

# EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND ORGANISATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR: AN EMPIRICAL REVIEW

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## Abstract

*Emotion has now been identified as a critical element in the workplace, even though traditional management has downplayed its role in the past. To be effective and successful in today's dynamic business world, leaders and employees must among other things be able to identify, take cue, manage, and problem-solve with emotions in the workplace. This is because the workplace is more dynamic, complex and highly competitive than ever before. Therefore, organisations are constantly looking for ways to improve their competitive position. Organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) is believed to be one of the important components that gives organisations competitive advantage and facilitates the successful accomplishment of goals. The aim of this paper was to present a theoretical review of empirical researches linking emotional intelligence (EI) with organisational citizenship behavior (OCB). The review established a strong positive relationship between emotional intelligence(EI) and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB). The implication is that in any typical organisation, individuals who are emotionally intelligent would exhibit more citizenship behaviour than others who are not. This is especially important in today's ever changing business world. Organisations have gone beyond the norms –moving beyond just technologies and the use of other hardwares, and are now tapping into the human soul for resourcefulness and competitiveness. Leaders and managers should therefore take steps to ensuring that they help their subordinates acquire and develop their emotional intelligence based on its recognised relevance in today's complex business world.*

**Key words:** Emotional Intelligence, Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

## Introduction

Emotions are critical elements in today's workplace. Before now, traditional management theories downplayed the idea that employee would ever consider emotions in making decisions leading to the achievement of organisational goals –emphasizing that they are rather logical or rational in the manner in which they perform their work following Weber's bureaucratic postulation (Igbinomwanhia, 2011).

Many reasons can be adduced to why early management writer's maintained such position. One of which is the fact that emotions were commonly viewed and discussed as being disruptive only (Robbins & Sanghi, 2005). However, it has been suggested that emotions ought to be thought of and discussed more in constructive manner (Igbinomwanhia, 2011). To be effective and successful in today's dynamic business world, leaders and employees must among other things be able to identify, take cue, manage, and problem-solve with emotions in the workplace (Igbinomwanhia, 2011).

Organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) could be viewed as those specific occasions when employees go beyond what is formally expected of them to get work done in order to promote the growth, effectiveness and success of the organization (Igbinomwanhia & Akinmayowa, 2014; Zhang, 2011). Today's workplace is more dynamic, complex and highly competitive than before. Organisations are constantly looking for ways to improve their competitive position. Thus, organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) is believed to be one important component of what gives organizations competitive advantage that permits them to successfully accomplish goals (Igbinomwanhia & Akinmayowa, 2014).

Researchers are beginning to increase their interest in the last few decades in their study of leaders' emotional intelligence (EI) and how it impacts the organization. For example, organisational citizenship behaviour-specifically sportsmanship has been found in emotionally intelligent managers which has enhanced the morale of the people in the organisation and, consequently, reduce employee turnover (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997).

This paper is aimed at presenting a theoretical review of empirical researches on the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and the exhibition of organisational citizenship behaviour among employees (OCB).

## **Literature Review**

### **Concept of Emotional Intelligence**

There are a number of definitions of emotional intelligence (EI) in the literature. Emotional intelligence (EI) has been defined as the ability to detect and manage emotional cues and information (Robbins & Sanghi, 2005). It is the ability to recognize, understand and regulate emotional (Wendy, 2012). In a more comprehensive sense, EI is the ability to identify emotion, recognise the meaning of emotions and their interrelationship and problem-

solve on the basis on them (Igbinomwanhia, 2011). In a nutshell, EI would include the ability to detect emotion (both yours and others), take cues from emotional information, decipher the meaning being communicated through emotion, able to manage and solve workplace problem on the basis of your understanding, meaning and cues from emotional information.

### **Theories of Emotional Intelligence (EI)**

Following our review of extant literature, three main theories of emotional intelligence are commonly discussed. They include: The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso model of emotional intelligence; the Goleman model of emotional intelligence; and the Bar-On model of emotional intelligence.

#### **The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Model**

Mayer, Salovey, Caruso are thought to be at the forefront in the research into the subject of emotional intelligence (Wendy, 2012). The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso model is an ability-based model of emotional intelligence. The model asserts that emotional intelligence is an ability which can be measured. According to the model a number of tasks can be used to measure emotional intelligence (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2004).

It is thought that this ability increases as the individual matures- it can also be added that as the individual grows through learning and personal development –emotional intelligence also increases.

#### **The Goleman Model**

The Goleman model of emotional intelligence is a mixed-model of emotional intelligence. The implication is that this model sees emotional intelligence not based only on ability, but on a number of other competencies and traits (Wendy, 2012). The assumption is that it is the interaction among these competencies that defines a person's level of emotional intelligence. This model identifies five competent areas and traits that are associated with emotional intelligence which include: empathy, skill in handling relationships, motivation, self-regulation and self-awareness (Goleman, 1998). This model may also be referred to as a competence-based model of emotional intelligence.

### **The Bar-On Model**

The Bar-On model of emotional intelligence asserts that emotional intelligence is a network of emotional and social competencies that can positively influence behavior (Bar-On, 2010). This model is similar to the Goleman model in the sense that it implies the idea that emotional intelligence can be perceived of as a mixed-model.

Bar-On (2010), submits that emotional intelligence influences how people understand and express themselves, how they relate to others, and how they deal with their daily challenges and stresses. This model may simply be referred to as performance-based model of emotional intelligence.

### **Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence**

Goleman (1998), originally identified five components of emotional intelligence. Following the contributions of other researchers to the subject matter, emotional intelligence may be categorized into the following dimensions (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2001; Kernbach & Schutte, 2005; Bar-On, 2010; Radha & Prasad, 2013; Danquah & Wireko, 2014): Self-awareness; Self-management; Social awareness; Relationship management; Stress management; Adaptability; General mood.

#### **Self-Awareness**

This is the dimension of emotional intelligence that describes the individual's ability to detect, and understand the imports of his/her emotions. It also includes the individual's ability to understand and be aware of his/her own strengths and weaknesses. Apart from describing the personal limits of the individual, this domain also captures the confidence of the individual in his/her capability and self-worth (Wendy, 2012). In context, it is the ability to know others' and one's own emotions, drives, values and goals, and being able to link such knowledge to the other's potential, capability and in making decisions about others as leader.

#### **Self-Management**

Self-management is basically all about managing one's internal impulses, states and resources (Maria, 2011). It is the ability to control or redirect one's disruptive emotions and impulses and being able to adapt to changing circumstances of customers. This is based on the assumption that customer

taste, preferences or/demands keep changing with time (Opuni &Adu-Gyamfi, 2015).

It captures several abilities such as emotional self-control, ability to keep disturbing impulses and emotions under control, the ability to transparently display honesty, integrity, and trustworthiness, flexibility in the face of changes, initiative, continuous improvement, readiness to act in the face of opportunities, ability to see the positive side of things, and to keep pursuing goals even when faced with setbacks (Maria, 2011; Wendy, 2012).

### **Social Awareness**

This is the ability to be aware or know other people's needs and feelings. Social awareness may capture such abilities as service orientation, organizational awareness and so on (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). organizational awareness is the ability to read the emotional currents prevailing in the organization and understand the dynamics of power sharing and relationship among individuals and group within the organization; and service orientation, to anticipate, recognize and meet the needs of the customers (Maria, 2011).

### **Relationship Management**

This domain captures a person ability to manage or handle his/her relationship with others and induce desirable outcomes from others such as –employees, superiors, subordinates, customers, clients and other stakeholders. This domain is purported to be especially important for effective leadership (Wendy, 2012).

This domain involves distinct areas such as: inspirational leadership (ability to inspire and guide individuals and groups), influence (tactics for persuading people), developing others, being a change catalyst (ability to manage or initiate change), conflict management (ability to negotiate and resolve disagreements), building bonds and teamwork (ability to work with others toward common goals and to be able to create group synergy when pursuing these goals) (Wolff, 2005; Wendy, 2012).

### **Empathy**

Empathy describes the ability to understand other's emotions, take interest in their concerns and to be able to sense their feelings and standpoints

(Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). This deals with considering customers' feelings, especially when making decisions about product/service packaging and customer-focused strategy implementation (Opuni, 2015).

### **Stress Management**

This domain captures the individual's ability to tolerate and control stress impulses. This would include emotional stability, stress tolerance and stress impulse control. Individuals with this ability are able to work under pressure and are more patient with others – subordinates, superiors, customers, clients and others (Wendy, 2012).

### **Adaptability**

This dimension captures the ability to be flexible and problem-solving or solution oriented. It also includes the ability to be realistic in validating emotions – both yours and that of other people. Also, this component involves adapting emotion to changing situational demands (Wendy, 2012).

### **General Mood**

This component is related to optimism and happiness. This skill involves the tendency to believe, expect, and hope for the best. Further, the individual is self-content and happy with their life. It focuses on a positive life outlook.

### **Concept of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)**

The concept of organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) was coined by Dennis Organ (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Organ, 1988). The idea was a build-up on the works of earlier researchers such as Chester Barnard's concept of the "willingness to cooperate," and Daniel Katz's distinction between "dependable role performance" and "innovative and spontaneous behaviours" (Barnard, 1938; Katz, 1964).

Organisational citizenship behaviour could be referred to as the behaviour that is at the discretion of the individual, not directly recognized by the prescribed reward system and that when added up would lead to the effective performance of the organisation (Organ, 1988). He went further to explain that by discretionary, he meant that the behaviour is not an enforceable obligation of the role or what is contained in the job description of the employee- that is, the clearly specifiable terms of the person's

employment contract with the organisation; the behaviour is rather a matter of personal discretion, such that non-performance would not be punishable. Organisational citizenship behaviour is a concept that covers everything positive and constructive that employees do, out of their own free will, which support co-workers and benefit the company (Zhang, 2011). Zhang added that OCB includes anything that employees choose to do, spontaneously and of their own accord, which often lies outside of their specified contractual obligations and which has the capacity to promote the effective functioning of the organization.

OCB has also been defined to represent those specific instances where employees go beyond the call of duty to get the organisation's work done (Igbinowmanhia & Akinmayowa, 2014).

It suffices to state that critics have asked whether or not OCBs, as conceptualized by Organ, were discretionary in nature and whether they are not formally rewarded (Eastman, 1994). Organ in his subsequent work responded and cleared all the criticisms. He noted that, since his original definition, jobs have moved away from a clearly defined set of tasks and responsibilities and have evolved into much more ambiguous roles. However, at some point there must be some sort of distinction in the behaviour of a person as to what the person was actually employed to do (in-role behaviour) and any other discretionary behaviour (extra-role behaviour) (Organ, 1997).

Given the dynamism, complexity and competitiveness of today's workplace, organisations are constantly looking for ways to improve their competitive position. Thus, organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) is believed to be one important component of what gives organisations competitive advantage that permits them to successfully accomplish goals (Igbinomwanhia & Akinmayowa, 2014).

### **Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour**

In this section, we shall discuss the relationship between emotional intelligence and organisational citizenship behaviour based on extant empirical researches.

In a study done by Justine (2012) on the relationship between organisational citizenship behaviour of corporate executives in India. 60 executives were selected from the executive's list of The ROOTS Industries, Coimbatore –the

sample was divided into two groups based on their level of authority. It was found from the research that a positive relationship exists between organizational citizenship behaviour and emotional intelligence.

In another study done by Tripathi, Suchet and Sokhi (2012) on the relationship between emotional intelligence and organisational citizenship behavior among scientists -50 Scientists working in various R&D organisations under the government of Indian were sampled. The results showed that intrapersonal, interpersonal and general mood scales of emotional intelligence significantly predict the conscientiousness dimension of organisational citizenship behaviour; intrapersonal, adaptability and stress management scales of emotional intelligence predict sportsmanship of organisational citizenship behaviour; general mood scale predicts courtesy and civic virtue of organisational citizenship behaviour. In addition, general mood scale predicts courtesy, and intrapersonal skills predicts altruism dimension of organisational citizenship behaviour.

In a research by Sahdu and Anupam (2017) in Bangladesh on the role of emotional intelligence on organisational citizenship behaviour – 163 full-time working MBA (evening) students studying at the Chittagong University Centre for Business Administration were sampled. The results revealed a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and the dimensions of organisational citizenship behaviour studied.

In yet another study by David and Elizabeth (2012) on the relationship between emotional intelligence and organisational citizenship behaviour. The sample comprised 334 employed college students and 72 professors. The results indicated a positive link between organisational citizenship behaviour and emotional intelligence. emotional intelligence was found to have a very strong relationship with organisational citizenship behaviour directed at the individuals.

Still another research by Osman, Mahmut, Demet, and Gozde (2014) on the relationship among emotional intelligence, organisational justice and organisational citizenship behaviour -255 respondents were sampled, the results showed that organisational justice is affected by emotional intelligence, organisational citizenship behaviour is affected by emotional intelligence directly and organisational citizenship behaviour is affected by emotional intelligence indirectly.



In Nigeria, a research was carried out by Bukki (2014) titled "Influence of Emotional Intelligence and Work-Family Conflict on Organisational Citizenship Behaviour of Secondary School Business Subject Teachers in Ogun State". The study comprised a sample of 300 respondents. The result of the study revealed a significant composite and relative contribution of emotional intelligence and work-life conflict on organisational citizenship behaviour. Worth noting in the study is the discovery that emotional intelligence was the most potent predictor variable in the research. It was recommended that organisations should select teachers with high emotional intelligence as this may have significant positive impact on their organisation.

In another study in Nigeria by Kolawole and Mjoli (2019) titled "Emotional Intelligence as a Moderator in the Relationship between Occupational Stress and Organisational Citizenship Behavior among Nigerian Graduate Employees". In the study, a positivist explanatory cross-sectional research design was adopted. A sample of 1,532 male and female graduate employees across the various sectors of the Nigerian economy was the focus of the study. The result of the study showed a significant moderate relationship between occupational stress and organisational citizenship behaviour. It was recommended that human resource managers should develop emotional intelligence in employees so as to raise the level of organisational performance, and reduce the negative impact of occupational stress.

In a similar study in Nigeria conducted by Gunu and Oladepo (2014) on the impact of emotional intelligence on employees' performance and organisational commitment: a case study of Dangote Flour Mills workers. The study revealed a significant relationship between employees' emotional intelligence, organisational commitment and their performance. Employees with high level of commitment are likely to exhibit organisational citizenship behaviour.

In a nutshell, emotional intelligence has a strong significant positive impact on a number of organizational outcomes as a whole and specifically on organisational citizenship behaviour. Leaders and managers should therefore take steps to ensuring that their people have or develop emotional intelligence given its recognized relevance in today's complex business world. This can be achieved through different ways, for examples, organisations should include emotional intelligence test in their recruitment process to ensure that employees who already possess emotional intelligence among others are considered for employment. In addition, new employees should be allowed to participate in organisational socialisation programme which

usually include emotional intelligence test - as this will help make up for lack of experience of new employees and eventually raise their performance (Gunu & Oladepo, 2014). And of course, very importantly, organizations should constantly train its employees for emotional intelligence in its human resources training and development programmes and so on.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper is an attempt to present a theoretical review of empirical researches revealing the relationship between emotional intelligence and organisational citizenship behaviour. From our review so far, it is clear without a shadow of doubt that strong positive relationship exists between emotional intelligence and organisational citizenship behaviour.

For example, Sahdu and Anupam (2017) found a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and the dimensions of organisational citizenship behaviour studied in Bangladesh. In Nigeria, Bukki (2014) found a significant composite and relative contribution of emotional intelligence and work-life conflict on organisational citizenship behaviour among secondary school business subjects' teachers in Ogun State -with emotional intelligence being the most potent predictor variable in the research.

Against the backdrop of our review, we recommend therefore that leaders and managers should (1) put emotional intelligence into consideration when recruiting their employees; (2) constantly train their employees to acquire emotional intelligence skills set; (3) create a work environment that promotes the exercise of emotional intelligence skills in the performance of work tasks -as this will help reinforce the skills already acquired and make them permanent in employees; (4) model emotional intelligence by enshrining it into the organization's cooperate culture and so on.

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