

## Assessment of Emotional Intelligence among Nigerian Police

A. Oyesoji Aremu and T. Oluwayemisi Tejumola\*

*Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria*

*E-mail: sojiaremu@yahoo.co.uk*

*\*Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria*

**KEYWORDS** Emotional intelligence; police; gender; job status; marital status

**ABSTRACT** This study used an ex-post facto approach to assess emotional intelligence in the Nigeria Police. In the study, emotional intelligence of participants was content-rated using Emotional Intelligence Test. With a sample of 285 police (officers and men), the results indicated that Nigerian police are not emotionally intelligent when they were tested on the following variables: gender ( $t = .692, > 0.05$ ), age ( $t = .66, > 0.05$ ), job status ( $t = .36, > 0.05$ ), marital status ( $t = 1.1, > 0.05$ ), and years of experience ( $F = 1.372, > 0.05$ ). The results indicate the need for the Nigerian Police to embrace emotional intelligence.

### INTRODUCTION

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 (Aremu, 2005). 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 is accused of other than corruption is poor interpersonal relationship which is an important index in emotional intelligence.

Of recent, in Nigeria, research attention on emotional intelligence has proliferated across disciplines and among researchers (Adeyemo, 2004; Adeyemo and Ogunyemi, 2005; Aremu, 2005). Ashforth and Humphrey (1995) corroborated this by asserting that social scientists are just beginning to uncover the relationship of EI to other phenomena. The general contention of these researchers is that emotional intelligence as a construct of interest is germane to the well being of man, his organization and his society. Mayer and Salovey (1993) have defined emotional intelligence "as a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and other's emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions (p. 433)". From this definition, it is observed that emotional intelligence has its root in the concept of social intelligence, which was first propounded by Thorndike in 1920. According to Thorndike (1920), social intelligence

is the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls to act wisely in human relations. Gardner (1993) in his theory of multiple intelligences classified it under interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence. Gardner (1993) described interpersonal intelligence as the ability to understand other people, while intrapersonal intelligence is a correlative ability. That is, ability to understand self. It was from these two concepts from Howard Gardner's Multiple Theory of Intelligence that the Emotional Intelligence took its derivation.

Salovey and Mayer (1990) were of the opinion that emotional intelligence can be categorized into five domains:

Self-awareness (i.e., observing oneself and recognizing one's feeling as it happens); managing emotions (i.e., handling feelings in a more appropriate way); motivating oneself (i.e., channeling one's emotions in the direction of a goal); empathy (i.e., being sensitive to others' feelings and concerns); and handling relationships (i.e., managing others' emotions).

The above indicates the dynamism and relevance of emotional intelligence in human endeavours (including work place and organization). Goleman (1995) lent a support to this by asserting that emotional intelligence involves the skills that help people harmonize; and what has become increasingly valued as a work place asset in the years to come. This again underscores the importance of emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence is seen as an important factor for enhancing leadership effectiveness because of its emphasis on people and interpersonal relationships (Caruso et al., 2002).

Similarly, Schutte et al. (2001) gave an empirical report that emotional intelligence is related to interpersonal relations and cooperation. One of the reasons why emotional intelligence is germane to interpersonal relationship is that it has to do with understanding of feelings (most especially in other people).

Studies on emotional intelligence as earlier observed, took a centre point in the last two decades (most especially in Europe and America). Interestingly, these studies cover a wide range of socio-educational spectrum. Bachman et al. (2000) reported that competence in the collection of debt among account officers depend on some underlying competencies (emotional intelligence). Along this research contention, Derman (1999) observed that emotional intelligence could influence the success or failure of a business. Slaski and Cartwright (2002) also reported that participants – who scored higher on EI, suffered less subjective stress, experienced better health and well-being, and demonstrated better management performance. In the same vein, Yates (1999) concluded from his study that there was a relationship between the health habits of college-aged health education students and emotional intelligence.

On demographic variables and emotional intelligence there have not been much studies. Of recent, Adeyemo (2004) in his study on the patterns of emotional intelligence among counseling psychology students reported that gender was not significant. However, in similar findings on the effect of gender on emotional intelligence, Madonna and Gainor (2001) reported that females do display higher degree of emotional intelligence than their male counterparts. Studies have also shown that emotional intelligence increases with age (Adeyemo, 2004; Click, 2002).

Till date and unlike what obtains in other populations and organizations, there have not been sufficient studies on police and emotional intelligence. The few available ones are from Europe and America. This further supports the importance of the current study.

Donna (2003) for example reported that there was an inverse relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout among police officers from the Northeastern United States of America. According to the researcher, this has implications for selection and training in the police. Other than this, it could also be reasoned that it would not be out of context if police have any organizational

climate that is emotional intelligence-friendly. Aremu (2005) had inter alia found that emotional intelligence could influence career commitment of young police in Ibadan, Nigeria.

Bellamy and Bellamy (2003) reported from their study on transformational leadership in the police that there were substantial and statistically significant correlations between the emotional intelligence and transformational leadership qualities among the police. Bellamy and Bellamy (2003) then conclude that the orientation of police administrators is salient to leadership processes. They also contended that emotional intelligence, which is the ability to comprehend, perceive, regulate one's emotions and others (Mayer and Salovey, 1997) would be critical to the management of police work.

#### FRAME WORK AND HYPOTHESES

Some theoretical assumptions underscore intelligence as a social construct. Intelligence is described as a strong correlate of many life's outcomes like educational and occupational attainment (Gottfredson, 1986). It is generally regarded as one of the defining attributes of human nature. General intelligence, which is also referred to Intelligent Quotient (IQ), has for long been identified as an essential attribute in man. Psychologists, in the last two decades, have however argued that I.Q could only account for 10 percent of the totality of human intelligence. This means that the remaining 90 percent is accounted for by another form of intelligence – Emotional Intelligence (EI).

This EI is sometimes referred to as emotional quotient or emotional literacy. Wayne Leon Payne first academically used the term in 1986 in his doctoral dissertation. In 1990, Mayer and Salovey also used the term EI most especially in form of tests. The individual that is most associated with emotional intelligence is Goleman (1995).

Hein (2005) expatiated that emotional facilitation of thought means the ability to incorporate feelings, and potential of feelings to guide the individual. According to Hein (2005), emotional understanding means the ability to solve emotional problems, and ability to understand the value of emotions for survival. And lastly, he contended that emotional management means the ability to take responsibility for one's emotions and happiness; the ability to turn negative emotions into positive

learning and growing opportunities; and the ability to help others identify and benefit from their emotions.

The foregoing assumptions could perfectly fit into the policing job most especially in Nigeria where police are rated low by the public mainly as a result of corruption and extra judicial killings (Aremu, 2004, 2005). The theoretical underpinnings of emotional intelligence are on relationships (internal/intrapersonal) and being aware of other people's feelings and one's feelings.

Two important similarities therefore, exist between emotional intelligence and policing. First, policing job is essentially and primarily based on human contact. And for a rewarding contact, there must be a proper understanding by the person making the contact. Aremu and Adeyoju (1998) were of the opinion that Nigerian police would fare better in interpersonal relationships if their college and academy curricula are re-organized to include psycho-behavioural and management courses. According to them, this would make the police to be more humane when on duty. Good as the submissions of Aremu and Adeyoju (1998) were, they practically did not mention the exact courses. Thus, it stands to reason that emotional intelligence, as a programme in police training would address some identified problems of Nigerian police.

Secondly, police need to properly value themselves by having high self-concept. Nigerian police are not only undervalued, they themselves are reticent of the public goodwill. This could affect their self-presentation as police officers.

Aremu (2005) theorized that police job involves a dyadic relationship between the police and the Policed (the public). He stressed that police job is always situated within the context of human society. This theoretical assertion has bearing with the theoretical framework of the present study in which people would have to properly value their emotional intelligence for survival in the society.

From this theoretical framework, it is hypothesized that the assessment of emotional intelligence among the police would be significantly influenced by gender, age, job status, marital status, and work experience. It is also expected that through these variables, the degree of assessment of emotional intelligence among the Nigerian police would be determined. The study therefore, assumed that results therein would contribute to the growing body of

empirical knowledge on emotional intelligence generally and emotional intelligence and policing in particular.

## METHOD

**Population and Participants:** 285 participants from the population of police in promotional training course at the Police College, Ikeja, Lagos State and Oyo State Police Command participated in the study. 186 of them were males, while 99 were females. 188 of the participants were from the Lagos State police command, while 97 were from the Oyo State police command. They all ranged in age between 26 and 54 ( $x = 33.6$ ,  $SD = 2.4$ ). As also determined by the self-report made by the participants, 157 were married and 128 were unmarried; 180 were non-officers, and 105 were officers; and 187 were young and 98 were old.

**Procedure:** Administration of questionnaires was carried out at the Oyo State Police Command; and at the Police College, Ikeja, Lagos during a six-week promotional training course for the police in June 2005. The researcher obtained the permission of the Commissioner of Police (CP), Oyo State Police Command, and Commandant of the Police College, Ikeja, Lagos state. The researcher with the assistance of six postgraduate students personally administered the questionnaires.

**Instrument:** Self-report Emotional Intelligence Test. The 33-item scale developed by Schutte et al. (1998) was used to measure emotional intelligence of the participants. The SREIT is structured on a 5-point rating format (5 = Strongly Agree, 1 = Strongly Disagree) of items such as "I know when to speak about my personal problems to others", "I expect that I will do well on most things I try", "I like to share my emotions with others", and "I present myself in a way that makes a good impression on others". The cronbach co-efficient internal consistency of the scale in the current study was a .75.

## RESULTS

T-test and analysis of variance statistics were utilized to test the five hypotheses raised in the study. While t-test statistics was employed to test the significance of gender, age, job and marital status on emotional intelligence of participants, analysis of variance was utilized to test for the

significant effect of work experience on emotional intelligence of police. For these analyses, the margin of error was determined at .05 alpha levels.

**Gender and Police Emotional Intelligence:**

The first variable tested was gender. Naturally it is expected that emotional intelligence of police would be moderated by gender. However, as shown in table 1, the effect of gender as a variable on emotional intelligence of the participants was found to be insignificant (male and female,  $n_1 = 186, n_2 = 99, x_1 = 113.4, x_2 = 111.6; t = .692, > 0.05$ ).

**Table 1: T-test comparison of police emotional intelligence based on gender**

Variable	N	X	SD	df	t	P
Male	186	113.4	23.33	283	.692	NS*
Female	99	111.6	15.2			

NS: Not Significant

**Age and Police Emotional Intelligence:** The second hypothesis sought to know the effect of age of participants on their emotional intelligence. The results obtained showed that age, as a variable does not determine emotional intelligence of the participants. It was therefore found to be insignificant (young and old police,  $n_1 = 187, n_2 = 98; x_1 = 112, x_2 = 113.9; t = .658, > 0.05$ ).

**Table 2: T-test Comparison of Police Emotional Intelligence based on age**

Variable	N	X	SD	df	t	P
Young Police	187	112.2	22.11	283	.66	NS*
Old Police	98	113.9	16.9			

NS: Not significant

**Job Status and Police Emotional Intelligence:** The study also examined the effect the job status of the participants would have on their emotional intelligence. The results obtained from the t-test analyses returned an insignificant value on job status of the participants' emotional

intelligence (Non-officers and Officers,  $n_1 = 180, n_2 = 105; x_1 = 111.9, x_2 = 112.73; t = .32, > 0.05$ ).

**Table 3: T-test Comparison of Police emotional intelligence based on job status**

Variable	N	X	SD	df	t	P
Non-Officers	180	111.9	23.1	283	.32	NS*
Officers	105	112.73	20.4			

Not Significant

**Marital Status and Police Emotional Intelligence:**

The study examined again whether marital status of the participants would have any effect on their emotional intelligence. The results as shown in table 4 revealed an insignificant effect of the variable on emotional intelligence of the participants (married and unmarried,  $n_1 = 157, n_2 = 128; x_1 = 111.7, x_2 = 114.50; t = 1.09, > 0.05$ ).

**Table 4: T-test comparison of police emotional intelligence based on marital status**

Variable	N	X	SD	df	t	P
Married	157	111.7	22.74	283	1.1	NS*
Unmarried	128	114.51	20.01			

NS: Not Significant

**Work Experience and Police Emotional Intelligence:**

The study again examined whether work experience of the participants would influence emotional intelligence of police. Results obtained from the Analysis of Variance in table 5 showed an insignificant relationship between work experience and emotional intelligence of the participants ( $n = 285, df = 3, 281, 284, F = 1.371, > 0.05$ ).

**DISCUSSION**

In this study, emotional intelligence among police was predicated on five demographic variables— gender, age, job status, marital status, and work experience. The five findings from our

**Table 5: Univariable analysis of variance of police emotional intelligence based on years of experience**

Source of variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Main Effects	1773.236	3	591.079	1.371	NS*
X1 Group	1773.236	3	591.079		
Explained	1773.236	3	591.079		
Residual	121117.550	218	431.023		
Total	122890.786	284	432.714		

NS: Not Significant

hypotheses showed that: (1) emotional intelligence among police could not be determined by gender, (2) age of police has nothing to do with their emotional intelligence, (3) both officers and non-officers in the police would display the same degree of emotional intelligence, (4) being married or not has nothing to do with police emotional intelligence, and (5) length of service in the police is not related to the emotional intelligence displayed.

The results obtained in this study clearly and unambiguously demonstrated that emotional intelligence among police could not be either determined by gender, age, job status and marital status; and neither could it be influenced by the work experience of police. The insignificance of the variables investigated showed that emotional intelligence in the police leaves much to be desired. In essence, these findings are in consonance with that of Donnass (2003) in which an inverse relationship is reported between emotional intelligence and burnout among police officers.

In contrast, these findings are not related to the similar ones reported by Aremu (2005) in which emotional intelligence is found to be related to career commitment of young police; and Bellamy and Bellamy (2003) in which transformational leadership in the police is statistically correlated with emotional intelligence. The variance of these findings with others notwithstanding, it is evident enough to assert that emotional intelligence is a *sine qua non* for effective policing with a particular reference to policing in Nigeria.

Understanding the above, it is pertinent to specifically address the results of the study. As earlier observed in the study, there has not been sufficient literature on the effect of demographic variables on emotional intelligence. This has therefore, affected the tone of discussion in respect of demographic variables investigated.

The finding on the insignificance of gender on emotional intelligence of police is in line with the one reported by Adeyemo (2004) in which gender is also found to be insignificant on emotional intelligence among counseling psychology students. It however, contradicts finding of Mayer and Goher (1996) in which gender is found to be significant to emotional intelligence. Although this study reported the insignificance of gender on emotional intelligence of police, which by inference means police irrespective of gender, are not emotionally

intelligence. This notwithstanding, a cursory look at the mean values of the participants indicated a better emotional intelligence of male police over their female counterparts. One explanation for this is that policing job is seen more as masculine job. Thus, whatever allusion people make to policing job, it is seen first and foremost as a job for men.

The second demographic variable also showed that age was found to be insignificant on emotional intelligence among police. This finding is at variance with the ones reported by Adeyemo (2004). This notwithstanding, it stands to reason that the results were found to be so because of the style of policing in Nigeria which is apparently brutish (See Aremu, 2005; Sun, 2005); and where more often than not, most of the bad cases (e.g., corruption, extra judicial killings, etc) in the Nigeria police cut across all ages and cadres.

Closely related to the above finding in this study are the results, which showed that job status of police was insignificant to their emotional intelligence. The imperative of this further lends credence to the assertion that Nigerian police do not have sufficient emotional intelligence to make them do policing job as expected of them. The fact that this lack of emotional intelligence cuts across the rank and file of the force is an indication that the orientation and philosophy of policing in Nigeria is homogenous. This is what police themselves refer to as 'esprit de corp'. Based on this argument, it can then be said that the results point to the general ill feelings of members of the public toward the police in Nigeria.

Another interesting finding in this study is the one, which reveals that marital status has nothing to do with the emotional intelligence of the Nigerian police. Drawing inference from this is not easy in that sufficient literature was not available to support or counter our claim. Be that as it may, findings have shown that police do not make good homes (Aremu et al., 2005; Smith and Syke, 1994). In sum, being not emotionally intelligent in the police transcends the work place; the home front is also affected.

In an attempt to give this study a wider perspective, the study also examined the influence of the work experiences of participants on their emotional intelligence. Just like other findings reported in the current study, it was discovered that years of experience put into

policing do not in any way influence emotional intelligence displayed on the job. While it is difficult to rationalize any inference from this, it can be logically and modestly concluded that Nigerian police need a good education on emotional intelligence. And this, given the findings reported in the current study, should start from the training of police recruits in police colleges, and cadet officers in police academies.

In conclusion then, it is submitted that more than ever before, what the Nigeria Police need is the inclusion of emotional intelligence in its training curriculum. And for those presently on the job, seminars and workshops on emotional intelligence would be a great benefit to them, and by extension to the public. The researchers feel strong about these because the results of this study provide enough empirical support to assert as such.

## REFERENCES

- Adeyemo, D.A. and B. Ogunyemi. 2005. "Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy as Predictors of Occupational Stress among Academic Staff in a Nigerian University". *Electronic Journal of Organisational Learning and Leadership*, 4.
- Adeyemo, D.A. 2004. "Patterns of Emotional Intelligence among Counseling Psychology Students in a Nigerian University." *Sokoto Educational Review*, 7: 194-203.
- Aremu, A.O., A. A. Jones, and A. Babalola. 2005. "Predictors of Organizational Commitment of Nigerian Police in Lagos: Some Counselling Implications". *Police Practice and Research: An International Journal*, (in press).
- Aremu, A.O. and C. A. Adeyoju. 1998. "Improving the Police Officers Interpersonal Relationships through Social Skills Training". *Nigerian Journal of Clinical and Counselling Psychology*, 4(1): 18-23.
- Aremu, A.O. 2004. "Beyond Police Barracks: A Research Synthesis of a Counselling Psychologist." *Ife Psychologia: An International Journal of Psychology in African*, 13(1): 214-226.
- Aremu, A.O. 2005. "A Confluence of Credentialing, Career Experience, Self-Efficacy, Emotional Intelligence, and Motivation on the Career Commitment of Young Police in Ibadan." *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, 28(4): 609 – 618.
- Ashforth, B.E., and R. H. Humphrey. 1995. "Emotion in the Workplace: A Reappraisal", *Human Relations*, 48(2): 97-125.
- Bellamy, A.R. and A. R. Bellamy. 2003. "Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership: Recursive Leadership processes within the context of employee work attitude". *Midwest Academy of Management*, 23(3): 19 -31
- Caruso, D., J. Mayer, and P. Salovey. 2002. "Emotional intelligence and emotional leadership," (pp. 55-74) in R.Riggio, and S. Murphy (eds.), *Multiple Intelligences and Leadership*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Click, H.S. 2002. *An Exploration of Emotional Intelligence Scores Among Students in Educational Administration Programme*. Ph.D. Thesis (Unpublished), East Tennessee State, University.
- Derman, J. 1999. "The relationship between the emotional intelligence of family-member managers and business success in family businesses". *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 60 (05B): 2397.
- Donna, R. 2003. *Emotional Intelligence, Negative Mood Regulation Expectancies, and Professional Burnout among Police Officers*. Ph.D.Thesis (Unpublished), The State University of New Jersey, U.S.A.
- Gardner, H. 1993. *Frames of Mind*. New York: Basic Books.
- Goleman, D. 1995. *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can Matter More than IQ*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Gottfredson, L. 1986. "Why g matters: The complexity of everyday life." *Intelligence*, 24: 79-132.
- Hein, S. 2005. Introduction to Emotional Intelligence. Retrieved August 30, 2004, from www.htm/ History and Definition of Emotional Intelligence.
- Madonna, G.C. and K. A. Gainor. 2001. Emotional Intelligence and Empathy: Their relation to multicultural Counselling knowledge and awareness. *Issue: December*.
- Mayer, J.D. and P. Salovey. 1997. "What is Emotional Intelligence?" (pp. 3-31) in P. Salovey and D. Sluyter (eds.), *Emotional Development and Emotional Intelligence: Implications for Educators*. New York: Basic Books.
- Mayer, J.D., and P. Salovey. 1993. "The Intelligence of Emotional Intelligence." *Intelligence*, 17: 433-442.
- Payne, W.L. 1985. A study of Emotion: "Developing Emotional Intelligence, Self-integration, relating to fear, pain, and desire". *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 470: 203A.
- Salopek, J. 1998. "Train your brain." *Training and Development*, 52: 26-33.
- Salovey, P., and J.D. Mayer. 1990. "Emotional Intelligence." *Imagination, Cognition, and Personality*, 9: 185-211.
- Schutte, N.S. et al. 1998. "Development and validation of a measure of emotional intelligence." *Personality and Individual Differences*, 25: 167-177.
- Schutte, N., F. J. Malou, C. Coston, and D. Tracie. 2001. "Emotional Intelligence and Interpersonal relations." *Journal of Social Psychology*, 4: 523-536.
- Slaski, M., and S. Cartwright. 2002. "Health, performance and emotional intelligence: An explanatory study of retail managers." *Stress and Health*, 18: 63-68.
- Smith, R. and G. W. Syke. 1994. *Domestic Assault among Police: A Survey of Internal Affairs Policies*. Arlington: Texas Police Department, Southwestern Law Enforcement Institute.
- Sun Dailies 2005. *Police Mess. Apapa*. Lagos: The Sun Publishing Co. Ltd., May 19, 2005 p. 16.
- Thorndike, E.L. 1920. Intelligence and its uses. *Harper's Magazine*, 140: 227-235.
- Yates, J.M. 1999. "The relationship between emotional intelligence and health habits of health education students". *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 60 – 09A, 3284.