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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS A PREDICTOR OF ATTITUDE TO WORK AND STAFF PERFORMANCE IN POLYTECHNIC LIBRARIES IN SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the emotional intelligence as a predictor of attitude to work and staff performance in polytechnic libraries in south-east, Nigeria. It adopted the survey research design using census method as sampling techniques to ensuring that every staff in polytechnic libraries in south-east, Nigeria was captured. Self-constructed and validated questionnaire was used to collect data for this study. The findings show that emotional motivation predict attitude to work and staff performance in polytechnic libraries in south-east, Nigeria and emotional self-awareness significantly predict attitude to work and staff performance in polytechnic libraries in south-east, Nigeria. This study recommended that polytechnic libraries should create more awareness about the importance of self-awareness to their library staff. This can be achieved through effective training of the library staff on the competencies of self-awareness; library staff should be trained to be emotionally aware. When library staff are aware of their emotions, they perform well on their job and polytechnic Libraries should adopt motivational tools for library staff so as to enabling them discharge their duties effectiveness.

Keywords: Emotional, Intelligence, Emotional, Intelligence Attitude to Work, Staff Performance and Polytechnic Libraries

Introduction

Emotion is a state of psychological arousal, an expression or display of distinctive somatic and autonomic responses. Emotion fundamentally involves physiological arousals, expressive behaviours, and conscious experience. Olajojo and Oyeboade (2016) see emotion as a complex feeling state with psychic, somatic and behavioural components that are related to affect mood. According to Salovey and Mayer (1990), emotional intelligence emerged as understanding of one's own and others' feelings, emotions, the feature of control, and the emotional reasoning ability.

Emotional intelligence according to Onwubiko (2020), refers to the capability of a person to manage and control his or her emotions and possess the ability to control the emotions of others as well. Emotional intelligence has five main elements such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Salovey and Mayer (1990) opine that emotional intelligence is a three adaptive ability namely: the ability to appraise and express emotion, to regulate emotions and to utilize emotions in solving problems.

On the other hand, Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2002), define emotional intelligence as the ability to recognize the meanings of emotions and their relationships and to reason and problem-solve on the basis of them. Staff attitudes are made up of behavioural, cognitive as well as affective components. They are beliefs, feelings, perceptions, values and dispositions that can make one to act in certain ways. Attitudes influence the self-respect and self-perception of an individual and can affect how a worker performs his duties in the workplace (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer and Vohs, 2015). According to Wilson and Rosenfield (1990), employees' attitudes are correlates of efficiency and productivity for any organization. Therefore, a worker's attitude towards his workplace, duties, co-workers and supervisors influences his overall pattern of behaviour in the work environment and are clear pointers to his performance quotient. It has great potentials in impacting on his performance at work and could also negatively influence his interactions with colleagues and the clientele of the organization in this case, the polytechnic libraries (Harter, Schmidt and Hayes, 2012 and Bianca, 2017).

Library staff who have positive attitudes to their place of work, official responsibilities and supervisors are more diligent in providing services as well as using time and resources effectively unlike employees who harbour bad feelings who may be easily prone to creation of friction which can progress into counter-productive work behaviour (Stecher and Rosse, 2015 and Myer, 2013). How emotional intelligence as predictor of attitude to work and staff performance remains unclear in the face of research in this area. This may have informed the view of Almutairi (2011) that the concept of emotional intelligence is continuously emerging and should be properly studied especially in relation to staff attitudes. The attitude to work of library staff is considered to be important because they cannot provide efficient services to their clientele when morale is low as this affects staff performance and ultimately patronage of the institution.

Staff performance in the workplace is the accumulated results of activities that an employee performs. It comprises what an employee does in the workplace toward the achievement of organizational goals (library goals) and the outcomes of his actions which are measurable (Viswesvaran and Ones, 2016). The activities and behaviours are assumed to be under the control of the employee and are acknowledged as the defining aspects of his job, which is what the employee is hired to do (Rotundo and Sackett, 2002). High staff performance at work has been adjudged to be a determining factor in the success and profitability of organizations (Dizgah, Chegini and Bisokhan, 2015). Causal relationships have been established between staff performance and attitudes at the work place (Meyer, Becker and Vanderberghe, 2014). According to Judge, Bono, Thoreson and Patton (2016) and Susanty, Miradipta and Jie (2016), when workers have positive attitudes in an organization their level of commitment is high and this invariably enhances their work performance; for instance, in a library organization. A library staff is a person who works in a library, providing access to information which maybe technical or social programming as well as rendering other assistance to library users. As the services of libraries vary especially in this modern era, so are the types of staff who work in the library. All these staff, work in their own special areas to serve the general purpose of making information available to users (Reitz, 2009). The work of library staff is a service delivery one, and on a daily basis; library staff provide services to different people from different background, culture, feelings/emotions, skills and characters. Base

on this, it is required of library staff to have knowledge on how to manage emotions and render effective services to the "wonderful" library users.

Polytechnic libraries constitute a strand in a polytechnic. It is the nucleus where all academic activities of a polytechnic revolve. It is a larger library in a polytechnic both in function, scope of collection, staffing, user as well as the type of services rendered to it users (Adepoju, 2016). A polytechnic library is a library established, maintained and administered by a polytechnic to meet the information needs of it students, college and staff in order to carry out their administrative and academic responsibilities. The polytechnic library occupies central and primary place because it serves all the functions of the academic community such as teaching, learning, research and community services (Onwubiko and Uzoigwe, 2004). Polytechnic libraries play an indispensable role in the fulfillment of the functions of an academic community. Polytechnic libraries have for centuries played critically-important roles in supporting research in all subjects and disciplines within their host institutions. Polytechnic libraries are libraries that are attached to Polytechnic institutions which serve two complementary purposes to support the school's curriculum and research of lecturers and students. Higher institutions of learning such as polytechnic now have additional functions to include: pursuit, promotion, and dissemination of knowledge, provision of intellectual leadership, manpower development, promotion of social and economic modernization, promotion of intra- and intercontinental and international understanding (Ifidon and Okoli, 2002). To survive and compete successfully in today's turbulent environment, organizations like polytechnic libraries require staff to be proactive, show initiative while engaging with their role and remain committed to performing at high standards (Olaajo and Oyeboade (2016). Usually when it comes to productivity, authorities in the libraries are focused on getting all of their tasks done in an efficient manner, but there is need to look at emotional intelligence, as it can play a big role in increasing productivity in the library. In the light of the foregoing, this study therefore, seeks to investigate emotional intelligence as a predictor of attitude to work and staff performance in polytechnic libraries in south-east, Nigeria.

Research Questions

This research is set out to provide answers to the following research questions.

- i. How does emotional motivation predict attitude to work and staff performance in polytechnic libraries in south-east, Nigeria?
- ii. In which way does emotional self-awareness predict attitude to work and staff performance in polytechnic libraries in south-east, Nigeria?

Literature Review

Emotional motivation is a process that elicits, controls, and sustains certain behaviours. Emotional motivation is a phenomenon which affects the nature of an individual's behaviour, the strength of the behaviour, and the persistence of the behaviour (Rani and Lenka, 2012). According to Onyeukwu and Ekere (2018), emotional motivation is internal and external factors that stimulate desire and energy in people to be continually interested in and committed to a job, role, or subject, and to exert persistent effort in attaining a goal. Bamgbose and Ladipo (2017) assert that emotional motivation is a process by which the learner's internal

energies are directed toward various goals or objects. The authors noted that emotional motivation is an internal condition that activates behaviour and gives it direction and energies and directs goal-oriented behaviour.

Ola and Adeyemi, (2012) describe emotional motivation as the complex forces, incentives, needs, tensions and other mechanisms which energize, canalize and sustain human behavior to carry out a particular action. Hassan and Romle (2015) assert that emotional motivation is a process of goal-setting which establishes standard of performance that relate to self-efficacy and out-come expectations, library staff may feel emotionally motivated to perform any task because doing so gives that staff a feeling of accomplishment, mastery and self-fulfillment. Emotional self-awareness is considered as the first stage of emotional intelligence as a subset of social intelligence. Emotional intelligence thus begins at the individual level of analysis, with self-awareness typically cited as the starting point for emotional intelligence (Igbinovia, 2016).

Singh (2010) notes that emotional self-awareness is the basic foundation on which emotionally intelligent behaviour germinates and that emotional self-awareness refers to the ability to read one's own emotions and recognizing their impact to guide decisions. It is necessary for the individuals to have an accurate emotional self-assessment by knowing his/her own strengths and limitations. Cote and Miners (2006) assert that individuals with low cognitive intelligence may reap relatively large returns from high emotional intelligence, because job performance that is not attained through cognitive intelligence may be attained through emotional intelligence. To them, an employee who accurately detects colleagues' emotions may facilitate coordination and interpersonal functioning that may, in turn enhance job performance. Goleman (2013) present an emotional intelligence competence framework which considers the emotional self-awareness cluster as recognizing and understanding your emotions in the moment as well as your tendencies across time and situation. It includes individuals who are neither overly critical nor unrealistically hopeful but honest with themselves and others. It extends to a person's understanding of his or her value and goals. Singh (2010) opines that emotional self-awareness include some degree of self-disclosure so that library staff can develop effective relationship with other staff in the library and lead a more fulfilling life by sharing and receiving information. Emotional self-awareness is more of intrapersonal skill as it deals with an awareness and understanding of one's own emotions.

In the process of seeking, and in the general use and management of information that qualifies an individual to be information literate, emotions are involved. Thus emotional self-awareness could relate to information literacy competence of an individual. Emotional self-awareness is the ability to read and understand one's emotions, strengths, weakness, drives, values and goals, and

recognize their impact on others. By implication such understanding or awareness of self is used to guide decisions made using gut feeling. Singh (2010) asserts that emotional self-awareness is being conscious of and being able to connect with our personal feelings, thoughts and actions. This helps a person get a clearer perception of what he wants to achieve in life and therefore be able to work on his level of competencies.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was used for this study using questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The questionnaire is titled "emotional intelligence, attitude to work and staff performance questionnaire" (EIAWSPQ). The south-east Nigeria is one of the six (6) geo-political zones in Nigeria consisting of Abia State, Anambra State, Ebonyi State, Enugu State and Imo State. The south-east, Nigeria has a total population of sixteen million, three hundred and ninety five thousand, five hundred and fifty five (16,395,555) people with a growth rate of about 2.8% (Federal Government of Nigeria Official Gazette, 2007). Geographically the south-east, Nigeria is situated towards the southern coast of Nigeria. It is bounded on the East by Cross River State West, Delta State; North, Kogi State, South, Rivers and Akwa Ibom States (Uya and Uchendu, 1999).

The geo-political zone is acknowledged as one of the comparatively educationally advanced areas in Nigeria. The south-east, Nigeria has a total number of six (6) government owned polytechnic libraries, out these, three (3) are federal government owned polytechnic while three are also state owned polytechnic. They are; Abia State Polytechnic (ABIA POLY) Aba. Imo State Polytechnic (IMOPOLY) Umuagwo, Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Owerri (FPNO), Federal Polytechnic Oko (FPO) Anambra State, Akanu-Ibiam Federal Polytechnic (AIFP) Uwani and Institute of Management technology Enugu (IMT) Enugu. The population of the study is 242 library staff. This comprises both professionals and para-professionals in polytechnic libraries in south-east, Nigeria. A total of two hundred and forty-two (242) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the library staff in polytechnic libraries in south-east, Nigeria. Out of these, one hundred and ninety-four (194) copies of the questionnaire were duly completed and returned for analysis giving a response rate of (80.2%). Forty-eight (48) copies of the questionnaire were not returned giving a response rate of (19.8%). No sample size was drawn from the population. This is because the population of the study is accessible. The census method was used to ensuring that opinions of all library staff in the south-east, Nigeria were captured for the study.

Analysis

Research Question 1

How does emotional motivation predict attitude to work and staff performance in polytechnic libraries in south-east, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Responses on Emotional Motivation as a Predictor of Attitude to Work and Staff Performance in Polytechnic Libraries

S/N	Emotional Motivation as a Predictor of Attitude to Work and Staff Performance in Polytechnic Libraries	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean Value	Decision
a.	Emotional motivation helps to boost staff attitude to work and performance	105	68	13	8	194	3.39	Significant
b.	Good working environment can emotionally motivate staff attitude to work and performance	119	59	9	7	194	3.49	Significant

c.	Ineffectiveness of library staff is due to lack of attitude to work and emotional motivation	98	72	13	11	194	3.32	Not Significant
d.	Recognition of service and award emotionally motivate staff attitude to work and performance	112	54	15	13	194	3.37	Significant
e.	Staff training and development emotionally motivate staff attitude to work and performance	102	50	24	18	194	3.22	Not Significant
Significant Mean Value= 3.36								

(Source: Field Survey, 2024)

Result on Table 1, indicate that at a significant mean value of ($X=3.36$), emotional motivation predict attitude to work and staff performance in polytechnic libraries in south-east, Nigeria because emotional motivation helps to boost staff attitude to work and performance ($X=3.39$), good working environment can emotionally motivate staff attitude to work and performance ($X=3.49$) and recognition of service and award emotionally motivate staff attitude to work and performance ($X=3.37$). Although, other emotional motivation predict attitude to work and staff performance in polytechnic libraries in south-east, Nigeria such as ineffectiveness of library staff is due to lack of attitude to work and emotional motivation ($X=3.32$) and staff training and development emotionally motivate staff attitude to work and performance ($X=3.22$) were considered insignificant prediction because their mean values were less than the significant mean values of $X= 3.36$.

Research Question 2

In which way does emotional self-awareness predict attitude to work and staff performance in polytechnic libraries in south-east, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean Responses on Emotional Self-Awareness as a Predictor of Attitude to Work and Staff Performance in Polytechnic Libraries

S/N	Emotional Self-Awareness as a Predictor of Attitude to Work and Staff Performance in Polytechnic Libraries	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean Value	Decision
a.	I know my ability to understand and know self	98	88	5	3	194	3.45	Not Significant
b.	I know my ability to know values and belief	110	74	8	2	194	3.51	Significant
c.	I know my ability to have self confidence in all situations	120	60	10	4	194	3.53	Significant
d.	I know my ability to recognize feelings and their effects	116	73	3	2	194	3.56	Significant
e.	I know my strengths, and limits which help me to do quality jobs	107	74	7	6	194	3.45	Not Significant
Significant Mean Value =3.50								

(Source: Field Survey, 2024)

Table 2 shows the mean responses on emotional self-awareness as a predictor of attitude to work and staff performance in polytechnic libraries is greater than the significant mean value ($X=3.50$) in three main aspects. These are; I know my ability to know values and belief ($X=3.45$), utilizing health information assist me in making the right decisions as it relates to safety health practices ($X=3.51$), I know my ability to have self confidence in all situations ($X=3.53$) and I know my ability to recognize feelings and their effects ($X=3.56$). The other two reasons namely; I know my ability to understand and know self ($X=3.45$) and I know my strengths, and limits which help me to do quality jobs ($X=3.45$) have less than the significant mean value ($X=3.50$). The significant mean value ($X=3.50$) shows that emotional self-awareness predict attitude to work and staff performance in polytechnic libraries in south-east, Nigeria.

Findings

The findings of the study on Table 1, research question 1 revealed that emotional motivation predict attitude to work and staff performance in polytechnic libraries in south-east, Nigeria. This implies that emotional motivation significantly predict attitude to

work and staff performance in polytechnic libraries in south-east, Nigeria. The result of this study agrees with the findings of Dina and Olowosoke (2018) that there are some motivators that provide real motivation and when they are inadequate, library staff are not motivated. The authors further stated in their studies that Polytechnic Librarians should adopt reward, internship training, transformational and facilitative leadership to ensure that the management goals are achieved because the working task has been made more interesting, meaningful and challenging. The findings of Akintayo (2007) supported this finding in which he said that library staff would be motivated only to the extent that they expect high levels of efforts resulting to high levels of monetization of compensation. If library staff do not believe that their performance will be rewarded then there is no way they can achieve job satisfaction and this will affect motivation negatively, but if they believe in the high valence of outcomes they will be highly motivated to work towards attaining job satisfaction.

The findings of the study on Table 2, research question 2 revealed that emotional self-awareness predict attitude to work and staff performance in polytechnic libraries in south-east, Nigeria. This implies that emotional self-awareness significantly predict attitude

to work and staff performance in polytechnic libraries in south-east, Nigeria. This is in line with Okpara and Edwin (2015) in their study on the emotional self-awareness profile of public librarians in Malaysia and found out that public librarians have a good potential of competencies for self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. However, it was noted in their study that the highest competency possessed by Malaysian public librarians is the dimension of self-awareness; asserting that there is no doubt that working in public libraries requires high self-awareness because of the diversity of requests from various groups.

Conclusion

In the light of the findings above, conclusions was drawn. The study has successfully investigated the emotional intelligence as a predictor of attitude to work and staff performance in polytechnic libraries in south-east, Nigeria. The study revealed that emotional motivation and emotional self-awareness predict attitude to work and staff performance in polytechnic libraries in south-east, Nigeria. It could be seen that the more motivated and self-aware library staff in the polytechnic libraries are the more they improve on their performance.

Recommendations

In line with the findings, the study recommended as follows:

- Polytechnic libraries should create more awareness about the importance of self-awareness to their library staff. This can be achieved through effective training of the library staff on the competencies of self-awareness.
- Library staff should be trained to be emotionally aware. When library staff are aware of their emotions, they perform well on their job.
- Polytechnic Libraries should adopt motivational tools for library staff so as to enabling them discharge their duties effectiveness.

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