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Dynamics of Emotional Intelligence and Public Management Decision-Making

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Abstract

Psychologists and other scholars in related fields continue to explore the effectiveness of emotional intelligence in diverse areas due to its acceptability as the revolutionary new science of performance success. Emotional intelligence and its multiple competencies promote emotional understanding ability that supports creative thinking in problem-solving like decision making. Decision-making is a matter of choosing the best course of action from available alternatives. Despite the beauty of the three models of decision-making it is crucial to stress that implementation is important because it is the outward manifestation of the decision itself. Quality decision making needs emotional perception which includes the ability to distinguish between honest and dishonest emotional expressions, feelings and influencing thought processes. Self-concept and the stability of personality help individuals in managing relationships and people appraise and communicate emotions, and how they use such emotions influence their behaviour in problem solving situations. Decision-making is a major part of problem solving, therefore, the interaction with cognition and affect concentrates not only on memory or judgment, but also on more general contributions of emotionality to personality. Effective implementation requires the competencies of self-assertiveness so as not to give opportunity for miscarriage of the decision. Implementation helps to avoid the problem of indecision. While evaluation of a decision should be on continuous basis, a systematic evaluation should be built into the decision process. Using the exploratory research design involving 205 participants the result indicates strong positive relationship between emotional intelligence and quality public management decision-making. The study offers suggestion for further study, and recommends that public management decision-making should not overlook the need for efficiency in public sector management.

Keywords

Efficiency in Public Sector Management, Self-assertiveness, Miscarriage of the Decision, Multiple Competencies, Implementation of a Decision, New public Management, Amizi-oloko, Portmanteau Management

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1. Introduction

In Introducing the construct of emotional intelligence over thirty years ago and defining it as the ability to monitor emotions in one's self and in others, Salovey and Mayer [1] relate it to a set of conceptually connected mental processes involving emotional information. The mental processes include (i) appraising and expressing emotions in the self and others, and (ii) regulating emotions in the self and others and (iii) using emotions in adaptive ways. They opine that

although these processes are common to everyone, emotional intelligence also addresses individual differences, in abilities. processing styles and In this conceptualization, these pioneer scholars also relate emotional intelligence to Howard Gardner's view of social intelligence which refers to Personal Intelligences. Like social intelligence, the personal intelligences are broadly divided into interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences, which include knowledge about the self and about others. They explain that one aspect of the personal intelligences relates to feelings and very closely related to what is known

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as emotional intelligence. To this extent therefore, emotional intelligence typically involves among other things, the ability to monitor others' moods and temperaments and to use such knowledge in the service of predicting their future behaviour. By the recognition and use of emotional states to regulate behaviour and to solve problems, emotional intelligence can have tremendous positive effect on management decisionmaking. In its broadest terms, public management connotes enhancing transparency and accountability in fiscal management. Good public management can be positively associated with both government effectiveness and control of public corruption. Promoting government efficiency and public corruption requires quality management decision-making [2]. Decision-making involves the process of choosing a course of action among competing alternatives. The two major tasks in public management are action and choice. Action is the implementation of policies and programmes of government, and the choice of a policy comes before the implementation. Therefore, the process of making a choice is what is meant by decision-making. A general theory of administration includes principles of organization to ensure effective decision-making. This is a matter of huge public and social responsibility that requires the application of emotional perception and understanding, as it is recognized that emotional understanding ability facilitates decision-making. For example, according to Yip and Co'te [3] an important aspect of emotional intelligence is not only the ability to perceive and monitor the existence of emotions, but also the ability to understand the sources of emphasize emotions. They that understanding ability allows people to analyze the cause-andeffect relationships between emotions and events relating to the past and also predicting the emotions that will result from future events [4-8].

1.1. Research Problem

People often discuss what they call a failed state, but spare no time in discussing the problem that there cannot be a failed state without a failed public management decision making that inhibits public good and national growth. Most of the changes in national governments in Africa since 1960s had their roots in problems associated with public management failure. For example, the recent successful palace coup in the Republic of Mali came after a protracted pubic protest against massive mismanagement of the country's common resources [9]. Nigeria, for instance, has had three major development strategy papers (DSPs) since 1999 in the forms of the Vision 20:2020, the Transformation Agenda of 2011 – 2015, and the current Economic Recovery and Growth Policy (ERGP) of 2017. While the last programme cannot be evaluated now, not up to 5 percent of the over 1600 projects recognized in the Transformation Agenda was executed, and the failure of Vision 20:2020 is now consigned to history. A country where a Federal Government Owned Agency (FGOA) like the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) parades about 12,000 abandoned projects requires a powerful dose of quality public management decision making driven by emotional intelligence to instil sanity. According to Akpabio [10] after paying over N1 billion to forensic auditors to clear the mess in NDDC, government is in addition engaging eight more forensic audit firms who will earn another N745m, for the continuing exercise. According to Ahmed [11] as a result of weak fiscal management, the government has arrived at the decision of deploying directors of finance and accounts to some revenue generating Federal Government Owned Enterprises (FGOEs) to improve transparency accountability in revenue reporting. The decision is a policy initiative aimed at generating more revenue and associated remittances into the government treasury and also to improve the operational performance of all FGOEs. For example, situations where decisions are made to spend public money for works not done or to subsidize fraudulent activities smacks of decisions related to lower emotional understanding ability that has negative effect on decision-making capacities. This level of emotional challenge is highly responsible for low quality public management decision-making and irresponsible behaviour in public financial management [12-14].

1.2. Research Objective

The study was designed to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and quality public management decision-making.

1.3. Research Significance

As the outcry over weak public management increasingly grows around the world, students, researchers, academics, opinion leaders, policy and decision makers, and the general public stand to gain by appreciating that emotional intelligence is critical in quality public management decision-making for public good.

1.4. Research Questions

- i. Can emotional-self-awareness help in quality decision making?
- ii. Is initiative necessary in public management decision-making?
- iii. Does empathy help in active management?
- iv. Can service orientation drive public good?
- v. Is it true that leadership helps in developing others?
- vi. Are you sure that self-motivation leads to goal-achievement?

1.5. Hypothesis

To achieve the objective of the investigation, the following hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho: There is no relationship between emotional intelligence and quality public management decision-making.

Hi: There is a relationship between emotional intelligence

and quality public management decision-making.

1.6. Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is the basis of the study and shows its major variables in relation to the research problem. It is frequently expressed as a model. A model is used in management science research to identify and explain important issues that would otherwise be buried in an excess of words. The model for this work is as in figure 1.

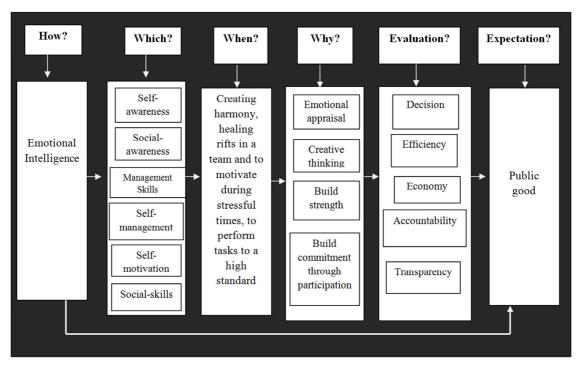


Figure 1. Emotional Intelligence and Public Management Decision-Making Model.

Emotional intelligence as the ability for self-awareness and emotional understanding has numerous management applications and benefits. For example, it has positive application on leadership and management decision-making and effectiveness [15-16]. This conceptual model provides a strategy in terms of experimentation and eclecticism in attempts to answer the question of using emotional intelligence to drive quality public management decisionmaking. Decision-making requires emotional understanding, and honesty, reflected by self-awareness. Quality decisions cannot be made without the important ingredients of selfmanagement, integrity, initiative, and adaptability. Public management decision making must also recognize the needs of the people in society, by reflecting empathy, organizational awareness or service orientation [17]. People are most active in teams when they feel well motivated, because motivation leads to high performance. Self-motivation involves using one's deepest preferences to move and guide action towards goal achievement. These emotional processes interact to address affect-driven biases that might occur from possible incidental emotions to prove that emotional self-awareness, adaptability, empathy, influence, and motivation help in decreasing anxiety and incidental emotions and increasing the quality of decision-making [18-20]. For decision-making to have quality, it must pass the process of evaluation. Such evaluation ensures participation, emotional appraisal, empowerment, creative thinking and performance [21-22]. Evaluation determines decision outcomes in terms of performance, transparency and accountability. In public sector management context, accountability and transparency suggest that public officers have an overriding responsibility to the public interest which requires that they set aside all personal, sectional and regional interests in the performance of public duties such as decision making in the public interest. This model is unique because according to McCourt [23] the new public management (NPM) paradigm focuses five Es-economy, efficiency, effectiveness, experimentation and eclecticism. He also opines that the solution to the problems of government in developing countries requires open-mindedness and adaptability [24-29].

2. Literature Review

Emotional understanding and emotional management factors of emotional intelligence are problem-solving mechanisms that can address issues in decision-making. Managing emotions is critical in allowing participation, encouraging and appreciating others' perspectives in decision-making or negotiations [30-32]. Emotional intelligence also involves integrating an individual's ability and personality and then applying their corresponding effects on management performance. Quality decision making needs emotional perception which includes the ability to distinguish between honest and dishonest emotional expressions, feelings and influencing thought processes. Self-concept and the stability of personality help individuals in managing relationships and people appraise and communicate emotions, and how they use such emotions influence their behaviour in problem solving situations. Decision-making is a major part of problem solving, therefore, the interaction with cognition and affect concentrates not only on memory or judgment, but also on more general contributions of emotionality to personality [33-36]. Quality decision making draws heavily from emotionrelated traits which characterize an individual's natural emotional states, like emotional stability, as well as intelligences, cognitive styles, motivational dynamics, and relationship styles. Intelligences reflect cognitive styles, modes of thinking and reasoning processes. On the other hand, motivational dynamics involve motives to attain desired aims, while relationship styles describe a person's interpersonal interactions and longer-term relationships with other people [37-38]. Obviously, evaluation is of necessity in quality public management decision making and leadership. For example, while evaluation of a particular policy decision should be on adhoc basis, a systematic evaluation should be built into the decision. This is concerned with the relationship between the decision and its objectives. Generally, systematic evaluation directs attention to the effects a decision has on the public need to which it is directed [39-40].

2.1. Decision Making and Behaviour

Behaviour is purposive if it is guided by general objectives. It is rational if it selects alternatives which are aimed at achieving previous selected goals. Decision making is a matter of negotiations and compromise. The alternative that is eventually selected is seen as the best solution that is available under the circumstances. This involves active participation, empowerment, and a sense of accountability and social responsibility. It entails selecting certain elements in the decisions of the members of the group and establishing regular organizational or institutional procedures to select and determine these elements and communicating them to all the members concerned. For example, if the task is to build a University at Amizi in Oloko, a design for the University is drawn and adopted by the group or committee, such a design

limits and guides the activities of members of the committee. The ultimate decision which comes out of such group dynamics will aim at (i) to specify functions, that is the general scope and nature of duties (ii) to allocate authority, determine who in the organization is to have power to make further decisions, and (iii) to set such other limits to his choice as are needed to co-ordinate the activities of other individuals in the organization so as to achieve set goals. Different individuals with varying levels of empowerment participate in reaching decisions and the process involves trait personality dimensions such as openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness that are also factors of emotional intelligence. These emotional intelligence factors emphasize emotional self-awareness, flexibility, monitoring, feelings, interpersonal relationships, empathic awareness, problem-solving, zeal, persistence, and the ability to motivate one's self to reach desirable goals [41-42]. Sumathy, et al [43] suggest that organizational leaders require emotional intelligence to be very effective in decision making. They observe that emotions play a much greater role in thought, decision making and individual success, and also believe that there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and decision making skills of executives [44-46].

2.2. Decision-Making and NPM

Management decisions can traditionally be made under conditions of certainty, risk, and uncertainty. Decision making under a condition of certainty is difficult in reality. Because of human nature, it is not possible to have a condition of perfect reality in decision making, even with its psychological implications of emotions. Some management decisions are made under conditions of risk, and this involves when the alternatives are well known, but the outcomes are unknown. In this case, administrators' device techniques such as emotional understanding, based on past experience, research and information management to arrive at quality decisions. Generally speaking, a condition of uncertainty is where the alternatives are not known and the likelihood of their outcomes is also not known. Making a decision under uncertainty is difficult and unreliable and therefore, requires competencies of initiative to mitigate any adverse outcomes. Under a condition of uncertainty, the emotional intelligence factor of stress management helps in reducing the adverse implications. Decision making is laden with emotions and characterized by three major models such as: Rationalcomprehensive model, incremental decision-making model, and mixed-scanning model [47]. Despite the beauty of the three models of decision making, it is important to state that implementation is very crucial in the decision making process because it is the outward manifestation of the decision itself. Effective implementation of a decision requires the emotional intelligence competencies of selfconfidence, flexibility, adaptability, self-assertiveness among others, so as not to give room for miscarriage of the decision [48-51]. The NPM paradigm attempts to build management skills in the public sector to operate along the paths of performance against the backdrop of portmanteau management – management by boxing public resources by few public officers for personal gains [52-53]. Effective NPM rests squarely on quality decision-making driven by emotional intelligence and reflecting such important competencies as independence, objectivity, resourcefulness, personal integrity, emotional-stability, energy, enterprise, and optimism. Optimism is a necessity in quality decision making because prophets of doom are never good decision-makers and cannot move people to action. The decision maker as a leader must demonstrate hope in possibilities. This pragmatic approach encourages empowerment of others, promotes service-orientation, builds employee trust, develops a philosophy of quality management and results to quality public performance [54-59]. In an emotional intelligence driven decision-making process, once a decision has been made to pursue a particular course, teams have to be given considerable freedom to experiment and to explore in order to innovate and adapt, and to discover what works best. In other words, considerable flexibility is needed in quality management decision making to enhance implementation [60-62]. In efforts to enhance the quality of public management decision making, governments around the world now encourage the idea of whistle blowing. This is a relatively recent phenomenon which describes the practice of an employee or any other individual metaphorically blowing a whistle to attract attention from the outside to some corrupt or malpractice within the business, government or any other organization, particularly now that curbing public corruption is on the public agenda. Originally, this was done by lone individuals, taking great risks with their employment, but the method has now changed through the involvement of top management and government to protect the interests of potential whistle blowers. About 90 percent of organizations affected by this recent management decision making technique report a successful outcome. This has raised much curiosity among management, government and employees and also enhanced the quality of decision making and responsibility. It is envisaged that concerns about malpractice in private and public institutions will be properly addressed in tandem with the NPM philosophy, which advocates on what management could do to improve the quality and efficiency of public services [63]. The idea of whistle blowing as a management technique does not only help in curbing public sector corruption, it must also be seen as a measure of stimulating the economy and public governance for global competitiveness [64-72].

3. Research Methodology

The exploratory research design was adopted for the study. The population composed of the people in Nigeria. The sample was selected through the judgmental method and the sample size of 205 participants determined by the sample ratio concept and their profile was shown in table 1. Data for this study were generated from books, journals, newspapers, government publications, public policy documents, as well as personal interviews. For example, primary data were collected using a 5-point Likert-type questionnaire adapted from the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSREIT) scale [73]. The SSREIT is comprised of 33 items, three of which are negatively skewed. Previous investigations have found the total scores on the SSREIT scale to be acceptably internally consistent with Croubach's Alpha of.90. Also, content and construct validity had been established. The data collection materials were personally administered on the participants by the investigator and two assistants. The participants were given four weeks to respond to the questions. All the materials administered were retrieved, the responses pooled, and found suitable for the purpose of analysis. Data were analyzed by descriptive and regression statistical methods and the regression method was by the Ordinary Least Square technique, based on a unique model specification.

Model specification is the expression of a relationship into precise mathematical form. According to Koutsoyiannis [74] economic theory does not indicate the functional form of any relationship. This means that economic theory does not state whether a relationship will be expressed in linear form, quadratic form, or in a cubic form. On the strength of this, it was decided to specify the relationship between quality public management decision-making (PMD) and emotional intelligence (EI) as follows:

$$PMD = b_0 + SA_1 + b_1 + SOA_2 + b_2 + SM_3 + b_3 + SS + u$$

Where:

SA = Self-Awareness

SOA = Social-Awareness

SM = Self-Management

SS = Social skills

bo = Constant term

bi, b_2 , b_3 = Coefficient attached to explanatory variable

u = Stochastic error term.

Table 1. Profile of Respondents (n=205).

	Description	Category	Total	Percentage
:	Gender	a) Female	90	43-90
1	Gender	b) Male	115	56-10
		a) Diplomas	60	29-27
ii	Education	b) Degrees	95	46-34
		c) Others	50	24-39
		a) 18 – 35 years	65	31-71
iii	Age	b) $36 - 60$ years	101	49-27
		c) 61 – 70 years	39	19-83
		a) 5 - 10 years	45	21-95
iv	Experience	b) 11 – 25 years	85	41-46
		c) 26 – 35 years	75	36-59
		a) Low	55	26-83
V	Status	b) Middle	60	29-27
		c) High	90	43-90

Table 2. Frequency and Mean for Responses to Research Questions.

	Statement of Research Questions	Scores				D	C1-	M	D:	C 1	
S/N		SA	A	A N	D	SD	Row	Sample	Mean	Decision –	Grand
			4	3	2	1	Scores	size	Score	@ 3 points	mean
i	Emotional intelligence helps in quality decision making	95	65	1	2	42	784	205	3.82	True	
ii	Initiative is not necessary in public management decision making	10	20	2	5	168	254	205	1.24	False	
iii	Empathy helps in active management	88	70	1	10	36	779	205	3.80	True	
iv	Service orientation can drive public goals	90	80	3	1	31	812	205	3.96	True	
V	Leadership involves directing others	101	85	1	3	5	859	205	4.19	True	3.82
vi	Self assertiveness helps in goal achievement	110	60	4	4	27	839	205	4.09	True	
vii	Implementation is crucial in quality decision making	120	40	1	3	41	810	205	3.95	True	
viii	NPM aims at efficiency	130	50	2	2	21	881	205	4.30	True	
ix	Participation enhances the quality of decisions	140	35	3	1	26	877	205	4.28	True	
X	Evaluation is part of quality decision making	150	40	1	2	12	929	205	4.53	True	

 Table 3. Regression Analysis.

Variables	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.	
С	-1-705035	0.652560	-2-571550	0.0030	
SA	0.809740	0.442140	1.577510	0.1061	
SM	0.256730	0.245628	0.828430	0.2898	
SS	316.7868	462.8245	0.655021	0.6118	
R.squared	0.749213	Mean dependent var	-82.21240		
Adjusted R-squared	0.714304	S.D. dependent var.	301.8432		
S.E. of regression	1701.689	Akaike info criterion	17.04316		
Sum squared resid.	5187.210	Schwarz criterion	17.20620		
Log likelihood	-159.3740	Hannan-Quinn Crite.	15.78065		
F-statistic	1.927150	Durbin-Watson stat.	1.903509		
Prob (F-statistic)	0.000120				

4. Presentation of Result

4.1. Discussion

The integrated conceptual framework in figure 1 points to the reality that emotional intelligence is critical in quality public management decision making. Because of the importance of decision making as a top management responsibility, competent participants were selected for the study as shown in table 1. The analysis of their responses in table 2 showed that they agreed that emotional intelligence helps in decision-making, but disagreed that initiative is not necessary in public management decision making. This supports Goleman [66] that initiative helps in mobilizing others through unusual

enterprising efforts. It was established that empathy and service-orientation can drive the achievement of public goals [67]. Leadership and self-assertiveness are important factors of emotional intelligence and the respondents confirmed that they are required in quality public management decision-making. This supports Ayininuola [75] that leadership is a major factor of corporate quality decisions and governance. The height of this analysis is the agreement of respondents that evaluation is part of quality decision making. This revelation is crucial because of the concept of the administrative man or rationality. The concept of rationality can be explained as the selection of preferred behaviour alternatives in terms of some system of values whereby the consequences of behaviour can be evaluated. Evaluation is very important in public management

decision making because the administrative man makes decisions on the basis of satisfying a large number of people. Actually, most public management decisions are not based on economic considerations but on the provision of social amenities like the building of public schools, roads, hospitals among others. This notwithstanding, the administrative man is also concerned with efficiency and effectiveness [76]. The analysis in table 3 was used to establish the level of relationship between the variables of interest. In regression analysis R² shows the highest percentage value that the independent variable explains in the dependent variable. In this investigation, the R² value of 0.75 means that about 75 percent variation in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable. The goodness-of-fit test of the model is also very good as the adjusted R² value is 0.71. The value of Durbin-Watson is 1.9 that lies within the range between 1.5 and 2.5. Therefore, it can be stated that there is no autocorrelation among the independent variables of interest. The F-test and t-test were significant at 0.05 level. What this statistically means is that there is strong positive correlation between emotional intelligence and quality public management decision making. This is the objective of the study. This result lends credence to the earlier findings of Yip and Co'te [3] that emotional intelligence is needed in quality decision making.

4.2. Scope of Further Study

The public sector is a large scale organization and further study should therefore focus on how to manage reforms to enhance public sector performance, in the face of increasing global criticisms against public sector mismanagement and corruption.

4.3. Recommendations

- i. Even though public management decisions are not based on economic considerations, it must not loose sight of the elements of efficiency and transparency in public life.
- ii. Public administrators must understand the concept of rationality in public decision-making from the perspective of selecting the alternative that best maximizes the interest of the public.
- iii. Public decisions should be properly evaluated before adoption to ensure its efficacy and economy.
- iv. Decisions made should be quickly and effectively implemented to avoid miscarriage of important public decisions.
- v. The efficiency of an individual is often limited by such factors as skills, knowledge and experience. To this extent, government has to ensure that people with requisite competencies and experiences are entrusted with the making of important public decisions for the sake of public good.

5. Conclusion

The study was designed to investigate how emotional intelligence leads to quality public management decision making. The construct of emotional intelligence has been reviewed in different perspectives and results available show that it contributes highly to successful performance. It involves emotional perception and understanding ability that equips the individual in reaching quality decisions. Decision making involves choosing from available alternatives and often guided by the concept of rationality in terms of preferred behaviour. The concept of behaviour is central to emotions and emotional intelligence, through creative thinking, emotional understanding ability, can lead to quality decisions. The exploratory research design was adopted for the study and the result showed positive relationship between the variables of the study.

Originality

Emotional intelligence is recognized for performance effectiveness but the notion of how it drives decision making requires exploration. This paper is one of the new reports in recent years contributing to the literature by addressing such gap and presenting a model for emotional intelligence and quality public management decision making.

Conflict of Interest

This author declares no conflict of interest in respect of the authorship and/or the publication of this paper.

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Author Contribution

John Nkeobunna Nnah Ugoani, collected, analyzed and interpreted data in respect of this paper. The paper is the intellectual property of the sole author who is therefore, solely responsible for any omissions or liabilities arising there-from.

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