

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM TELECOMMUNICATION FIRMS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract: This study investigated the effect of emotional intelligence on organizational performance of telecommunication firms in Nigeria. It focused on ten (10) selected telecommunications firms in Delta State. The objectives of the study were to determine the effect of self-awareness, self-regulation on organizational performance of employees of telecommunication firms. The study adopted descriptive survey research, and responses from the respondents were generated with a five point Likert Scale questionnaire. A total of one hundred and seventy-one (171) copies of the questionnaire were administered to employees of ten (10) selected telecommunication firms in Delta State, Nigeria. From the one hundred and seventy-one (171) copies of the questionnaires that were administered, one hundred and twenty-three (123) were retrieved and properly filled. Data obtained were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The multiple regression result revealed that there is significant relationship between self-awareness, (p-value = 0.004 < 0.005), self-regulation (p-value = 0.020 < 0.05) and organizational performance. The study concludes that emotional intelligence has a positive significant effect on organizational performance in the telecommunications firms. Based on the finding, the study recommends that self-awareness skills of leaders should be encouraged to improve subordinates' work attitude. The study provides a model of motivation of workers that shows how the various dimensions of motivation can improve organizational in the telecommunication sector.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Self-awareness, Self-Regulation, Organizational Performance; Telecommunication Firms.

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Introduction

In an era of shifting paradigms, one of the world's fastest growing emerging sectors, such as the Telecommunications, should be able to develop its human resources as a source of competitive advantage. In order to develop and enhance workforce capabilities and to successfully compete in the 21st Century, firms have to embark on future oriented human resources strategies. It could be argued that the individual competencies of the workforce in any organization would determine its overall success. This success, among other things, may be attributed to the Socio-Behavioural characteristics and adjustments these individuals have to make in their job-role and position power to gain common ground in any organizational setting (Alotaibi, Amin & Winterton, 2020).

Moreso, as the economy is rapidly evolving in contemporary society, competition continues to grow, and organizational success has become one of the most significant measures of how to develop better and better in the face of global competition. Companies today want to hire or train new workers who are able to go beyond their current positions to maximize performance. As a result of this, several contemporary strategies have been birthed, but one that is seen as very important is the concept of emotional intelligence. This is a vital tool, as it deals with the human resource aspect of the firm.

Organization consists of people with feelings, beliefs, culture, and needs, and to relate with them satisfactorily and avoid conflict in the work place regularly, one has to be emotionally intelligent. Managers have to understand the feelings of their subordinates, their reasoning and their thinking; they have to anticipate their actions and reactions in every given situation and they need to be intelligent emotionally to do so. According Stanton (2020) states that managers who score high on comprehending their own feelings and that of their subordinates are more likely to achieve business success.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) therefore, is playing a vital role in every organization which describes the ability, capacity, skill or, in the case of the trait EI model, a self-perceived ability, to identify, assess, and manage the emotions of one's self, of others, and of groups. The emotions of individuals have intensive effect on their behaviour and organizations growth and success depends largely on the strength and performance of their workforce. Ordinarily, employees exhibit both positive and negative emotions at the workplace and these affect organizational results positively or negatively respectfully. Base on this, having a deep understanding and control over one's emotions and that of others is very vital for successful work relationship and creating conducive work environment.

Emotional intelligence helps employees to focus on their targets unwaveringly; unmanaged emotions will create spontaneous excitement in the employees which may mar their concentration and commitment. Organizations must understand and accept that emotional intelligence is a key contributing factor to successful performance of every Organization (Alotaibi, Amin&Winterton, 2020). The telecommunication industry in Nigeria has witnessed an influx in participants, thus making competition (for effective service delivery and customers retention) and organization performance to be on the high. With this in mind, the telecommunication firms is pushed to come up with not just a strategy that looks at customers retention, but that which looks at the employees (managers inclusive) level of emotional intelligence.

Failure of firms to achieve stated goals can be attributed to poor or lack of emotional intelligence by the managers and employees, as emotional intelligence gives one a comparative advantage. Looking into empirical works, literature is replete as to emotional intelligence and organizational performance. However, there is perceived dearth or little work on it relating to telecommunication firms, as majority is focused on the banking industry. Another observation shows that though telecommunication firms are plenty in their numbers in Delta State, researchers have not picked up interests in this study area. These observations provided a window of opportunity for the researcher to investigate emotional intelligence and organizational performance in telecommunication firms in Delta State, Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

Emotional Intelligence

Goleman (2021) defined emotional intelligence as the ability through which a person could screen his emotions, other persons' emotions, differentiate between various emotions and label them and consequently he might use this emotional information to guide his thinking and Behaviour. In the similar context, Mayer, Roberts, and Barsade (2018) sees emotional intelligence as skills that can aid an employee to precisely perceive, understand and employ emotion in enhancing suitable thoughts and behaviors. Schutte, Malouff, and Thorsteinsson (2023) argued that a person was considered to be competent in perception of emotions if he was able to recognize emotions-related voice and facial cues of others as well as aware of one's own emotional state and reactions.

Generally referred to as soft skills or intra-personal skills, emotional intelligence is a collection of traits and abilities that encompasses a wide range of personal abilities and dispositions that fall outside of the conventional domains of specialised knowledge, general intelligence, and technical or professional skills. Since emotions are an essential component of our biological composition, they accompany us to work every morning and shape our behaviour. The five components of emotional intelligence are: understanding one's own emotions, controlling emotions, inspiring others, identifying emotions in others, and managing relationships (Goleman, 2015). Both individual and organisational performance are enhanced by emotional intelligence. It has a big impact on the kind of work that employees do and the relationships they have within the company.

Understanding our emotions and those of others is a necessary skill for improving the effectiveness of relationships between two people. This skill is known as emotional intelligence. Major traits of emotional intelligence include emotional awareness, motivation, the ability to control one's anger, intuition, and emotional responsiveness to the feelings and reactions of others, according to Bahdor et al. (2021). These proficiencies encompassed significant sets of values. The study of emotional intelligence outcome from the works of Gardner(1983), and Williams and Sternberg (1988), who proposed broader approaches to understanding intelligence on how to manage it in a work place. Mayer and Salovey (2017) stated that emotional intelligence and included Gardner's intrapersonal and interpersonal components of the construct.

Goleman (2018) took emotional intelligence to a new level by making it more useful in the organization and by describing it as an important ingredient for successful business careers and as a crucial component for effective group performance. These people and indeed many others have attempted to explain the concept of emotional intelligence. Mayer and Salovey (2017), who introduced emotional intelligence saw it as a form of intelligence that involves the ability to monitor individual's and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to validate this necessary information gathered to guide one's thinking and actions. However, these authors then changed their view of emotional intelligence, and described emotional intelligence as the ability to integrate emotions, perceive emotions to facilitate thought, understand emotions and to regulate emotions to promote personal growth.

To them, emotional intelligence involves the ability to appraise, express emotions, and perceive accurately, the ability to access and generate feelings when they facilitate thought, the ability to understand emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. These authors provided a model which comprises of four abilities; perception, assimilation, understanding, and regulation of emotions. Emotional perception is the ability to perceive emotions on self and also on objects, art, stories, music, and other stimulus. Emotional perception consist the ability to differentiate between honest and dishonest expressions of emotions. The assimilation of emotions is the ability to generate, use and feel emotions as necessary to communicate feelings.

Emotional intelligence is the array of personal management and social skills that allows one to succeed in the organization and life in general (Emily, 2016). Emotional intelligence often called EQ (Emotional Intelligence quotient) encompasses intuition, character, integrity, and motivation. It also includes good communication and relationship skills. Organisations have implemented emotional intelligence into employee development programs (Fast Company, 2020), and some business schools have included emotional competency training in their curricula (Boyatzis, Stubbs & Taylor, 2022). The concept of emotional intelligence has an exceptionally significant impact on management. The popularity of emotional intelligence may be a reflection of the belief that emotional intelligence skills are just as important to success as more conventional abilities like verbal and mathematical aptitude. The term "emotional intelligence" describes the capacity to recognise, manage, and assess emotions. In order to maximise long-term happiness, emotional intelligence

is defined by Daniel Goleman as "emotional awareness and emotional management skills that provide the ability to balance emotion and reason."

Self Awareness

Self-awareness is the most crucial competency associated with work place emotional intelligence. Grayson, (2023) defined self-awareness as the ability to recognize one's feelings, to differentiate between them, to know what one is feeling and why, and to know what caused the feelings. Emotional self-awareness, according to Goleman (2018), is the ability to recognise one's own emotions and the potential implications of them. According to Yeung (2019), the first step towards developing emotional intelligence is increasing one's self-awareness. Yeung (2019) also contended that self-awareness would be the ability to read a map if emotional intelligence were a voyage.

Self-awareness consists of emotional abilities that enable us to be more effective and form outstanding relationships in the work place. Self-awareness is the ability for one to recognize his or her emotions and their effects. Studies suggest that People who are aware of their emotions are more effective in their jobs. They recognize and understand their moods, emotions and needs and can perceive and anticipate how their actions affect others. The first aspect of self-awareness is emotional self-awareness. This illustrates how critical it is to acknowledge one's own emotions and how they impact one's ability to perform.

To accurately evaluate oneself, one must be aware of their own inner strengths, limitations, and resources. Individuals that possess this ability are self-aware, self-reflective, experience-learning, and receptive to direct criticism, open to fresh viewpoints, and committed to their own growth. A strong feeling of one's value and ability is a prerequisite for self-confidence. Individuals possessing this ability, according to Goleman (1998), exhibit self-assurance, presence, the courage to express unpopular opinions and take risks for what is right, decisiveness, and the capacity to make wise choices under duress. Individuals who possess self-confidence usually perceive themselves as capable and capable of facing obstacles. They believe themselves to be catalysts, movers and initiators, and feel that their abilities stack up favorably in comparison to others.

Self-Regulation

Goleman has identified self-regulation or self-management as his second key competency. Self-management is the capacity to maintain composure in heated or confrontational situations, minimise defensiveness, and eventually restore reason (Wolmarans& Martins, 2021). Self-management is the capacity to employ emotional awareness to maintain flexibility and positively influence one's behaviour. It is the stage of life where an individual learns to regulate how they feel about certain things and/or individuals. Self-regulation progresses primarily from social sources and change to individual sources in a sequence of levels (Schunk& Zimmerman, 2013). According to Schunk and Zimmerman (2013), self-regulation would encourage people to take a more powerful role on their thoughts, emotions, and performances.

Organizational Performance

In management research, organisational performance is a useful construct that is commonly employed as a dependent variable. According to Richard, Devinney, Yip, and Johnson (2019), it is one of the constructs that is most frequently utilised as the last dependent variable in a variety of areas (Cho & Pucik, 2015). Because it is a subjective notion, organisational performance has been defined in a number of ways in the past. Research and comprehension of the notion are hampered by the lack of agreement on its definition, dimensionality, and measurement (Santos & Brito, 2012).

Three distinct areas of firm outcomes are covered by organisational performance, according to Richard et al. (2009): (a) financial performance (profits, return on assets, return on investment, etc.); (b) product market performance (sales, market share, etc.); and (c) shareholder return (total shareholder return, economic value added, etc.). Liptons (2013) on the other hand proposes that organizational performance is the ability of the firm to prevail.

Organizational performance appraises the output of the organization against organizational vision, goals, and the standards of overall development of organization.

Market competition for customers, inputs, and capital make organizational performance essential to the survival and success of the modern business (Wiklund& Shepherd, 2013.) As a consequence, this concept has acquired a central role as the deemed goal of modern industrial activity. Marketing, operations, human resources (HR), and strategy are all ultimately judged by their contribution to organizational performance (Sila&Ebrahimpuor, 2015). The methodology for measuring organisational performance has drawn even more scholarly interest as the argument over what constitutes organisational performance rages on. Performance measurement, then, calculates the ranges within which initiatives, capital expenditures, and acquisitions are yielding the desired outcomes.

Researcher and management evaluation of individual firm and manager activities, competitive positions, and firm evolution and performance over time are all made possible by performance measurement. Its widespread use as a dependent variable (return, economic value contributed, etc.) demonstrates its significance as the ultimate evaluative criterion (Richard et al., 2019). Organizational performance is a measure of how well or how bad a firm has fared in terms of its productive endeavors, sales and marketing activities as well as return on its investment.

In contemporary times, general understanding of performance is the effective integration of productive resources with social, managerial and human resources to produce a healthy outcome that is in tandem with set goals and business expectations (Barney, 2002). Performance is a measure of a healthy state of an organization, or turnover of products that result from management decisions and the execution of those decisions by employees of the organization (Carton & Hofer, 2006). However, the measurement criteria are selected based on the circumstances of the organization being investigated.

Theoretical Framework

The study was hinged on the Golman's theory of emotional intelligence. Goleman first developed his Theory of Emotional Intelligence in 1995 when he published a book based on his research. This study is based on that theory. He claims that the idea of emotional intelligence (EI) aids people in making decisions about their thoughts and behaviour. According to his definition, emotional intelligence is the capacity of a person to identify and understand their own and other people's feelings in order to motivate oneself and manage their relationships with others.

The theory can be used in a variety of contexts to enhance students' emotional intelligence, including educational settings and the telecommunications industry among others. This is because high performance greatly depends on a manager's capacity to control his own emotions as well as those of his subordinates and customers. John Mayer and Peter Saloven introduced the idea of emotional intelligence for the first time in 1997. Subsequently, his idea was put forth by another psychologist, the well-known psychologist and science journalist Daniel Goleman. His idea originated from his studies and experiences with behaviour, emotions, and the brain. In 1995, he also released his book on emotional intelligence.

Based on the idea he established, he was able to become one of the New York Times best-selling writers with the book "Emotional Intelligence - Why it can matter more than IQ." After the book's publication, the concept of emotional intelligence (EI) gained international recognition and was incorporated into other countries' cultures. In a 2018 paper titled "How Psychologists Evaluate Intelligence," Kendra Cherry went into additional detail about the elements of EI that he had created. Cherry claims that the elements mentioned below are necessary for people to comprehend emotions. According to the study, emotional intelligence (EI) is a

collection of traits and skills that are centred on four capacities: self-awareness, relationship management, societal awareness, and self-management.

Methodology

This study adopted the cross sectional survey research design in examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational performance of telecommunication firms in Delta State, Nigeria. The study population comprised ten (10) telecommunications firms in Delta State, out of which a sample of 181 was obtained using the Yard Formulae developed by Cooper and Schinder, (2013) together with (Kothari, 2014). Data were collected through primary source (structured questionnaire).

Furthermore, Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the internal reliability of the instrument; the result yielded a Cronbach Alpha of 0.886 which is greater than 0.7 (threshold). Hence, all items (self-awareness, regulation and organizational performance) are reliable. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to determine the nature of relationship between the independent (emotional intelligence with dimensions of self-regulation and awareness), and dependent variable (organizational performance). The multiple regression equation is given as follows:

$$OP = f(EINT)$$

$$OP = f(SAW, SRG)$$

$$OP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SAW + \beta_2 SRG + \epsilon$$

Where; OP = Organizational Performance; EINT = Emotional Intelligence; SAW = Self Awareness; SRG = Self-Regulation; β_0 = Intercept of regression line; $\beta_1 - \beta_4$ = Partial regression coefficient of the independent variables; ϵ = error term or stochastic term.

Results

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
SAW	123	16.0943	3.54268
SRG	123	16.4923	3.02654
OP	123	16.4320	2.57946
Valid N (listwise)	123		

Source: Compiled by the Researcher (2026)

The descriptive statistics in Table 1 indicates that Self Awareness (SAW) has a mean and standard deviation values of 16.0943 and 3.5426. The result further showed that Self-Regulation (SRG) has a mean value of 16.4923 and a standard deviation value of 3.02654.

Table 2: Factor Analysis

Component	Total Variance Explained					
	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.819	31.275	31.275	7.819	31.275	31.275
2	2.173	8.690	39.965	2.173	8.690	39.965
3	1.523	6.093	46.058	1.523	6.093	46.058
4	1.334	5.334	51.393	1.334	5.334	51.393

5	1.270	5.079	56.472	1.270	5.079	56.472
6	1.130	4.522	60.994	1.130	4.522	60.994
7	1.049	4.197	65.191	1.049	4.197	65.191
8	.935	3.739	68.930			
9	.889	3.555	72.485			
10	.812	3.246	75.731			
11	.748	2.993	78.724			
12	.630	2.522	81.246			
13	.577	2.307	83.553			
14	.529	2.116	85.669			
15	.508	2.031	87.700			
16	.445	1.781	89.481			
17	.435	1.741	91.223			
18	.402	1.607	92.829			
19	.377	1.508	94.337			
20	.322	1.288	95.626			
21	.293	1.174	96.799			
22	.279	1.116	97.916			
23	.218	.870	98.786			
24	.168	.560	100.000			
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						

Source: Compiled by the Researcher (2026)

A cursory look at the statistics above depicts that out of the 24 items selected in emotional intelligence and organizational performance. 7 factors were extracted to contribute about 65.191 of factor required to explain the items. The first factors contribute 31.28%, the second 8.69%, the third 6.09% while the fourth 5.33% and, the fifth factor contributes 5.08%. On the other hand 4.52% and 4.19% account for sixth and seventh factor respectively. On the whole, the entire factor selected contributes about 65.19%. This implies 34.81% of the factor explaining emotional intelligence and organizational performance is not known.

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.827
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1300.449
	Df	300
	Sig.	.000

Source: Compiled by the Researcher (2026)

The factors supporting Emotional Intelligence contribute about 0.827 i.e. 82.7%, while the remaining 17.3% of the factors explaining Emotional Intelligence and organizational performance is not known.

Table 4: Pearson Correlations

		OP	SAW	SRG
Pearson Correlation	OP	1.000		
	SAW	.727	1.000	
	SRG	.631	.582	1.000

Source: Compiled by the Researcher (2026)

The Pearson correlation in Table 4 showed the coefficient of the type of relationship that exist between the independent variables, self-awareness (SAW), and Self-Regulation and dependent variable, organizational performance (OP) in selected

telecommunication firms. Result from the correlation matrix show that, self-awareness (SAW) has a coefficient of (r=0.727)72.7% which reveals that self-awareness (SAW) has strong positive correlation with organizational performance (OP), this implies

when there is an increase in Self Awareness in the working environment, it will bring about effective performance in the organization.

Furthermore, the result showed that self-regulation (SRG) has a coefficient of ($r = 0.631$) 63.1% which indicates that a strong positive correlation exists with organizational performance. Again, this is indicative of the fact that, an increase in self-regulation or

management will bring about a positive and significant increase in organizational performance.

Table 5: Multiple Regression

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	6.648	1.376		1.722	.001
	SAW	.834	.183	.822	3.730	.004
	SRG	.625	.093	.612	4.011	.020

Source: Compiled by the Researcher (2026)

Table 5 is the multiple regression results; in order to determine the significance of coefficient of independent variable in econometric model the t-statistics is computed. The calculated t for factors responsible for Self Awareness (SAW) and organizational performance ($t= 3.730$, $\beta= 0.822$, $P=0.004$). This implies that there is a significant relationship between Self Awareness and organizational performance of telecommunication firms in Delta State, Nigeria. Thus the alternate hypothesis is accepted. In order to determine the significance of coefficient of independent variable in econometric model the t-statistics is computed. The calculated t for factors responsible for Self-Regulation (SRG) and organizational performance ($t= 4.011$, $\beta= 0.612$, $P=0.020$). This implies that there is a significant relationship between self-regulation and organizational performance of telecommunication firms in Delta State, Nigeria.

Furthermore, to determine the significance of coefficient of independent variable in econometric model the t-statistics is computed. The calculated t for factors responsible for Social Skills (SCS) and organizational performance ($t= 5.321$, $\beta= 0.294$, $P=0.041$). This implies that there is a significant relationship between social skills and organizational performance of telecommunication firms in Delta State, Nigeria.

Conclusion

The study concludes that emotional intelligence has a positive and significant relationship with organizational performance in the selected telecommunication firms in Delta State, Nigeria. Specifically, self-awareness has positive and significant effects on organizational performance of selected telecommunication firms. This shows that self-awareness is a critical tool in the workplace with a very good potential in boosting the growth perspective of firms.

On the other hand, self-regulation has positive and significant effects on organizational performance of selected telecommunication firms; this point to the reality that self-regulations serve as key component of the emotional intelligence construct, and managers as well as employees having this will ensure the growth of the organization.

Given the findings, the study recommends that self-awareness skills of leaders should be encouraged to improve subordinates’ work attitude. In addition, management should do well to set up policies that are always in line with the feelings of the employees. Again, managers should always be concerned about the welfare of its staffs, as this will build confidence in them and increase their level of productivity, thus boosting organizational performance. The study established updated literature on emotional intelligence and organizational performance and as well brings the conduct of such study to the telecommunication industry in Nigeria.

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