness is the ability to recognize and respond to the needs of others. It is a third dimension of emotional intelligence. They clarified that this is crucial for efficient administration and motivating people to work toward a common objective because its importance can never be overestimated. According to [Papathanasiou et al. \(2021\)](#), social awareness is synonymous with empathy. They define it as the ability for a person to put themselves in the other person's shoes, identify with them, and use that emotion to inspire themselves to overcome any obstacles. This is mostly accomplished through social interactions, which serve as the foundation

for how other people's conduct is influenced and, ultimately, how higher performance is possible.

According to [Salovey and Mayer \(1990\)](#), social awareness is the ability to understand situations from another person's perspective, recognize other people's feelings, and engage compassion in problem-solving. [Srivastava et al. \(2021\)](#) asserts that people with strong social awareness are better able to communicate a wide range of emotions than people without it. As a result, people are expected to have these skills, which enable them to understand other people's feelings, listen intently to what they have to say, and effectively engage with them ([Obiekwe and Ogbo, 2020](#)).

H3: Social Awareness has no significant effect on employee performance in Nigeria health sector

Relationship Management- Relationship management, according to [Obaide \(2022\)](#), is a critical component of emotional intelligence since it greatly enhances the effectiveness and standard of interpersonal interactions. Relationship management was defined as a person's capacity to comprehend both their own and other people's emotions in order to establish harmonious communication. According to [Salovey and Mayer \(1990\)](#), persons with strong relationship management skills can interact, communicate, and develop relationships with others in an efficient manner.

[Schlaegel, Engle and Lang \(2022\)](#) explained that relationship management would enable a person to respond positively to changes in their social and environmental context and also foster an environment that is encouraging to others because they are able to recognize, assess, and understand their own emotions as well as those of others. According to [Obiekwe and Ogbo \(2020\)](#), this dimension is more related to social skills since it describes a person's ability to take on leadership responsibilities and, more specifically, use it to influence and motivate others to achieve a shared objective.

H4: Relationship Management has no significant effect on employee performance in Nigeria health sector

2.4. Nexus between Emotional Intelligence and Employee Performance in the Health Sector

Health sector employees are known to encounter many challenges in the course of carrying out their duties and responsibilities within the organization. In order for them to do their jobs well, emotional intelligence is essential, and this has a big impact

on how well they perform within the organization (Akgerman and Sönmez, 2020). According to Schlaegel, Engle and Lang (2022), emotional intelligence increases the degree of collaboration inside a company and enables workers to function as a team more successfully. This is one of the most important components as it is required of employees to communicate with one another. Emotional intelligence plays a major role in this since it fosters a sense of trust among staff members, which in turn helps the business accomplish its goals and objectives (Srivastava et al. 2021).

Employees with emotional intelligence, according to Schlaegel, Engle and Lang (2022), are able to recognize the positive side of their actions and contributions inside the company. As a result, they are more likely to be devoted to the company, which improves performance. Alsufyani et al. (2022) revealed that stress and burnout are the primary causes of poor performance for workers in the health sector and thus concluded in their study that if workers in this field are able to recognize, regulate, and effectively manage their emotions as well as those of others, their performance within the company can improve. According to the study by Kwajaffa et al. (2020), employees are more likely to be engaged in their work when there is less burnout. This can be readily accomplished when the person in question has the ability to control both their own and other people's emotions.

Employees with emotional intelligence are better at handling stress in the workplace, preventing problems that could lead to depression, and stabilizing their moods. These skills will improve their performance in the workplace (Kiishi, 2024). According to Merkusi and Aini (2020), emotional intelligence has a direct bearing on workers' performance because it helps them control their emotions, enabling them to express their feelings in a more healthy and productive way. According to Mukokoma (2020), emotional intelligence can act as a catalyst for the development of stronger relationships within an organization. This is because when people understand emotion and feelings, it can increase employee confidence and facilitate the completion of tasks more successfully.

2.5. Theoretical Review

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory- Maslow Hierarchy of Needs Theory was one of the first

theories to explain why people are motivated at work. It is based on the idea that people have needs that are arranged hierarchically, that satisfying one need leads to satisfying another, and that this is what motivates people to work in an organization (Stajkovic and Luthans, 1998). This theory also supports the efficient management of employees within an organization. This is because employees are a key component of an organization, and their motivation is essential for them to perform more effectively and efficiently (Maslow and Lewis, 1987).

When a person's needs are not satisfied in an organization, their level of satisfaction declines, which in turn lowers their performance (Mustofa, 2022). Abraham Maslow's theory was described in terms of five categories of basic needs, each of which has five levels of importance. These categories include safety needs, social needs, self-actualization, self-esteem, and physiological needs. According to this theory, a person's social needs are determined by their interactions with others and their level of acceptance and affection from them (Kiishi, 2024). The social needs are associated with emotional intelligence because emotional intelligence emphasizes how people relate to one another. Positive relationships among individuals raise employee satisfaction, which in turn improves employee performance within the organization (Alsufyani et al. 2022).

3. Research Methodology

A descriptive survey research strategy was used to efficiently accomplish the study's goal. According to Creswell and Clark (2017), this study design is very helpful for enabling a researcher to perform a basic statistical analysis and is also highly effective in interpreting the data. The study's population is 102 and this consist of doctors and nurses at State Hospital Ijebu Ode, Ogun State according to data gathered from the human resources department. Using Yamane formula, 81 make up the study's sample size, and convenience sampling technique was used. This makes it possible to gather data from the sample based on the elements' accessibility and simplicity of acquisition.

Data was collected from the respondents using a distributed questionnaire that included statements pertaining to the study variables (emotional intelligence and employee performance) as well as factors that reflect the respondents' demographic information. The five-point Likert scale, which

goes from strongly agree to strongly disagree, was used in the design of the study instrument to indicate how much respondents agreed or disagreed with the assertions. A pilot study was conducted to examine the validity and reliability of the research instrument. The results were deemed reliable by Pandey and Pandey (2021) since the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was above 0.75. Descriptive analysis was used to compute the data, and multiple regression was used to do inferential

analysis and determine the relationship between the research variables.

4. Research Findings

The total number of respondents identified for this study is 81; however, of those who received the questionnaire, 72 completed it and returned it, yielding 89% response rate.

4.1. Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Table 1. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.723 ^a	.520	.515	.21142

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness and Relationship Management

The preceding table indicates that the R square value is 0.520. This indicates that while factors covered in the study had a 52% variation in employee performance, other factors not taken into account had a 48% variation. Therefore, it can be

4.2. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

concluded that the study's components—social awareness, self-awareness, self-management, and relationship management—have a significant impact on how well workers in the health sector perform.

Table 2. ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7.152	4	1.788	52.097	.000 ^b
	Residual	32.776	68	.482		
	Total	39.928	72			

a. Dependent Variable: Job satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness and Relationship Management

According to Creswell and Clark (2017), the ANOVA is used to assess how different the data set in a study is from one another. The F statistics in the above table showed a value of 52.097 at a p value less than 0.05. A justification for the model's

suitability in demonstrating the correlation between the research variables (emotional intelligence and employee performance)

4.3. Multiple Regression

Table 3. Coefficients^a Results for Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	.651	.314		1.14	.000
	Self-Awareness	.341	.037	.311	6.312	.001
	Self-Management	.411	.068	.215	3.15	.002
	Social Awareness	.217	.023	.118	3.156	.001
	Relationship Management	.381	.055	.201	2.872	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

The coefficient for self-awareness, as seen in table 3 above, had a beta value of 0.341 and was

significant at a level less than 0.05. this proving that self-awareness and worker performance at

State Hospital Ijebu Ode, have a good and significant relationship. this also means that, if all other factors stay the same, there would be a 34.1% increase in employee performance for every 1% increase in self-awareness of emotional intelligence.

The coefficient for self-management, as seen in [table 3](#) above, had a β value of 0.411 and was significant at a level less than 0.05. Thus, proving that staff performance at State Hospital Ijebu Ode, and self-management have a good and significant relationship. This also means that, if all other factors stay the same, there would be a 41.1% increase in employee performance for every 1% increase in self-management of emotional intelligence.

[Table 3](#) above demonstrates that the social awareness coefficient had a β value of 0.217, which was significant at a level less than 0.05. proving that there is a substantial and favorable relationship between State Hospital Ijebu Ode, employees' performance and social awareness. This indicates that, if all other factors stay the same, there would be a 21.7% increase in employee performance for every 1% increase in social awareness of emotional intelligence.

The coefficient for relationship management, as seen in [table 3](#) above, had a β value of 0.381 and was significant at a level less than 0.05. this proving that relationship management and staff performance at State Hospital Ijebu Ode, have a good and significant relationship. This also means that, if all other factors stay the same, there would be a 38.1% increase in employee performance for every 1% increase in relationship management of emotional intelligence.

4.4. Discussion of Findings

The analysis revealed a positive and significant relationship between self-awareness and employee performance, which is consistent with earlier research by [Kwajaffa et al. \(2020\)](#), who defined self-awareness as the capacity to recognize one's own emotions as well as those of others. When this is achieved, an individual is better able to respond and relate in ways that will improve their performance. This supported the findings of [Akanni, Obi and Oduaran \(2022\)](#), who postulated that a person's emotional vulnerability is reflected in their level of self-awareness and that this has a significant impact on how well they perform.

The results of the analysis also showed a strong and positive correlation between employee performance and self-management, which is consistent with the findings of [Obaide \(2022\)](#), who defined self-management as the proactive application of a plan that helps people align their actions and motivates them to take actions that advance their goals. According to the study by [Mukokoma, \(2020\)](#), self-management is crucial for an individual's ability to exercise self-control and manage their time. It also helps them make wise judgments, which improves performance. This adds credence to the research conducted by [Papathanasiou et al., \(2021\)](#), who found that people who engage in self-management are better able to control and steer the activities going on around them, which helps them accomplish their goals.

The above analysis's hypothesis, which states that there is a positive and significant relationship between social awareness and employee performance, was also accepted. This is consistent with the findings of [Alsufyani et al., \(2022\)](#), which explain that when people have social awareness, they can effectively express their emotions, which has an impact on their decision-making. According to [Olatunji, Idemudia and Owoseni \(2020\)](#), social awareness is the capacity for an individual to comprehend a range of emotions and, as a result, know how to connect with people in a way that enhances their performance in the workplace.

The analysis also supported the final hypothesis, which found a strong and positive correlation between relationship management and worker performance. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by [Obiekwe and Ogbo \(2020\)](#), who discovered that people with strong relationship management skills would find it easier to connect with others and build relationships, particularly when working in a team. As a result, performance would increase. Additionally, [Kiishi \(2024\)](#) found a correlation between relationship management and worker performance, explaining that relationship management is critical to enabling people to work together productively within an organization to achieve a common goal, which in turn boosts worker satisfaction and productivity.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Consistent with earlier research, the study has demonstrated the critical role that emotional

intelligence plays in the performance of workers in the health sector, specifically in relation to how well they relate to patients and other employees within the organization. According to the study, healthcare professionals who are able to identify, understand, and regulate their own emotions as well as those of others will be able to increase patient satisfaction, which in turn will enable them to function as a cohesive team within the organization and lead to improved performance. The study's recommendations suggest that management in the health sector educate their staff members more about the value of emotional intelligence as doing so will help the company as a whole as well as the employees. This could be achieved by setting up or holding training sessions and seminars that give their staff members a thorough understanding of how to manage their emotions in the workplace in order to improve their performance. Additionally, the organization's management should create a positive work environment. One way to do this is by putting in place a feedback system that enables employees to speak openly and directly with management about anything that is bothering them, as well as to

express their opinions and feelings about their experiences working there.

It is also recommended that more research focus on variables not covered in the study in order to obtain a deeper understanding of this study variable. This could potentially improve employees' emotional intelligence within the organization and improve their performance. In addition to the health sector, future research should focus on other organizations or sectors, such as the manufacturing, educational, and many more, in order to close the gaps in the study. Finally, in order to address the limitations of the study and determine whether the findings are still valid, future research would take into account other research designs and instruments.

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Authors' contributions

The authors equally contributed to the preparation of this article.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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