Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Wellbeing of Civil Servants in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study on emotional intelligence and psychological well-being of civil servants was conducted in Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Nigeria. It adopted an ex-post facto design. The populations comprised 49,704 Civil Servants from the 27 Ministries in the Federal Capital Territory. A sample of 354 Civil Servants was used for the study. The study was guided by two hypotheses formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample. An adopted scale titled 'Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Wellbeing Questionnaire" (EIPWQ)'' was used for data collection. Data were collected by the researchers with the help of research assistants. The data were analyzed using descriptive and Regression Statistics at p = 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed that emotional intelligence significantly predicts psychological wellbeing of civil servants and their gender in Abuja. Recommendations are Employers should be aware of their staff emotional intelligence as it relate to their psychological wellbeing, help their staff to manage their emotional intelligence and civil servants on their parts should use their emotions to motivate themselves. Conclusion, the study has shown that emotional intelligence predicts the psychological well-being of civil servants in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, prediction, psychological wellbeing

INTRODUCTION

Civil servants are the engine room of the economy of any nation. Without civil servants, the workings and operations of government would not be very smooth.

Therefore, there is a need for proper care and servicing of the sub-sector. The welfare of every civil servant is so important since they are the engine room of the economy. Civil servants have a lot of needs to satisfy daily. Some of the needs of the civil servants are domestic and organizational needs; if not properly managed could affect them adversely.

Psychological well-being is an essential factor in the life of every civil servant. Psychological distress can be a problem among civil servants. Psychological well-being is a normal state of mental health or an absence of mental illness among civil servants (Morgan & Farsides, 2009). It is the psychological state of civil servants who function at a satisfactory level of emotional and behavioral adjustments (WHO, 2014). From the perspective of positive psychology, psychological well-being may include an ability to enjoy life and create a balance between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological resilience. The well-being of an individual is the realization of the ability to cope with life stresses, productive work, and contribution to the community (Morgan & Farsides, 2009). It is a complete state of physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (Nelis, Kotsou, Quoidbach, Hansenne, Weytens & Dupuis, 2011). It can affect daily life, relationship, physical health, and the ability to enjoy life and balance activities and efforts to achieve psychological resilience (Zeidner, Matthews & Roberts, 2012).

Psychological well-being is the successful performance of mental functions, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with other people, and providing the ability to adapt to change and cope with adversity. The term mental illness is a form of psychological abnormality; that refers collectively to all diagnosable mental disorders and health conditions characterized by alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior associated with distress or impaired functioning (Di Fabio & Kenny, 2015). Employees in an organization have to deal with a range of tasks, duties and responsibilities. Employees possess a set of competencies and a required level of intelligence to accomplish an organizational objective. Intelligence in this context refers to the capacity to understand basic principles, truths, and facts, acquire knowledge and apply it to practical situations. This study also wants to unravel how emotional intelligence could predict the psychological well-being of civil servants in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.

Emotional intelligence has gained attention as a focus of research and intervention for its promise as a set of skills that enhance resources and promote well-being. The connection between emotional intelligence and a range of positive outcomes across the academic, social, psychological, and career domains among civil servants is yet to be well-documented, making the researchers investigate how emotional intelligence would influence civil servants' psychological well-being.

A significant association between emotional intelligence and the psychological well-being of civil servants is supported by conceptual models that explain the possible causal mechanisms through which emotional intelligence might influence well-being. Seifert (2011) suggests that emotional intelligence and psychological well-being foster adaptive methods of coping with social challenges, social stress, and interpersonal conflict, promoting the development of supportive social networks, decreasing negative and increasing positive emotions, and enhancing emotional regulation among public servants. Emotional intelligence is also conceptually related to the psychological well-being focus on personal growth and self-actualization (Seifert, 2011). Interpersonal (social) and intrapersonal skills are emotional awareness and internal self-regulation. Emotional intelligence should contribute to positive relationships with others and the capacity for mastery over an environment that allows for personal growth, a sense of meaning in life, and self-actualization (Zeidner & Olnick-Shemesh, 2010; Friedman & Kern, 2014).

Emotional intelligence is the capability to recognize emotions, discern between different feelings and label them appropriately, use the information to guide thinking and behaviour, and manage or adjust emotions to adapt to environments to achieve one's goal(s) (Goleman, 1999). Civil servants may set challenging goals and maintain commitments for themselves. They may heighten and sustain their efforts in the face of failure. They may approach threatening situations with the hope of assurance that they can exercise control over them. Such an efficacious outlook may produce personal accomplishments, reduces stress, and lowers vulnerability to depression (Luszczynska & Schwarzer, 2005). Sagone and De-Caroli (2014) carried out a study to examine the relationships between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being. Their results showed a positive relationship between psychological well-being and emotional intelligence. The review study was on relationships between psychological well-being and emotional intelligence as a predictor of work.

Sakunthala-Rathnakara (2014) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and the psychological well-being of public and private sector executives. Their finding was that there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and the psychological well-being of executives. Emotionally intelligent employees possess a higher level of psychological well-being and a positive impact on the success of their work and non-work life. The review and our study used psychological well-being as a variable, but this study differs in location, design, sample size, and respondents. Guerra-Bustamante, León-del-Barco, Yuste-Tosina, López-Ramos, and Mendo-Lázaro (2019) studied emotional intelligence and psychological well-being in adolescents in the Community of Extremadura, Spain. Their results show that as the capacity to understand and regulate intelligence increases, happiness also increases. Adolescence is seen as an ideal time to encourage the development of emotional abilities that contribute to the greater good of individuals.

Every day, workers in the FCT leave their houses and travel distances to get to their offices; some are subject to domestic and official problems that may affect their psychological level. These problems are suspected to affect their well-being. On this premise, this study investigates the relationship between daily problems to emotional intelligence and how it can predict the psychological well-being of civil servants in the Federal Capital Territory. Civil servants in Federal Capital Territory are likely to have a lot of psychological setbacks due to the stress of meeting their daily demands. Some civil servants are involved in domestic and workplace challenges that can affect their psychological well-being. Psychological distress is a problem for civil servants in the Federal Capital Territory. It might relate to their inability to cope with daily job stress. This daily stress from family members, co-civil servants, and superiors results in low self-esteem. Psychological distress is not a respecter of gender and ethnicity. Lack of psychological well-being seems to be a harmful and killing agent in every society, which may result in many disorders among civil servants in the FCT. It is why the researchers decided to provide statistical evidence on emotional intelligence as a predictor of psychological well-being among civil servants in Abuja.

This study would benefit civil servants, stakeholders in education, curriculum planners, and employers of labour, government, and researchers. When findings are published, the civil servants, stakeholders in education, curriculum planners, and employers of labour, government, and researchers, in the Federal Capital Territory

Abuja would also benefit in boosting their psychological well-being for proper engagement in their work.

The purpose of this study was to investigate emotional intelligence and psychological well-being among civil servants in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. Specifically to:

1.   Determine if emotional intelligence can predict the psychological well-being of civil servants in Federal Capital Territory Abuja.

2.   Determine if emotional intelligence can predict the psychological well-being of civil servants in Federal Capital Territory Abuja based on gender.

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

1.   Emotional intelligence cannot significantly predict the psychological well-being of civil servants in FCT.

2.   Emotional intelligence cannot significantly predict the psychological well-being of civil servants in FCT based on gender.

METHOD

The study employs an *ex-post facto* design. The area is the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, the capital city of Nigeria. The FCT has many industries and serves as the headquarters of many Government establishments (Federal Capital Territory Administration Achieved, 2018). The population consisted of all 49,704 Civil Servants from 27 Ministries in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja (Establishment and Records of each Ministry & IPPIS platform, 2019). The sample for this study consisted of 354 Civil Servants from 27 randomly selected Ministries in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. A stratified random sampling technique was adopted in selecting the sample.

The instrument for data collection was the Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Wellbeing Questionnaire" (EIPWQ). The questionnaire has two clusters (A & B). Cluster A contains 33 items soliciting information on emotional intelligence, and cluster B has 42 items of information on psychological well-being structured on a four-point rating scale with response modes of Strongly Agreed = 4, Agreed = 3, Disagree= 2, and Strongly Disagree = 1. Since the instrument was adopted and used in a different environment, it was ideal to re-validate it. It was re-validated by three

experts, two from Guidance and Counselling and one expert from Test and Measurement, all from the Department of Education Foundations and General Studies, Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi. Their contributions were used in preparing the final instrument.

The questionnaire was administered to 30 Civil Servants in Federal Parastatals in the Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State, which was not part of but had characteristics similar to the sample to establish the reliability. Cronbach Alpha determined the internal consistency of the items. The reliability coefficient from each cluster was 0.85 and 0.89, while the overall reliability index of the instrument was 0.80. The research questionnaire was administered with the help of five research assistants. They were instructed on the mode of administration and retrieval of the questionnaire. The researchers and research assistants collected the instrument from the respondents immediately after completion.

The mean, standard deviation, and multiple regression method were used to analyse the data. The hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance, and a benchmark of 2.50 was established. An item with a mean rating of 2.50 and above was accepted, while a mean below 2.50 was in disagreement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Mean and standard Deviation of Emotional intelligence as a predictor of psychological well-being of civil servants in Federal Capital Territory Abuja

S/N	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remarks
1	I know when to speak about my personal problems to others	3.02	1.04	Agreed
2	When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times I faced similar obstacles and overcame them	3.02	.84	Agreed
3	I expect that I would do well on most things I try	3.16	.79	Agreed
4	Other people find it easy to confide on me	3.13	.91	Agreed
5	I find it easy to understand the non-verbal messages of other people	3.02	.92	Agreed
6	Some of the major events of my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important and not important	3.03	.96	Agreed
7	When my mood changes, I see new possibilities	3.13	.83	Agreed
8	Emotions are some of the things that make my life worth living	3.01	.93	Agreed
9	I am aware of my emotions as I experience them	2.39	.90	Not

				Agreed
10	I expect good things to happen	2.97	.93	Agreed
11	I like to share my emotions with others	3.05	.94	Agreed
12	When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last	3.04	1.00	Agreed
13	I arrange events others enjoy	3.28	.75	Agreed
14	I seek out activities that make me happy	3.15	.75	Agreed
15	I am aware of the non-verbal messages I send to others	3.10	.90	Agreed
16	I present myself in a way that makes good impression on others	2.93	.93	Agreed
17	When I am in a good mood, solving problems is easy for me	3.03	.93	Agreed
18	By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing	3.19	.82	Agreed
19	I know why my emotions change	3.07	.91	Agreed
20	When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas	2.37	.89	Not Agreed
21	I have control over my emotions	2.93	.94	Agreed
22	I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them	3.03	.93	Agreed
23	I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome to task I take on	3.01	.92	Agreed
24	I compliment others when they have done something well	3.02	.96	Agreed
25	I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send	3.13	.83	Agreed
26	When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I have experienced this event myself	2.98	.94	Agreed
27	When I feel a change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas	2.48	.92	Not Agreed
28	When I am faced with a challenge, I give up because I believe I will fail	3.00	.88	Agreed
29	I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them	3.08	.91	Agreed
30	I help other people feel better when they are down	3.06	.97	Agreed
31	I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles	3.28	.75	Agreed
32	I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice	3.16	.80	Agreed
33	It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do	3.13	.88	Agreed
	Cluster Mean	3.01	.89	Agreed

Table 1 reveals that three items (items 9, 20 and 27) fell below the benchmark set for the prediction level at 2.50, while the remaining 30 items were above the prediction

level of 2.50 with a range between 3.00 and 3.28. The analysis indicates that emotional intelligence positively predicts the psychological well-being of Civil Servants in FCT.

Table 2: Mean and Standard deviation of emotional intelligence as a predictor of psychological well-being civil servants in Federal Capital Territory Abuja based on gender

S/N	Items	Male (N = 199)			Female (N = 198)		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
1	I know when to speak about my personal problems to others	3.11	.97	Agreed	3.02	1.05	Agreed
2	When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times I faced similar obstacles and overcame them	3.27	.74	Agreed	3.24	.84	Agreed
3	I expect that I would do well on most things I try	3.23	.72	Agreed	3.19	.77	Agreed
4	Other people find it easy to confide on me	3.24	.88	Agreed	3.17	.85	Agreed
5	I find it easy to understand the non-verbal messages of other people	3.03	.94	Agreed	3.05	.86	Agreed
6	Some of the major events of my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important and not important	3.10	.94	Agreed	3.02	.94	Agreed
7	When my mood changes, I see new possibilities	3.17	.79	Agreed	3.09	.87	Agreed
8	Emotions are some of the things that make my life worth living	3.02	.92	Agreed	3.02	.92	Agreed
9	I am aware of my emotions as I experience them	2.33	.88	Not Agreed	2.56	.93	Not Agreed
10	I expect good things to happen	3.03	.94	Agreed	2.91	.92	Agreed
11	I like to share my emotions with others	3.10	.94	Agreed	2.99	.93	Agreed
12	When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last	3.09	.99	Agreed	2.98	1.01	Agreed
13	I arrange events others enjoy	3.36	.71	Agreed	3.20	.78	Agreed
14	I seek out activities that make me happy	3.15	.78	Agreed	3.16	.71	Agreed
15	I am aware of the non-verbal messages I send to others	3.08	.92	Agreed	3.16	.85	Agreed
16	I present myself in a way that makes good impression on others	2.90	.94	Agreed	2.99	.89	Agreed
17	When I am in a good mood, solving problems is easy for me	3.01	.96	Agreed	3.04	.90	Agreed
18	By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing	3.25	.83	Agreed	3.12	.80	Agreed

19	I know why my emotions change	3.11	.93	Agreed	3.01	.88	Agreed
20	When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas	2.37	.90	Not Agreed	2.36	.88	Not Agreed
21	I have control over my emotions	2.90	.94	Agreed	2.95	.93	Agreed
22	I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them	3.01	.96	Agreed	3.05	.91	Agreed
23	I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome to task I take on	3.02	.94	Agreed	3.00	.89	Agreed
24	I compliment others when they have done something well	3.05	.96	Agreed	3.00	.95	Agreed
25	I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send	3.15	.82	Agreed	3.10	.85	Agreed
26	When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I have experienced this event myself	3.02	.92	Agreed	2.93	.95	Agreed
27	When I feel a change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas	2.51	.94	Agreed	2.48	.92	Not Agreed
28	When I am faced with a challenge, I give up because I believe I will fail	2.98	.91	Agreed	3.01	.85	Agreed
29	I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them	3.13	.92	Agreed	3.05	.90	Agreed
30	I help other people feel better when they are down	3.06	1.02	Agreed	3.06	.92	Agreed
31	I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles	3.30	.75	Agreed	3.26	.76	Agreed
32	I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice	3.10	.88	Agreed	3.22	.71	Agreed
33	t is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do	3.11	.91	Agreed	3.19	.81	Agreed
	Cluster Mean	**3.03**	**.87**	**Agreed**	**2.92**	**.87**	**Agreed**

Table 2 reveals that two items (items 9 and 20) fell below the benchmark set for the prediction level at 2.50 for male civil servants. Two items (items 9 and 20) fell below the benchmark set for the prediction level at 2.50 for female civil servants, while the remaining 31 items were above the prediction level of 2.50, with a range of 2.51 and 3.36 for male civil servants. Similarly, 31 items were above the prediction level of 2.50, a range of between 2.56 to 3.26 for female civil servants. The analysis reveals that emotional intelligence positively predicts the psychological well-being of Civil Servants in FCT based on gender with equal numbers of items in each case.

Hypothesis 1: Emotional intelligence cannot significantly predict the psychological well-being of civil servants in FCT.

Table 3: Regression Analysis of psychological wellbeing and emotional intelligence

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Dec.
Regression	9416.119	1	9416.119	79.908	.000	S
Residual	46427.841	352	117.837			
Total	55843.960	353				

$\alpha = 0.05$, S = Significant

Table 3 shows the regression analysis of the significant predictors of psychological well-being and emotional intelligence of civil servants in FCT. The result shows an F-ratio of 79.908 with an associated probability value of 0.00. This probability value of 0.00 is less than the 0.05 level of significance set by the researchers. The null hypothesis that emotional intelligence cannot significantly predict the psychological well-being of civil servants in FCT is rejected. The inference drawn is that there is a significant prediction of psychological well-being on the emotional intelligence of civil servants in FCT.

Hypothesis 2: Emotional intelligence cannot significantly predict the psychological well-being of civil servants in FCT based on gender.

Table 4: Regression Analysis of psychological wellbeing and emotional intelligence based on gender

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Dec.
Regression	4941.031	2	2470.515	14.640	.000	S
Residual	32907.055	173	168.754			
Total	37848.086	175				

$\alpha = 0.05$, S = Significant

Table 4 shows the regression analysis of the significant predictors of psychological well-being and emotional intelligence of civil servants in FCT based on gender. The result shows an F-ratio of 14.640 with an associated probability value of 0.00. The probability value of 0.00 is less than the 0.05 level of significance set by the researcher. The null hypothesis that emotional intelligence cannot significantly predict the psychological well-being of civil servants in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja based

on gender was rejected. Hence, there is a significant prediction of psychological well-being by emotional intelligence of civil servants in FCT based on gender.

The findings revealed that emotional intelligence predicts the psychological well-being of Civil Servants in FCT. It disagrees with Guerra-Bustamante *et al.* (2019), whose results showed negative correlations between the psychological well-being and emotional stability of hotel employees. They also found two predictor variables of significance in explaining emotional stability. The study agrees with the findings of Nelis *et al.* (2011), who revealed a positive correlation between psychological well-being with emotional intelligence among elite athletes. The study also agreed with Sakunthala-Rathnakara (2014), whose results provided evidence of a positive relationship between EI and PWB ($\hat{r} = 0.32$). Also, the study aligns with Zeidner and Olnick-Shemesh (2010) that there is a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being. The study negates the findings of Nelis *et al.* (2011), whose results revealed a negative correlation between emotional intelligence and stress at work, indicating that high scorers in overall EI suffered less stress in the occupational environment.

Emotional intelligence significantly predicts the psychological well-being of civil servants in FCT based on gender. The findings agree with Zeidner and Olnick-Shemesh (2010), who showed that girls scored significantly higher than boys on emotional intelligence, compared to a significant difference between boys' and girls' scores on total psychological well-being. The result negates the findings of Sagone and De-Caroli (2014) with an insignificant relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being. Results also showed that there is no gender difference in emotional intelligence patients. The study negates the findings of Zeidner, Matthews, and Roberts (2012), whose results showed that gender had no significant contributions to psychological well-being.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated emotional intelligence and the psychological well-being of civil servants in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. It concluded that employers should focus on their staff's emotional intelligence to improve workers' productivity. When Civil Servants are educated and emotionally intelligent, their performance is

improved. In conclusion, the study has shown that emotional intelligence can predict Civil Servants' psychological well-being in FCT, Abuja, Nigeria. Based on the findings, it is recommended that:

1. Employers should be aware of their staff's emotional intelligence related to their psychological well-being.
2. Employers should help their workers to manage their emotions intelligently.
3. Civil servants should use their emotional intelligence to motivate themselves.

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