

Emotional Intelligence as Correlate of Job Satisfaction and Commitment among Secondary School Counsellors in Kano State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study aims at studying emotional intelligence as correlate of job satisfaction and commitment among secondary school counsellors in Kano State, Nigeria. The research design adopted for this study is correlational design. The population for this study was made up of 1,505 secondary schools' counsellors in Kano State. The sample of the study comprised of 740 secondary schools' counsellors (497 males and 243 females). Instruments for data collection in the study were researcher designed questionnaires titled 'Secondary School Counsellor's Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (SSCEIQ)' and 'Secondary School Counsellor's Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (SSCJSQ)' and School Counsellor's Job Commitment Questionnaire (SSCJQC). Pearson Correlation analysis was used to analyse the data. Findings of the study include the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction and emotional intelligence and job commitment of counsellors was very high positive relationship with a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. It is recommended among others that government should be interested in the counsellors' emotional intelligence, job satisfaction and commitment because they influence counsellors' behavior. Education managers should raise the counsellors' emotional intelligence, job satisfaction and commitment by focusing on the intrinsic and extrinsic parts of the school counselling.

Key words: Emotional intelligence, job commitment, job satisfaction, secondary school, school counsellors.

Introduction

Job satisfaction represents one of the most complex areas that have been a subject of discussion and investigation among education managers when it comes to managing their human resources. Job satisfaction is one of the significant and positive factors which has an influence on the performance and attitudes of employees toward their job within an organization (Strydom, as cited in Mehrad & Zangeneh, 2017). Many studies have established an unusually large impact of the job satisfaction on the motivation of workers, while the level of motivation has an impact on productivity, and hence also on performance of business organisations (Aziri, 2011). Similarly, Luthan's research evidence (as cited in Aziri, 2011) indicates that satisfaction may not necessarily lead to individual's performance improvement but does lead to departmental and organisational

level improvements; and that there are still considerable debates whether satisfaction leads to performance or performance leads to satisfaction. Aziri (2011) opined that job satisfaction can be considered as one of the main factors when it comes to efficiency and effectiveness of business organisations. Aziri further claimed that the new managerial paradigm which insists that employees should be treated and considered primarily as human beings that have their own wants, needs, and personal desires is a typical indicator of the importance of job satisfaction in present-day establishments. Sirohi and Shrivastva (2013) have confirmed the relationship between satisfaction and performance in the faculties of private universities in India. This relationship, therefore, explained that the satisfaction level of university staff has impact on willingness to put in their best in the university job in the way that might lead to the highest level of productivity in the universities as a whole.

Mehrad and Zangeneh (2017) are of the view that job satisfaction as an organizational factor has specifically two different levels (high and low levels) that are determined by various motivators. According to Mehrad and Zangeneh, each of these levels specifies the number of employees' feeling towards their job and also shows their reaction at workplace. The presence of high level of job satisfaction at workplace leads to high productivity, loyalty, dedication, and punctuality amongst employees. In the same vein, employees who have a high level of job satisfaction show acceptable organisational behavior and prefer to remain at work (Wan Ahmad & Abdurahman, as cited in Mehrad & Zangeneh, 2017). In contrast, employees with low level of job satisfaction show abnormal behavior at organisations. These behaviors include: turnover, low productivity, slowness, and absenteeism.

Job satisfaction needs to be regarded as a very important issue within the Nigerian education sector, especially for secondary school counsellors. This is mainly due to the fact that it is connected with different aspects of their role and those which consume most of their time both in and outside of school counselling practice. It is also proper to claim that, with regard to job satisfaction, a satisfied secondary school counsellor is a happy school counsellor and a happy school counsellor is a successful employee that is expected to contribute to educational success. However, despite the wide attention received by job satisfaction in scientific research, there is still no general agreement regarding what job satisfaction is. Job satisfaction has been defined in several forms as one of the organisational feelings which combine physiological and psychological

factors that employees illustrate towards their job and workplace. Succinctly, job satisfaction is a collection of positive approaches, attitudes, and opinions that employees display towards their job at the workplace (Mehrad and Zangeneh, 2017). According to Hoppock (as cited in Aziri, 2011), job satisfaction is defined as any combination of psychological, physiological and environmental circumstances that cause a person to truly feel satisfied with his job. Vroom (as cited in Aziri, 2011), defined job satisfaction as affective orientations on the part of employees toward work roles which they are presently occupying. However, in the context of this study, job satisfaction is defined as the extent to which a secondary school counsellor is feeling contented with his or her school counselling job to the extent that positive and favorable feeling towards the counselling job indicates efficiency and effectiveness in job performance, while negative and unfavorable feeling towards the counselling job indicates inefficiency, ineffectiveness, and poor job performance. It is worth noting that workers with high level of job satisfaction typically had an overall job commitment (Meyer & Allen as cited in Iden, 2014).

Commitment can simply refer to the focus and the desire of attachment of a person to a certain task or work (Pitaloka & Sofia, 2014). Ayele (2014) observed that commitment can be viewed from two perspectives i.e. as an attitude and as a behavior. Commitment as an attitude reflects feelings such as attachment, identification and loyalty to the organization as an object of commitment while commitment as a behavior is evident when committed individuals enact specific behavior due to the belief that it is morally correct rather than personally beneficial (Ayele, 2014). Meyer and Allen (1991) identified three forms of commitment which can be used to measure the counsellor's job commitment. These are affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Affective commitment deals with the attachment of a counsellor with the school organization and its goals and objectives. It is affected by job characteristics (Morrow, 1993) and more concerned with intrinsic factors than extrinsic factors (Akpan, 2013). Continuance commitment deals with the concern of counsellors on the cost associated with leaving the school counselling and the lack of alternative employment opportunities. Normative commitment deals with counsellors' loyalty and obligation to remain in the school counselling job. Hunt and Morgan (as cited in Isma'il, 2012) defined organizational commitment (which is a broader concept) as an employee's strong belief in and acceptance of an organization's goal and values, effort on behalf of the organization to reach these goals/objectives, and strong desire to maintain membership in the organization. In the context of this study, job

commitment refers to the secondary school counsellor's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the school counselling practice so that there exists congruence between an individual's own values and beliefs and those of the school counselling practice.

Indeed, job commitment is one of the most important workplace attitudes of employees. Employees' commitment to job evokes their working consciousness which will lead to performing the work better with rationality due to having faith in work enhancement (Ozer & Gunluk as cited in Jandaghi, Mokhles & Bahrami, 2011). Where congruence exists between the employee's commitment and his job then job commitment can enhance individual and organisational performance by increasing work motivation and by reducing costs associated with negative organisational behaviors such as turnover, burnout, apathy, and absenteeism (Cohen & Golan, 2007). This is implying that job commitment helps to retain school counsellors and makes them satisfied with their job and through this also makes their schools very effective. In other words, job commitment contributes to improvement of school counselling and counsellor retention. Thus, job commitment can be regarded as one of the major professional characteristics that influence counsellor's success. However, this success is achieved when counsellors are managed properly to the extent that they display their job commitment which usually leads to increased effectiveness, performance and productivity. Therefore, an important organisational resource is to possess satisfied, highly energetic, creative and committed human capital (Shagholi as cited in Jandaghi, Mokhles & Bahrami, 2011). This can be the reason behind the efforts made by education stakeholders in the study area to ensure that adequate motivation is provided to schools' counsellors so as to promote effective school counselling.

School counselling has a significant role in the overall growth and development of secondary school students and is therefore an essential part of Nigeria's school curriculum. This is because secondary school students are at the stage of adolescence which is characterized by many physical and psychological changes which pose a number of personal, social and educational challenges (Mutie & Ndambuki as cited in Nyamwange, Nyakan & Ondima, 2012). To effectively achieve the roles, a trained and committed school counsellor, who is satisfied with his counselling job, is required to manage a secondary school guidance program. However, an observation by the researcher points to the fact that secondary school counsellors are not satisfied and committed to their school counselling practice in the study area. Thus, all avenues to investigate variables that

are perceived to have relationship with secondary school counsellors' job satisfaction and commitment are worth exploring so as to save the study area and the nation from educational and general underdevelopment. It is based on this background that the researcher investigated emotional intelligence (EI) as correlates of job satisfaction and commitment among secondary school counsellors in Kano State, Nigeria.

In recent times, there is accumulating evidence that EI is an important predictor of key organisational outcomes (Dans & Ashkanasy in Sydney-Aghor, Ebeh, Nwankwo & Agu, 2014). Emotional Intelligence (EI) is found to have a significant impact on everyday life. Goleman (1996) pointed out that while traditional intelligence may predict what job individuals can enter, within the job it is the EI that distinguishes outstanding performers from average ones. Palmer, Donaldson, and Stough (2002) have found high EI to predict life satisfaction. Pelliteri (2002) reported that people who are higher on EI are more likely to use an adaptive defense style and thus to exhibit healthier psychological adaptation. Meyer, Dipaolo, and Salovey (1990) found higher EI to be significantly correlated with parental warmth and attachment style, and that people with high EI tend to be more successful in work and life than those with lower EI (Cherniss, 2001). Also, emotionally intelligent individuals are expected to recognize, manage and use their emotions to eliminate the resultant obstacles and advance their career prospects better than people with low EI (Akomolafe, Jude & Onijuni, 2013).

There are numerous ways of defining emotional intelligence. McPheat (2010) defines EI as an individual's innate potentiality to feel, use, communicate, recognize, remember, describe, identify, learn from, manage, understand, and explain emotions. McPheat added that EI involves a combination of competencies which allow an individual to be aware of, to understand, and to be in control of his own emotions, to recognize and understand the emotions of others, and to use this knowledge to promote his success and the success of others. Lynn (2008) viewed the term to include (i) one's ability to recognize, manage, control and adapt our emotions, reactions and responses (self-awareness and self-control); (ii) harnessing our emotions and motivating ourselves to work appropriately toward the achievement of our goals (motivation), (iii) understanding the feelings of others and their points of view in order to relate to others more effectively (empathy), (iv) bringing authenticity to one's life and living one's intention and values which requires one to know who he is and what one wants to do with his life (mastery of purpose and vision), and (v)

building genuine relationship, expressing caring concern and working as part of a team (social expertness). Operationally, in the context of this study, EI is defined as the ability of a school counsellor to be aware of his emotions and the emotions of his students and to use that awareness to understand and help manage the physical, mental, and social consequences that negative emotions may have on one's ability to pursue and achieve own goals and on students' ability to pursue their goals.

From the above, it can therefore be inferred that to advance as a school counsellor, one requires understanding and mastery of emotional intelligence. School counsellors who master EI, and possibly having higher EI, can develop their careers by delivering more consistently and by taking on counselling roles more seriously. In fact, it is expected that success in school counselling career may be said to be a function of the level of EI of the counsellor. School counsellors who master EI are expected to distinguish themselves from other counsellors who have not. They will be able to achieve more and feel more satisfied with themselves and their relationship with others. Taking into cognizance the importance of EI in the overall well-being of school counsellors, the present work investigated, among others, EI as correlate of job satisfaction and commitment among secondary school counsellors.

An observation by the researcher in the study area points to the fact that secondary school counsellors are not satisfied and committed to their school counselling practice. Where there is absence of job satisfaction and commitment among the school counsellors, the tendency is that the counsellors may not be able to develop a process and procedure for implementing and evaluating comprehensive and effective school guidance and counselling programme in consultation with students, parents, school committees, school boards, and community members. Also, the school counsellors' inability to achieve job satisfaction and commitment in school counselling can result in students' inappropriate personality development and adjustment, selection of inappropriate courses that are not in line with individuals' needs, interests and abilities, and improper selection of career. Other problems that can emanate as a result of lack of secondary school counsellors' job satisfaction and commitment include students mismatching between education and employment and thus the inefficient use of nation's manpower, inadequate motivation for youth to engage in self-employment and failure to identify and help students in need of special help. If this is the situation, the researcher is worried that the absence of job satisfaction and commitment among the

secondary school counsellors will affect the overall growth and development of secondary school students. Consequent to this, the educational development and the general development of Kano State can be at stake, which will in turn affect national development. It is against this background that the present study investigated emotional intelligence as correlates of job satisfaction and commitment among secondary school counsellors in Kano State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction of secondary school counsellors?
2. What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and job commitment of secondary school counsellors?

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is correlational design. Correlational design is a non-experimental research technique in which pre-existing groups are compared on some dependent variables. The area of the study is Kano State - a state situated in the north-western geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The population for this study was made up of 1,505 secondary schools' counsellors. The sample of the study comprised of 740 secondary schools' counsellors (497 males and 243 females). The instruments for data collection in the study were questionnaires titled Secondary School Counsellor's Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (SSCEIQ), Secondary School Counsellor's Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (SSCJSQ) and School Counsellor's Job Commitment Questionnaire (SSCJCQ). 4 point rating-scale as: 1 – Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Agree, 4 – Strongly agree. The instruments were face-validated by three experts from the area of Guidance and Counselling and one from the area of Measurement and Evaluation, all in the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Cronbach alpha method was used to determine the internal consistency of the instruments. The reliability coefficients obtained were 0.75 for SSCEIQ, 0.84 for SSCJSQ and 0.81 for SSCJCQ were derived. A face-to-face method of data collection was employed by the researcher in collecting data for the research work. Data collected were answered using Pearson's correlation analysis at the significance level of 0.05. To determine the relationship existing between the variables 0.00-0.19 (very low relationship), 0.20-0.39 (low relationship), 0.40-0.59 (moderate relationship), 0.60-0.79 (high relationship) and 0.80

and above (very high relationship). Regression analysis was used to test the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction and emotional intelligence and job commitment. The null hypothesis is rejected where the probability value (p-value) is less than the a priori probability value i.e. 0.05 level of significance, otherwise the null hypothesis would be accepted.

Results

Research Question One: What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction of secondary school counsellors?

Table 1: Pearson Correlation showing the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction of secondary school counsellors

		EI	JS	Decision
Emotional Intelligence (EI)	Pearson Correlation	1	.855**	Very high positive relationship
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
	N	683	683	
Job satisfaction (JS)	Pearson Correlation	.855**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	683	683	

Table 1 shows the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction of secondary school counsellors. The table shows that the value of the correlation coefficient (r) is 0.855. This indicates that the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction of secondary school counsellors is a very high positive relationship.

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and job commitment of secondary school counsellors?

Table 2: Pearson Correlation showing the relationship between emotional intelligence and job commitment of secondary school counsellors

		EI	JC	Decision
Emotional Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	1	.917**	Very high positive relationship
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
	N	683	683	
Job Commitment (JC)	Pearson Correlation	.917**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	683	683	

Table 2 shows the relationship between emotional intelligence and job commitment of secondary school counsellors. The table shows that the value of the correlation coefficient (r) is .917. This indicates that the relationship between emotional intelligence and job commitment of secondary school counsellors is a very high positive relationship.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of the study indicated that the relationship between EI and job satisfaction of secondary school counsellors is a very high positive relationship. The relationship between EI and job satisfaction of the secondary school counsellors has the value of the correlation coefficient (r) of 0.855 as shown in Table 1. This means that higher level of EI among the school counsellors leads to higher level of job satisfaction. Equally, this means that EI correlates with and, to some extent, predicts job satisfaction among secondary school counsellors in the study area. The above finding supports Lee and Ok (as cited in Tagoe & Quarshie, 2017) who found a positive correlation between EI and job satisfaction among hospital workers. The authors maintained that the significance of EI cannot be disputed in the lives of workers in relation to job satisfaction. Furthermore, the findings reported that EI played a pivotal role in predicting job satisfaction among employees (Ghoreishi, Zahirrodine, Assarian, Moosavi, & Mehrizi, 2014). Given the view that people with high EI competencies are more likely to gain success in the work place than less emotionally intelligent people, it means that secondary school counsellors with high EI in the study area would likely be the counsellors enjoying high job satisfaction. This also means that EI competencies, when developed in the secondary school counsellors, can help them to increase their job satisfaction within their respective schools' counselling.

Thus, in the context of secondary school counsellors in the study area, EI is a significant predictor of job satisfaction. There is no doubt that when the counsellors have the abilities to understand and regulate their emotions and that of their clients, and use the emotions to facilitate the counselling of their clients, such abilities can drive the counsellors to achieve job satisfaction. The result seems to be consistent with the study conducted by Yusof, Tengku-Muda, and Ishak (2016) which revealed that there is a relationship between EI and job satisfaction among school counseling head teachers in Selangor, Malaysia. The analysis of Pearson Correlation, r , between EI and job satisfaction in Yusof, et al.,'s study shows a significant positive relationship between EI and job satisfaction among the counselling heads of secondary schools. Accordingly, the finding

of this study supports the study conducted by Anari (2012) which investigated the relationship between EI, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment among high-school English teachers in Iran. Anari's study found that there is a positive significant correlation between EI and job satisfaction. Also, results of the studies conducted by Syed, Rohany, Mohammad, and Muhammad (2012), Sener, Demirel and Sarlak (2009), Tagoe and Quarshie (2017), and Sy, Tram, and O'Hara (2006), though using different samples, are proving that there is a positive relationship between EI and job satisfaction. These results might be due to the fact that workers with high EI are able to recognize, manage, and eliminate obstacles in their work place and advance to achieve job satisfaction than those workers with low EI.

On the other hand, in a study aimed at evaluating the degree of EI and job satisfaction in the staff of Kashan hospitals, Iran, Ghoreishi, Zahirrodine, Assarian, Moosavi, and Mehrizi (2014) reported that there was no significant relation between job satisfaction and EI and its subscales. In another study aimed at analyzing the relationship between EI and job satisfaction, by taking into consideration organizational learning capability, Alegro and Chiva (2008) discovered that the direct relationship between EI and job satisfaction is very low and not significant ($\beta = -0.096$, $t = -1.161$). With these results, it seems that the results of the studies which have examined the relationship between EI and job satisfaction are different. Perhaps one reason for the difference in the results is the use of different tools to measure EI and job satisfaction. Furthermore, it could be likely due to the difference in the studied populations, and work places. In the study area, the relationship between EI and job satisfaction is of a higher degree due possibly to the special attention given to guidance and counselling by Kano State Ministry of Education.

The analysis of research question two, which aimed at finding out whether a relationship exists between EI and job commitment of secondary school counsellors in Kano State, revealed that a very high positive relationship exists between the two variables. This is represented by the value of the correlation coefficient (r) of 0.917 in Table 2. This result implies that when EI of secondary school counsellor's increases, job commitment of the secondary school counsellors also increases with a very high magnitude. This result is implying that secondary school counsellors who are best equipped with EI skills are better motivated to demonstrate higher levels of job commitment in their workplace. Conversely, the result is suggesting that lower job commitment among the secondary school counsellors might be due to inappropriate acquisition of EI skills by counsellors. The importance of job commitment can be noticed when the amount of expenses

incurred when replacing a committed school counsellor as well as the painful cost of retaining under-committed school counsellor is considered. It is further reported that costs are incurred when organizations hire replacements who must be trained to fill the role of former committed employees and organizations with employees who possess high levels of commitment to the organization and their job have demonstrated lower incidences of absenteeism, tardiness, losses, and fewer grievances (Montana & Charnov as cited in Webb, 2011).

Hence, it can be deduced that when seeking to improve the secondary school counsellors' job commitment, the education stakeholders should take cognizance of the relationship between EI and job commitment as emotionally intelligent counsellors are more likely to be committed to school counselling practice. This result is consistent with the study conducted by Alavi, Mojtahedzadeh, Amin, and Savoji (2013) which shows that EI and its sub-scales are significantly related to organisational commitment (a broader concept encompassing job commitment). Also, the finding of this study supports the study conducted by Mohamadkhani and Lalardi (2012) which aimed at determining if there is any relationship between EI and organizational commitment of staff in 5-star public hotels in Tehran. The result of Pearson correlation coefficient analysis of Mohamadkhani and Lalardi's study revealed that there was a positive significant correlation between EI and organizational commitment. The results of this and other studies showed the important role of EI on job commitment, thus they suggest that educational planners plan some educational programmes for secondary school counsellors to increase their emotional skills so as to improve their commitment which can result in the effectiveness of the school counselling practice.

Conclusion

Emotional intelligence and job satisfaction and commitment are desirables needed by counsellors to perform effectively and efficiently during counselling activities. Counsellors who possess high level of emotional intelligence and job satisfaction and commitment are more likely to achieve counselling goals and objectives. From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction of secondary school counsellors is very high positive relationship. In addition, there is significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction of secondary school counsellors. Accordingly, the relationship between emotional intelligence and job commitment of secondary school counsellors

is very high. Likewise, there is significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job commitment of secondary school counsellors.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. Government should be interested in the counsellors' emotional intelligence, job satisfaction and commitment because they influence counsellors' behavior. To strengthen the emotional Intelligence of counsellors, there is need to always improve the counsellors' self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy for others, and social skills, such as proficiency in managing relationships and building networks. To strengthen the counsellors' job satisfaction and commitment, there is need to among others always improve the counselling environment, salary and working conditions of the counsellors, development opportunities for counsellors (such as attending trainings, conducting and reporting research) and ensuring that counselling programme is flexible and autonomous.
2. Education managers should raise the counsellors' emotional intelligence, job satisfaction and commitment by focusing on the intrinsic and extrinsic parts of the counselling job, such as making the counselling work challenging and interesting in order to keep the counsellors motivated and committed to ensure the establishment and development of school guidance programme. A counsellor with low emotional intelligence, low job satisfaction and commitment can hardly commits serious effort towards achievement of school guidance programme goals and objectives.
3. Education managers should put in place structures that enhance counsellors' emotional intelligence, job satisfaction and commitment in order to induce positive counselling outcomes that may lead to maintain, and support efficiency in schools. Education managers should know that creating a satisfied counsellors is hardly a guarantee of successful school counselling. Therefore, effort should be made to focus on all facets of emotional intelligence and job commitment in order to enhance the counsellors' performance in schools.
4. Education managers should make adequate provision for secondary school counsellors' development programmes and counsellors should be encouraged to participate in such programmes to increase and update their knowledge and skills. The training which should

focus on factors responsible for emotional intelligence, job satisfaction and commitment will help them to have better understanding of school operations, school guidance programme management and how to use modern technologies (e.g. ICT tools) for effective counselling.

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