

EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE, SELF-EFFICACY AND PROFESSIONALISM AS CORRELATES OF EFFECTIVE POLICING AMONG JUNIOR OFFICERS IN SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the impact of emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and professionalism as correlates of effective policing among junior police officers in Southwest Nigeria. Using the descriptive survey research design, two research questions were asked and three hypotheses were tested. Data were collected using four validated instruments. Six hundred randomly selected junior police officers across Southwest Nigeria participated in the study. Analysis of data was done using the multiple regression analysis and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). Findings showed that there were both joint and relative influences of the predictors on the criterion variable. Findings also revealed that effective policing among junior police officers is related to emotional competence, self-efficacy and professionalism. The findings have implications for police practice and mentoring in Nigeria. Thus it is recommended that the Nigeria Police authority should adequately train junior officers in the psychology of policing for effective policing to ensure adequate protection of life and property in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Junior Police officer, Emotional Competence, Self-efficacy, Professionalism.*

INTRODUCTION

With the effective sustenance of the Nigerian society hinged on an efficient law enforcement process, the role of the police in ensuring social justice, peace and harmony cannot be over-emphasized. However, despite the fact that in the administration of justice in Nigeria, the police have the sweeping powers of arrest and prosecution of offenders, the Nigerian State recently has consistently witnessed unquantifiable measure of terror, lawlessness, kidnapping, ethno-religious conflict, social disorder, armed robbery, and senseless vindictive assassinations whose causes and perpetrators have defiled security scrutiny and apprehension. This ugly incidence brings the efficiency of the Nigerian Police to questioning and disrepute.

Giving support to this point of view, Onyeozili (2005) posits that in Nigeria crime and violence are moving on a fast lane. Onyeozili further asserts that given the spate of violence, and the level of degeneration in the body polity, one may be right to conclude that the Nigeria Police have exhibited glaring inadequacies, and demonstrated incapacity to effectively enforce the law and maintain order in the society as it is no longer safe to walk alone even during the day considering the fact that robberies, assassination, arson and child-theft amongst other vices, have become the rule rather than the exception.

Thus, the Nigerian Police has at various times been criticized by both the general public and public officials in the exercise of their duties and responsibilities. Onyeozili (2005) notes that various factors have been blamed as constituting a stumbling block to effective policing, administration of justice and efficient maintenance of law and order in Nigeria. Onyeozili contends that often cited factors include, "god fatherism", nepotism, ethnicism, corruption. Other factors are institutional constraints such as inadequate manpower (both in strength and expertise), insufficient education and inadequate training in psychology of policing, inadequate equipment, and poor conditions of service of the average policeman (popularized by military dictatorships).

This is in congruence with the behavioralists such as Adeyemo and Ogunyemi (2008), Aremu (2006), Krimmel and Lindenmuth (2001) who point out that effective policing for National Security goes beyond buying of sophisticated weapons and equipment for police officers to work with. It also goes beyond providing police officers with air-conditioned jeeps, cars and all that. Behavioralists such as Adeyemo and Ogunyemi (2008), Aremu (2006), Krimmel and Lindenmuth, (2001) simply reason that the bed rock for effective policing in Nigeria is adoption of a policy that could raise the morale of the rank and file of Nigeria police, develop emotional competence, self-efficacy and promote professionalism. This they believe could catapult the output of police officers, hence security (Emeka, 2007).

This brings to bear the fact that over the last two decades many researchers in the fields of organizational psychology and management have been interested in the relationship between an individual's attitude to, and enjoyment of work and its impact upon the operation of an organization. However, this research is adopting a paradigm shift in emphasis away from attitudes to the work itself, with more attention directed at some personal and psychological factors that could engineer positive employee attitudes toward the organization as it concerns the Nigeria Police Organization. The stimulus for this shift is a theory developed by Porter, Steers, Mowday and Boulian (1974), suggesting that the psychological attachment of employees to the organization could predict employee effectiveness.

In Nigeria, the works of Aremu is quite significant in this respect. Aremu (2005, 2006b) espouse that the Nigeria Police remains the most discussed of all security outfits in Nigeria. And its corporate image has never been so called to question as it is in recent time. The understanding is that either something is wrong with the police organization or members of the organization (police). Incidentally, it is through the personnel of the police force that people assess the organization. And one of the vices the police are accused of other than corruption and inefficiency is poor interpersonal relationship which is an important index in emotional Competence.

Goleman (1998) contends that emotional competence is what results and enhances our personal, relational and professional performance, and what ultimately helps us attain an overall increase in our quality of life. According to Goleman (1998), emotional competence is a learned ability grounded in Emotional Intelligence. Emotional Intelligence influences our potential for learning the practical emotional

competencies, and developing the emotional literacy necessary for quality of life, life satisfaction, and overall happiness. Such skills include the development of the following: Self/Social/Relational Awareness and Competence, and Self/Social/Relational Management and Competence which are germane to stimulating effective policing in any society. Thus, this learned capabilities, could reinforce efficiency and effectiveness among Nigerian police officers.

Fishler (1997) states that police officers need to develop healthy relationships and manage conflict while achieving productive goals. To achieve their goals, police officers need to be emotionally competent as to be able to build, maintain, and strengthen alliances and partnerships, both within and outside their organization. Likewise, O'Neill and Cushing (1991) contend that police officers face daily challenges and stress that few other occupations experience. Few occupations require the intensity of constant alertness, proper mood and demeanor, short term memory, and physiological stamina that police work requires.

Therefore, to be an effective and efficient police officer in today's environment requires emotional competence and control to meet the demands faced on the streets. Krimmel and Lindenmuth (2001) equally affirm that developing and utilizing appropriate emotional competent skill could enhance police effectiveness and ensure effective policing. This is premised on the fact that emotional competence could enable officers to be self-efficacious and develop good communication skills to be able to relate with other officers, and community members in order to balance the needs of the organization and community. Corroborating this point of view, Adeyemo and Bola (2008) assert that emotional competence and self-efficacy are critical psychological factors in the behaviour of individual workers in organizations.

Adeyemo and Bola (2008) further affirm that according to Bandura's (1998) theoretical analysis, perceived self-efficacy is people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. A strong self-efficacy enhances human accomplishment and personal well-being in many ways. This predisposes the fact that police officers with high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks of policing as challenges to be measured rather than as threats to be avoided. They approach threatening situation with assurance that they can exercise control over them. Such an efficacious outlook produces personal accomplishment, reduces stress and lowers vulnerability to depression (Multon, Brown and Lent, 1991; Pajare, 1996, 1997; Bandura, 2000).

In contrast, police officers who are not self-efficacious and who doubt their capabilities shy away from difficult tasks of policing which they tend to view as personal threats. They have low aspirations and weak commitment to the goals of effective policing which they choose to pursue. When faced with difficult tasks, they dwell on their personal deficiencies, on the obstacles they will encounter, and on all kinds of adverse outcomes rather than concentrate on how to perform successfully. They slacken their efforts and give up quickly in the face of difficulties; they fall easily to stress and depression (Pajare and Miller, 1994). This potent that

research has shown that self-efficacy at work is related to job performance (Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo and Tucker, 2007). This probably is because people with high self-efficacy actually set higher goals for themselves and they are more committed to their goals, whereas people with low self-efficacy tend to procrastinate (Phillips and Gully, 1997). Giving credence to this point of view, Bandura (1998) posits that self-efficacy is a context-specific construct that indicates competence to perform a specific task or skill domain. Therefore, the ability to perform expected task plays a pivotal role in fostering positive act of professionalism and work behaviour. Professionalism within the police service incorporates not but one characteristic, but rather numerous characteristics and involves the adoption of a set of values and attitudes which aim to forge the respect and conduct worthy of a profession. Therefore, True professionalism in policing is viewed as a recognized indicator and predictor of police effectiveness globally (Jeffrey, 2009).

Thus, Ball (2008) states that professionalism is not just about appearance, ethics, and a code of conduct. Professionalism is about having a lifetime dedication and commitment to higher standards and ideals, honorable values, and continuous self improvement. Ball also asserts that Police professionalism is equated with better-educated, highly-trained, rule-oriented police officers. It is not only what the police do, but how they do it. Projecting further, Ball (2008) contends that success in attaining professionalism demands commitment to public service, organizational (individual and department) expertise, and the realization that the police have a responsibility, must be dedicated, to serve and protect. Corroborating this perspective, Ojedokun (2010) reports that behavioural professional expectation though present in "Police Act", the "Official Holy Book" of members of Nigeria Police; attitude towards unethical behaviour of some police personnel in Nigeria is a departure from these norms. For example, Adebayo (2005) states that the quality of services rendered at present by the Nigeria police does not measure up to their professional expectation.

Adebayo (2005) further note that unethical work behaviour of police personnel manifests in high level of insecurity occasioned by rampant cases of armed robbery, gruesome murder, assassinations and poor response rate to distress calls from victims of violent crimes in Nigeria. In other words, a significant number of police personnel continue to undermine the integrity of the Nigeria police, despite the fact that they swore to an oath that they would be of good behaviour when being enlisted. This specifically manifests when they meet members of the public. This police- citizens contacts often result in alleged police brutalities, improper arrests, high level corruption, unjustifiable use of firearms, improper pulling over of vehicles, and extortion of money from motorists in major cities and on high ways in Nigeria and this act is grossly unprofessional. The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 margin of error.

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between the emotional competence of junior police officers and effective policing in Nigeria.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between self-efficacy of junior police officers and effective policing in Nigeria.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between professionalism of junior police officers and effective policing in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey research design of ex-post facto type. With population of police junior officers from twenty randomly selected police station post in the three senatorial district of each of the six states in the South-Western region of Nigeria (Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo and Ekiti States), six hundred junior police officers (345 males and 255 females) were randomly selected from a cluster of police stations in the states using the box simple random technique for selection of the police station. Their mean age was 28yrs.

The Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI) is a 360-degree tool designed to assess the emotional competencies of individuals and organizations. It is based on emotional competencies identified by Dr. Daniel Goleman in *Working with Emotional Intelligence* (1998), and on competencies from Hay/McBer's *Generic Competency Dictionary* (1996) as well as Dr. Richard Boyatzis's *Self-Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ)* Boyatzis, Goleman and Rhee (1999). The Emotional Competence Inventory 2.0 (ECI) measures 18 competencies organized into four clusters: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, and Relationship Management. The Emotional Competence Inventory takes approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. Internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of the instrument has been found to be good for "total others" ratings.

The reliabilities range from .68 (Transparency) to .87 (Emotional Self Awareness) with an overall average reliability of .78. The reliabilities of the "self" rating were not as good and ranged from .47 (Conflict Management) to .76 (Inspirational Leadership) with an overall average reliability of .63. Police Self-Efficacy Scale (PSES) by Aremu (2009) is a ten item scale and the scores on the scale ranged from 10 to 100. Items 1 to 7 are adapted from Pearlin and Schooler's (1978) Mastery Scale. It has an inter-item consistency of 0.91. Police Professional Conduct Scale by Aremu (2009) is a ten item scale. Items 7, 8, 9 and 10 were adapted from Adebayo (2005). Except for items 2, all other items should be reversed. PPCS has a coefficient of 0.82. Police Effectiveness Scale by Aremu (2009) is a ten item scale. The scale is scored by averaging responses to items and multiplying by 10 (scores therefore ranging from 10 to 100). The scale inter-item consistency is 0.91. The scales adopted the 4 point likert format.

The researcher obtained permission from the DPO of selected police stations in each of the states in the Southwest. The consent of the participants was equally sought and obtained. Having sought and obtained the consent of the participants, the researchers with the assistance of some police officers personally administered copies of the instruments with some explanation on how to complete them and the purpose of the research. Data were analyzed with Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression statistical tools at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The extent to which emotional competence, self-efficacy and professionalism serves as correlates of effective policing among junior officers in south-west Nigeria is presented as thus:

Table 1: Emotional Competence, Self-Efficacy and Professionalism as Correlates of Effective Policing among Junior Police Officers: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix of Relationship between variables.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
Effective Policing	600	62.41	10.449	1.000			
Self-Efficacy	600	30.03	6.103	.543	1.000		
Emotional Competence	600	63.88	12.066	.679	.524	1.000	
Professionalism	600	62.38	12.723	.496	.441	.595	1.000

Table 1 gives description of measures of association between the variables identified in this study. The scores indicate significant relationship between the variables (Self-Efficacy, Emotional Competence and Professionalism). The table shows that emotional competence has the highest correlation with effective policing among junior police officers $r = .679$, $p < 0.05$.

Table 2: Regression summary showing the joint effect of the independent variables on effective policing among junior police officers.

R	=	.717			
R ²	=	.515			
Adj R ²	=	.510			
Std Error	=	7.317			
Source	Df	SS	MS	F-Ratio	Sig
Regression	3	16798.118	5599.373	104.592	.000
Residual	596	15846.452	53.535		
Total	599	32644.570			

SS = Sum squares, MS = Mean square

Based on the result presented in table 2, the three independent variables made a joint contribution of 51.5% to the total prediction on effective policing among junior police officers. The composite effect of the independent variables as jointly contributive on effective policing among junior police officers are revealed as thus, $R = .717$, $R^2 = .515$, $Adj. R^2 = .510$ and Std. error of estimate 7.317. The result of the multiple regression analysis produced an F-ratio $(3/596) = 104.592$ which was significant at $p < 0.05$ alpha level.

Table 3: Relative contribution of the independent variables on effective policing among junior police officers.

Variables	B	Std.Error	Beta	T	Sig
Self-Efficacy	.412	.083	.241	4.970	.000
Emotional Competence	.431	.047	.498	9.216	.000
Professionalism	0.00757	.042	.092	1.794	.074

Table 3 highlights the relative effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The table reveals that the independent variables (Self-Efficacy, Emotional Competence and Professionalism) made significant contributions on effective policing among junior police officers. As displayed on the table emotional competence has a higher significant contributing effect on effective policing among junior police officers. Followed by self-efficacy while professionalism made less significant contribution. The t-observed for each of the variables attest to this fact.

Table 4: PPMC summary table showing significant relationship between emotional competence of junior police officers and effective policing in Nigeria.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	R	Df	P
Effective policing	600	62.41	10.449	.679	598	Sig
Emotional competence	600	63.88	12.066			

The table shows that the variable emotional competence positively and significantly correlates with effective policing in Nigeria. The mean and standard deviation for social support was 63.88 and 12.066 respectively. With this result the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the emotional competence of junior police officers and effective policing in Nigeria is thus, rejected.

Table 5: PPMC summary table showing significant relationship between self-efficacy of junior police officers and effective policing in Nigeria.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	R	Df	P
Effective policing	600	62.41	10.449	.543	598	Sig
Self-efficacy	600	30.03	6.103			

The table shows that the variable self-efficacy correlates significantly with effective policing in Nigeria. The mean and standard deviation for self-efficacy is 30.03 and 6.103 respectively. With this result the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between self-efficacy of junior police officers and effective policing in Nigeria is thus rejected.

Table 6: PPMC summary table showing significant relationship between professionalism of junior police officers and effective policing in Nigeria

Variables	N	Mean	SD	R	Df	P
Effective policing	600	62.41	10.449	.496	598	Sig
Professionalism	600	62.38	12.723			

The table 6 shows that the variable professionalism significantly correlates with effective policing in Nigeria. The mean and standard deviation for professionalism is 62.38 and 12.723 respectively. Consequently, the position of the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between professionalism of junior police officers and effective policing in Nigeria is rejected.

The result from the study indicates that effective policing among junior police officers in Nigeria requires them to be emotionally competent, self-efficacious and professionally upright. If this is the case therefore, the current incidence of terror, lawlessness, kidnapping, ethno-religious conflict, social disorder, armed robbery,

and senseless vindictive assassinations being experienced in the Nigerian State would be a thing of the past such that Nigeria could be transformed to a modest state of peace, safety and harmony. This is in congruence with the behaviorists, point of view that effective policing for National Security goes beyond buying of sophisticated weapons and equipment for police officers to work with. It also goes beyond providing police officers with air-conditioned jeeps, cars and all that. Behaviorists simply reason that the bed rock for effective policing in Nigeria is adoption of a policy that could raise the morale of the rank and file of Nigerian police. Develop emotional competence, self-efficacy and promote professionalism. This they believe could catapult the output of police officers, hence security (Emeka, 2007).

Further finding revealed that emotional competence, self-efficacy and professionalism had joint significant contributive effect on effective policing of junior police officers. This can be attributed to the fact that policing in Nigeria is a specialized professional career. Therefore, by inclination the attitude of its officers to, and enjoyment of work has an impact on the organization effectiveness. This supports Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974) view that the psychological attachment of employees to the organization could predict employee effectiveness. The result of the first hypothesis tested showed that emotional competence correlates significantly with policing effectiveness among junior officers in Nigeria Police.

The reason for this could be that emotional competence is germane to stimulating effective policing in any society. Thus, this learned capabilities, could reinforce efficiency and effectiveness among Nigerian police officers. This gives credence to Fishler's (1997) view that police officers need to develop healthy relationships and manage conflict while achieving productive goals. To achieve their goals, police officers need to be emotionally competent as to be able to build, maintain, and strengthen alliances and partnerships, both within and outside their organization. The result of the second hypothesis showed that self-efficacy correlates significantly with policing effectiveness among junior officers in Nigeria Police. This could be premised on the fact that self-efficacy is a critical psychological factor affecting the behaviour of individual worker in an organizations. And a strong self-efficacy enhances human accomplishment and personal well-being in many ways.

This predisposes the fact that police officers with high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks of policing as challenges to be measured rather than as threats to be avoided. They approach threatening situation with assurance that they can exercise control over them. Such an efficacious outlook produces personal accomplishment, reduces stress and lowers vulnerability to depression (Multon, Brown and Lent, 1991; Pajare, 1996, 1997; Bandura, 2000). The result of the third hypothesis showed that professionalism correlates significantly with policing effectiveness among junior officers in Nigeria Police. The reason for this could be align to the fact that Professionalism within the Nigeria police force incorporates set of values and attitudes which aim to forge the respect and conduct worthy of a profession. Therefore, True professionalism in policing is viewed as a recognized indicator and predictor of police effectiveness globally (Jeffrey, 2009).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Though in Nigeria crime and violence is moving on a fast lane, but with adequate training in the psychology of policing and human interpersonal relationship, junior officers in Nigeria Police could excel in their duty to serve and protect Nigerian citizens and society to the envy of all. From the foregoing and based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that the Nigeria Police should develop training programmes that could develop in junior officers emotional competence, self-confidence and express good professional and ethical behaviour. Also, the Nigeria Police authority should adequately train junior officers in the psychology of policing for effective policing.

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