

# Emotional Intelligence and Interpersonal Relations in Service Industries in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** - The study examined emotional intelligence and interpersonal relations. Unethical behaviour of employees that arises as a result of emotion made this investigation necessary. The objectives of the study were; to determine the nature of relationship between self-awareness and empathy toward colleagues in the organization and to ascertain the nature of relationship between social skill and improved team work within the organization. To achieve the objectives, a survey research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised of 167 staff of the selected deposit money banks and Taro Yamane formula was used to derive 118 as the sample size of the study. The techniques employed in analyzing the data were descriptive statistics and Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient. The results indicated that self-awareness has a positive and significant relationship with empathy toward colleagues in the organization and also social skill has a positive and significant relationship with improved team work within the organization. Based on the findings, the study concluded that emotional intelligence has relationship with interpersonal relations. It was recommended among others that managers of deposit money banks need to deploy means of enhancing social skills and abilities of the employees through (seminars and workshop) in order to improve the level of team work and employees' involvement in the workplace.

**Keywords:** Emotional intelligence, Interpersonal relations.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The whole idea of emotional intelligence dawn on researchers during the 1800's, but it may be surprising to note how this ideology of emotional intelligence has evolved over the years, from its initiation as something called "social intelligence" way back in the 1930's, to "emotional strength" in the mid-20th century, to its current terminology, "emotional intelligence." Jaeger, (2003) posits that emotional intelligence develops over a person's life span and could be enhanced through training, teaching and learning in formal educational contexts. Career counselors recognized the significance of emotional intelligence in interpersonal relationship, career satisfaction and well-being (Kidd, 2008). Pool and Sewell (2007) further assert that development of emotional intelligence is desirable for enhancing individuals' employability and interpersonal relationship.

Individuals' employability provides an inner sense of stability, security and relates to individual ability to achieve sustainable employment, interpersonal relationship and move self-sufficiently within uncertain and unpredictable labour market (Hillage and Pollard, 1998). Furthermore, Puffer, (2011) expressed that emotional intelligence positively relates to less

dysfunctional career thinking, greater career decision-making, self-efficacy, a higher level of willingness to explore variety of career preferences, and commit to attractive interpersonal relationship options. Carson and Carson,(1998) further opine that people's emotional intelligence is also positively associated with important employment experiences and emotional attachment to current relationship and jobs.

## Statement of Problem

Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand, accept and recognize our emotions, feelings, including the impact on ourselves, people and using the knowledge to improve our behaviours and manage our relationship with others. Literature has established the fact that teams that comprise of members who possess high emotional intelligence tend to display superior task performance when compared with teams made up of emotionally less intelligent members. In spite the crucial role that emotional intelligence play in improving individuals' performance as well as career prospects in organizations, employees, executives and career professionals across developing countries have just little knowledge about the concept. As a result, in absence of observable threat or external deprivation some employees display aversive interpersonal behavior such as verbal abuse, name calling, rudeness, emotional withholding notwithstanding emotion is one of the causes of interpersonal problems. Anger often gets the blame for destructive social behavior and anxiety for avoidant social behavior which is capable of crippling team performance at the short run and that of the organization at the long run if not thing is done to prevent such unethical behavior. It is against this background that the study is set to examine the nature of relationship between emotional intelligence and interpersonal relations.

## Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and interpersonal relations. The specific objectives are;

1. To determine the nature of relationship between self-awareness and empathy toward colleagues in the organization.
2. To ascertain the nature of relationship between social skill and improved team work within the organization.

### *Hypotheses*

HO<sub>1</sub>: Self-awareness has no positive and significant relationship with empathy toward colleagues in the organization.

HO<sub>2</sub>: Social skill has no positive and significant relationship with improved team work with-in the organization.

## II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Emotional intelligence (EI) plays an important role in ensuring success in the workplace and it should be nurtured and practiced by all parties facing the challenges of globalization and competition in business. YengKeat, (2009) posits that emotional intelligence is a positive encouragement to create human relationship that can lead to the achievement of common goals and organizational effectiveness. According to Bar-On (2000) emotional intelligence refers to an effective understanding of oneself and others, having a good relationship with other people, to adapt and cope with environment to become more successful in dealing with environmental demands. Furthermore, Salim and Nasir (2010) state that emotional intelligence is the ability or capability as shown and owned by an individual in facing any situation. Therefore, individuals who are able or capable to use dimension of feelings they have in themselves and others are those referred as people with high emotional intelligence.

In the view of Fletcher (2007) emotional intelligence refers to the ability of individuals in handling relationship with others (Interpersonal) and controlling their emotions (intrapersonal). This involves the capacity to perceive emotions, assimilate emotion related feelings, understand the information of those emotions, and manage them. Furthermore, it is the ability to understand, accept and recognize our emotions and feelings, including the impact on ourselves, people and use the knowledge to improve our behaviours as well as manage and improve our relationship with others (Cartwright and Solloway, 2007). People with high emotional intelligence are usually successful in most things they do. Why? Because they're the ones that others want in their team. When people with high emotional intelligence send an email, it gets answered. When they need help, they get it because they make others feel good, they go through life much more easily than people who are easily angered or upset (Goleman, 2000).

### *Emotional Intelligence and Interpersonal Relationship*

Goleman (2000) expressed that self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, and social skill, constitutes behaviours among individuals described as emotional intelligence. It is also view as a process that balance the internal interests of the organization for the benefit of those it intends to serve. Specifically, the utilization of emotional intelligence principles to develop a shared sense of culture can transform emotional intelligence from an individual behaviour to a group dynamic (Blattner and Bacigalupo, 2007). Furthermore, emotional intelligence has the capacity to raise the level of individual and team performance. Due to an enhanced ability

to recognize and manage emotions and brace against distracting emotions, emotional intelligence skills connect both to individual cognitive-based performance and team task performance skills (Morehouse, 2007). Jordan and Troth (2004) emphasized that a team comprised of members possessing high emotional intelligence tend to display superior task performance when compared with a team made up of emotionally less intelligent members.

### *Theoretical Framework*

This section provides an overview of a theoretical perspective on emotional intelligence which provides explanation to the study.

### *The Bar-on Model /Theory*

Bar-on (2006) propounded the theoretical framework for the emotional intelligence; he posits that the theory is a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that determine how effectively we understand and express ourselves, understand others and relate with them, and cope with daily demands. The emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators referred to in this concept include the following five key components, namely: (a) the ability to recognize, understand and express emotions and feelings; (b) ability to understand how others feel and relate with them; (c) ability to manage and control emotions; (d) ability to manage change, adapt and solve problems of personal and interpersonal nature; and (e) ability to generate positive effect, and self-motivation. Bar-On further posits that emotional intelligence develops over time and can be improved through training and programming.

### *Empirical Review*

Ellen (2013) carried out a study on the impact of emotional intelligence and executive coaching on leader effectiveness in North American financial institution. The objective of the research was to examine the influence of both phenomena on leader effectiveness. The empirical study examined two research inquiries: does emotional competence predict leader effectiveness, and what impact does a quality coaching relationship have on leader effectiveness? Leader effectiveness is proxy by job performance, personal vision, work engagement, and career satisfaction. Eighty-five senior executives in a North American financial services organization completed a leadership development experience which included training on emotional intelligence, multi rater assessment, and work with an external executive coach. Survey responses were collected and triangulated with job performance data and multi-rater feedback. Results indicated that both emotional competence and a high-quality coaching relationship do indeed make a difference. Specifically, findings revealed that emotional competence directly and positively impacts performance and career satisfaction and that a quality coaching relationship leads to increased levels of work engagement, career satisfaction and expression of a personal vision.

*Tsui-Shuang, Chun-Pao and Chung-I (2014) carried out a study on emotional intelligence and interpersonal relationships among college students in Southern Taiwan.* The main objective of the study was to explore the emotional intelligence (EI) and interpersonal relationships (IRs) among college students and to understand the important factors that were relevant to them. A cross-sectional survey was adopted and a structured questionnaire was sent to the college students who agreed to participate in the study, out of which 587 copies of questionnaires were completed and returned. Mean, standard deviation, ANOVA, t-test, multiple regression, factor analysis and Pearson correlation were employed to analyze the data. The results revealed that: the emotional intelligence (EI) and interpersonal relationships (IRs) among college students were above average; college students' EI and IRs showed significant differences by gender, romantic relationship, monthly allowance, family status, female students have higher EI and IRs than male students; the perceived level of EI was positively correlated with IRs; in examining the predictors of IRs, 3 important factors including "empathy", "self-regulation" and "relationship management" was found to explain 50.7% of the variance in IRs.

*Shafiq and Rana (2016) researched on the relationship between emotional intelligences and organizational commitment in Pakistani.* The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational commitment of college teachers in the Pakistani context. Data were collected from 494 college teachers in Pakistan. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and regression analysis was used in testing of the hypotheses. Findings of the study revealed that significant relationship exist between emotional intelligence and organizational commitment. Emotional intelligence further showed significant positive relationships with three components of organizational commitment which are affective, continuance and normative commitment, respectively.

*Seri, Azlina and Yeo (2019) researched on emotional intelligence among Women in selected organization in India.* The objective of the study was to provide a systematic review of published researches on emotional intelligence among women. To achieve this, papers were selected in January 2019 with search terms "Emotional intelligence" "Emotional intelligence among women" and "Gender in emotional intelligence" from five databases: Scopus, Psycinfo, Springer, Google Scholar, and Science Direct. 26 research based articles were evaluated published from 2010 to 2018. The analysis of the published articles considered two basic central themes in the study of emotional intelligence among women: level of women emotional intelligence and emotional intelligence attributes. The study revealed that level of emotional intelligence is low, meaning that women are less emotionally intelligent. Similarly, the study identified ten emotional intelligence attributes among women which include empathy, social responsibility, stress tolerance, emotional

self-awareness, emotional expression, independence, flexibility, problem solving, impulse control, interpersonal relationships and optimism.

*Maria del Carmen, Maria del Mar and Jos'e Jesu's (2019) conducted a study on emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and empathy as predictors of overall self-esteem in nursing by years of experience in Spain.* The objective of the study was to determine the explanatory value of individual variables such as self-efficacy; empathy and emotional intelligence on self-esteem in a sample of nursing professionals, to identify which variable have the most explanatory value for overall self-esteem with years of experience. The study sample consisted of a total of 1,601 Spanish nurses aged 22–60, with a mean age of 31.19 years. Spearman rank correlation co-efficient was used to analyzed the data for the study and the result revealed that emotional intelligence factors in all cases were observed to have positive correlations with overall self-esteem, mood was still the predictor with the most explanatory weight in all the groups, general self-efficacy disappeared in the model of professionals with the most experience.

*Divya (2019) carried out a study on emotional intelligence training workshop and its impact on employee performance in solar sector in India.* The objective of the study was to examine the effects of emotional intelligence (EI) training workshop on participants' performance. It entailed to evaluate whether EI training workshop bring about a change in the performance of participants. The study also seeks to explore the gender differences and the relationship between emotional intelligence and gender differences. The study adopted quantitative techniques and data from sampled 89 marketing managers from two selected organizations of the solar sector was used to examine the effects of enhanced emotional intelligence on the success of organization. In order to examine the gender differences in the emotional quotient, data was collected using Schutte's self emotional intelligence scale (SEIS) from 158 employees of the marketing department of selected organizations of the solar sector. Paired sample t-test, independent sample t-test, and spearman rank correlation co-efficient were used for data analysis. The results showed that significant relationship exist between enhanced emotional intelligence and employee performance; the results further suggest that the conduct of emotional intelligence workshop does increases the productivity of the employees; it was also found that gender differences are significant with respect to emotional competencies and this suggest that females are more emotionally competent as compared to males.

*Suleman, Hussain, Syed Ma and Lodhi Is (2019) examined the association between emotional intelligence and academic success among undergraduates of Kohat University of Science & Technology (KUST), Pakistan.* A sample of 186 students who were enrolled during the semester fall 2015 to spring 2018 was selected through a random sampling technique. A cross-sectional survey method was employed in this study. A standardized tool "emotional intelligence scale" was

employed for the collection of information from the undergraduates. Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of the students was considered as indicator for academic success. Data were collected through personal visits, simple percentage, mean, standard deviation; ANOVA, Pearson’s product-moment correlation and multiple linear regressions was employed to reach the desired research outcomes. The findings revealed that there was a strong positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic success among undergraduate students. The multiple linear regression analysis showed that self-development, emotional stability, managing relations, altruistic behaviour, and commitment predict academic success of undergraduates positively.

*Carolyn, Yixin, Luke, Kit, Micaela and Amirali (2020) carried out a study on emotional intelligence as a predictor for academic performance: a meta-analysis of Australian universities.* Schools and universities devote considerable time and resources to developing students’ social and emotional skills, such as emotional intelligence (EI). The goals of such programs are partly for personal development but partly to increase academic performance. The current meta-analysis examines the degree to which student emotional intelligence is associated with academic performance. The study found an overall effect of 20 using robust variance estimation (N 42,529, k 1,246 from 158 citations). The association is significantly stronger for ability EI (.24, k 50) compared with self-rated (.12, k 33) or mixed EI (.19, k 90). Ability, self-rated, and mixed EI explained an additional 1.7%, 0.7%, and 2.3% of the variance, respectively, after controlling for intelligence and big five personality. Understanding and management branches of ability EI explained an additional 3.9% and 3.6%, respectively. Relative importance analysis suggests that EI is the third most important predictor for all three streams, after intelligence and conscientiousness. Moderators of the effect differed across the three EI streams. Ability EI was a stronger predictor of performance in humanities than science. Self-rated EI was a stronger predictor of grades than standardized test scores.

*Summary of Related Literature*

Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand, accept and recognize our emotions and feelings, including the impact on ourselves, people and using the knowledge to improve our behaviours and manage our relationship with others. Furthermore, from the empirical review, it was found that:

1. The works reviewed focused on other sectors expect one that focused on service sector.
2. The studies reviewed were done in the western world but this very work was carried out in Abia State Nigeria, using selected deposit money banks.

III. METHODOLOGY

A structured questionnaire was used to elicited data from employees’ of selected Deposit Money Banks (First City Monument Bank in Umuahia, Eco Bank in Aba, Abia State). The population of the study was one hundred and sixty seven (167) and Taro Yamane formular was used to derive the sample size, which is one hundred and eighteen (118). Bowley’s formula was further used to determine the number of questionnaire administered to each strata. The instrument, made up of ten (10) items was subjected to reliability test using the cronbach’s alpha and the result is as shown below:

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.781	10

Again, Spearman rank correlation coefficient in SPSS (statistical package for social sciences) was used in testing of the hypotheses.

IV. RESULTS

A total of one hundred and eighteen copies of the questionnaire were administered but only one hundred six copies were returned. This represents ninety percent response rate. The mean weighting of responses gathered from the questionnaire were computed and interpreted from the data and are presented in tables.

Table 1: Responses on the nature of relationship between self-awareness and empathy towards colleagues in the organization

No	Question	SA	A	UD	D	SD	
1	I know when to speak about my personal problems to my colleagues	48 (45)	37 (35)	5 (5)	10 (9)	6 (6)	106 (100)
2	My Colleagues find it easy to confide in me	32 (30)	52 (48)	7 (7)	7 (7)	8 (8)	106 (100)
3	Emotional intelligence are one of the things that makes my life worth-living in the workplace	42 (39)	45 (42)	6 (6)	8 (8)	5 (5)	106 (100)
4	I like to share my emotion with others	32 (30)	38 (36)	15 (14)	13 (12)	8 (8)	106 (100)
5	I am self-aware of the non-verbal messages i send to my colleagues	48 (45)	37 (35)	5 (5)	10 (9)	6 (6)	106 (100)

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

Information on table 1 shows that 48 (45%) of respondents, 37 (35%) respondents, 5 (5%) respondents, 10 (9%) respondents and 6 (6%) respondents strongly agreed, agreed, undecided, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively, that they know

when to speak about their personal problems to their colleagues. Also, 32 (30%) of respondents, 52 (48%) respondents, 7 (7%) respondents, 7 (7%) respondents and 8 (8%) respondents strongly agreed, agreed, undecided,

disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively, that colleagues find it easy to confide in them, 42 (39%) of respondents, 45 (42%) respondents, 6 (6%) respondents, 8 (8%) respondents and 5 (5%) respondents strongly agreed, agreed, undecided, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively that emotional intelligence are one of the things that makes my life worth-living in the workplace. Moreover, 32 (30%) of respondents, 38 (36%) respondents, 15 (14%) respondents, 13 (12%)

respondents and 8 (8%) respondents strongly agreed, agreed, undecided, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively, that they like to share their emotion with others. On the other hand, 48 (45%) of respondents, 37 (35%) respondents, 5 (5%) respondents, 10(9%) respondents and 6 (6%) respondents strongly agreed, agreed, undecided, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively, that they were self-aware of the non-verbal messages they send to their colleagues.

Table 2 Responses on the nature of relationship between social skill and improved team work with-in the organization.

No	Question	SA	A	UD	D	SD	
1	Without emotional intelligence, I will not be able to identify and relate well with the team	52 (49)	41 (38)	4 (4)	6 (6)	3 (3)	106 (100)
2	My social skill help me know how others are feeling just by looking at them	36 (33)	58 (55)	9 (9)	2 (2)	1 (1)	106 (100)
3	Social skill significantly help in improving team work in the organization	52 (49)	45 (42)	3 (3)	4 (4)	2 (2)	106 (100)
4	The organization performs better when we work as a team	36 (33)	60 (57)	3 (3)	5 (5)	2 (2)	106 (100)
5	When i am in a positive mood, i am able to come up with a new idea for the team	45 (42)	52 (49)	5 (5)	2 (2)	2 (2)	106 (100)

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

Information on table 2 shows that 52 (49%) of respondents, 41 (38%) respondents, 4 (4%) respondents, 6 (6%) respondents and 3 (3%) respondents strongly agreed, agreed, undecided, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively, that without emotional intelligence, they will not be able to identify and relate well with team members. Also, 36 (33%) of respondents, 58 (55%) respondents, 9 (9%) respondents, 2 (2%) respondents and 1 (1%) respondents strongly agreed, agreed, undecided, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively, that social skill help them to know how others are feeling by looking at them, 52 (49%) of respondents, 45 (42%) respondents, 3 (3%) respondents, 4 (4%) respondents and 2 (2%) respondents strongly agreed, agreed, undecided, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively that social skill significantly help in improving team work in the organization. Moreover, 36 (33%) of respondents, 60 (57%) respondents, 3 (3%) respondents, 5 (5%) respondents and 2 (2%) respondents strongly agreed, agreed, undecided, disagreed and strongly

disagreed respectively, that organizations performs better when they work as a team. On the other hand, 45 (42%) of respondents, 52 (49%) respondents, 5 (5%) respondents, 2(2%) respondents and 2 (2%) respondents strongly agreed, agreed, undecided, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively, that when employees are in a positive/ good mood, they come up with a new idea for the team.

*Test of Hypotheses*

In order to test inferentially the level of relationship between emotional intelligence and interpersonal relations, the study conducted hypotheses test and the result is presented below:

*Hypothesis One*

Ho<sub>1</sub>: Self-awareness has no positive and significant relationship with empathy toward colleagues in the organization

Table 3 Correlation output on self-awareness and empathy toward colleagues in the organization.				
		Self-awareness		
Spearman's rho	Self-awareness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.967**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	106	106
	Empathy	Correlation Coefficient	.967**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	106	106
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
		N	106	106
<p>** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).                      The Spearman's correlation coefficient is .967 which means that there is a strong relationship between the two variables. Given that the p-value of .000 &lt; 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate which indicates that there is a positive and significant relationship between self-awareness and empathy toward colleagues in the organization.</p>				

## Hypothesis Two

Ho<sub>2</sub>: Social skill has no positive and significant relationship with improved team work with-in the organization.

		Social Skill	Team Work	
Spearman's rho	Social Skill	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	
		N	106	
	Team Work	Correlation Coefficient	.837**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	106	106
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
		N	106	106

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Spearman's correlation coefficient is .837 which means that there is a strong relationship between the two variables. Given that the p-value of .000 < 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate which indicates that there is a positive and significant relationship between social skill and improved team work with-in the organization.

## V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the testing of the first hypothesis, it was established that, self-awareness has a positive and significant relationship with empathy toward colleagues in the organization. This finding is in line with the work of Tsui-Shuang, Chun-Pao and Chung-I (2014) who sought to establish the relationship between emotional intelligence and interpersonal relationships among college students in Southern Taiwan. Their findings indicated that emotional intelligence (EI) and interpersonal relationships (IRs) among college students were above average; the perceived level of emotional intelligence was positively correlated with interpersonal relationships. The finding also correlate with the outcome of the study carried out by Maria del Carmen, Maria del Mar and Jos'e Jesu's (2019), on emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and empathy as predictors of overall self-esteem in nursing by years of experience in Span. The result revealed that emotional intelligence factors in all cases were observed to have positive correlations with overall self-esteem. The test of second hypothesis established that social skill has a positive and significant relationship with improved team work with-in the organization.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The study on emotional intelligence and interpersonal relations: a focus on selected deposit money banks in Abia State has revealed that self-awareness has a positive and significant relationship with empathy towards colleagues in the organization. This means the more employees are emotionally intelligent, the better they understand the thoughts and feelings of co-workers. Furthermore, it was found that social skill has a positive and significant relationship with improved team work with-in the

organization. This means that social skill is vital in identifying and relating well in one's team.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Organizations need to encourage employees to know their personality trait as it is necessary to facilitate proper adjustment towards understanding the thoughts and feelings of others in the work environment.
2. Managers of deposit money banks need to deploy means of enhancing social skills and abilities of the employees through (seminars and workshop) in other to improve the level of team work and employees' involvement in the workplace.

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