

# THE INCLUSION OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN NIGERIAN POLICE RECRUITS TRAINING PROGRAMME: AGENDA FOR POLICE PERSONNEL PROSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND EFFECTIVE POLICING

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## ABSTRACT

*Nigerian Police officers face unique challenges in the regulation of anger, resentment, and stress. These chronic emotional hazards tragically affect the high rates of murder, extra-judicial killings, domestic violence, and alcoholism among police officers. In addition to the obvious stresses and risks of police work, a less visible burden on officers comes from the tension between the opposite socialization of the paramilitary structure of the police versus the demands of ordinary citizens. In dealing with citizens, the rules of rank are far less clear. The result is mounting militarized resentment and anger against citizens. However, with Emotional Intelligence training, officers could learn to: understand and respectfully cope with the anger of non-offending citizens, recognize the earliest and most subtle signs of aggression in citizens, respond (not react) to the anger of suspects and uncooperative citizens, while regulating their own anger for maximum performance with minimum threat to lives. This paper therefore, examines the impact emotional intelligence training in police recruits educational training programmes could have on their professional development and effective policing in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** *Police, Emotional Intelligence, Education, Training, Resentment, Violence*

## INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian Police organization has consistently been under serious negative public criticisms. The police force is alleged to be devilled with social vices such as graft, corruption, robbery, indiscipline and so on (Ehinder, 2006; Keyamo, 2006; Nwozor, 2005; Okusanya 2006). Consequently, the Nigeria Police remains the most discussed of all security outfits in Nigeria. And its corporate image has never been so called to question as it is in recent time (Aremu, 2005). In this regards, the understanding is that either something is wrong with the police organization or members of the organization (police). Incidentally, it is through the personnel of the police force that people assess the organization. And one of the vices the police are accused of other than corruption is poor interpersonal relationship which is an important index in emotional intelligence. On this basis, Aremu, (2009) canvasses that the content and context of the professional and educational training programmes police recruits are being exposed to, should be projected towards ensuring the

development of appropriate skills, and competences that will engineer sound social, emotional, moral, intellectual and physical development. This is expected to produce a sound, efficient, enduring, purposeful, enterprising, pro-social and proactive police organization.

However, public observations acclaim the fact that the Nigerian Police organization epitomizes violence, aggression, corruption, and injustice. Hence, the recent out cry for a more people oriented, effective and prosocial police organization has necessitated the need for a paradigm shift in the profession educational structured training programme and pattern of police recruits who happen to constitute about 70% of the total force (Aremu, 2006). This shift is focus from the traditional pattern of policing to a more cultured and humanly civilized mode aimed at facilitating operational efficiencies, promotes team collaboration, innovation and effectiveness. These processes suggest the need to improve police recruit personnel social and emotional skill competence for improved performance (Aremu, 2009).

Policing is not all about ability, but requires the mastering of emotions and the effective application of psychological principles such as emotional intelligence to understand and cope with the challenges of the job (Aremu, 2009). In support, Mayer, Caruso and Salovey (2000) contend that emotional intelligence is not a single trait or ability, rather a composite of distinct emotion reasoning abilities. The general contention of these researchers is that emotional intelligence as a construct of interest is germane to the well being of man, his organization and his society. Mayer and Salovey (1993) have defined emotional intelligence as a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and other's emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions. From this definition, it is observed that emotional intelligence has its root in the concept of social intelligence, which was first propounded by Thorndike in 1920 (Aremu & Tejumola 2008).

### **NIGERIAN POLICE RECRUITS TRAINING PROGRAMME**

The deficit in police officers professional and educational training programme in emotional intelligence, social relations' skill, psychological and moral quality; explains the pathology of police violence, aggression and corruption in Nigeria. In today's contemporary world, these factors are no doubt important. In Nigeria, the average policeman is inadequately educated for the roles he is expected to play. Further, he is inadequately trained for the police work, he is poorly remunerated and equipped and resented by the public. Consequently, he is prone to react to public demand for effectiveness and politeness rather cynically and aggressively. And more often than not, the police culture abounds with perceptions of the public as uncooperative, unsupportive, and antagonistic towards the police. This notion, serve as a stringent barrier meditating against the peaceful and successful cooperating and interactive

relationship between the police and the civil society in Nigeria. Also, the consequence of the career frustration experience by the lower cadre of Nigeria Police personnel (recruits) in the cause of going about their official duty cannot be quantified. Observably, most recruits enlist into Nigeria police organization with the belief that the organization is a heaven of prosperity but sooner than expected they become dissatisfied with their job due to poor condition of service. The result of this development is the open act of corruption display in the like of bribery, extortion of money, violence and brutality, fabrication and destruction of evidence, favouritism and nepotisms mostly by junior cadre police officer. This group of police officers are limited in education, social position, poorly remunerated and ill-motivated.

To this end, emphasizing on the import of emotional intelligence training into the professional and educational programmes of police recruits is germane towards developing in officers the needed competence for effective policing in Nigeria. This is in consideration of the fact that understanding emotions involve comprehension of how basic emotions are blended to form complex emotions. Regulating emotions encompasses the control of emotions in oneself and in others. An individual's emotional intelligence is an indicator of how he or she perceives, understands and regulates emotions. Individual with emotional intelligence are therefore able to relate to others with companion and empathy, have well developed social skills and use this emotional awareness to direct their acts and behaviours.

### **NATURE OF POLICING IN NIGERIA**

The police are State officials charged with responsibility for 'law enforcement and order maintenance' in society. To discharge these twin responsibilities, the police are empowered to use force, indeed violence. National constitutions and statutes, international conventions and rules; police departmental orders and professional ethics regulate the use of force or violence by police. But despite these provisions, the police in most societies use force and violence beyond the limits permissible by law. There are two dimensions of police violence. These are police use of violence against the citizens and citizen's use of violence against the police. The incidence, extent and pattern of both forms of violence in different communities are determined by social, political, economic and institutional factors. Police violence is generally conceived in terms of police brutality, torture, homicide, unnecessary use of excessive force, lethal use of firearms including extra-judicial executions of suspects, and sometimes-innocent citizens by the Nigerian police. In Nigeria, police violence is widespread. Its manifestations include beating and kicking of citizens, unnecessary use of restraints such as handcuffs and leg chains, unnecessary use of lethal firearms against suspects and members of the public, torture of suspects in order to extract confession or extort gratification (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2000).

A further conceptualization of what policing is, according to Alemika (1993a), shows that it is paramilitary in nature and it is so constituted to comprise able-bodied men and women, trained with the sole purpose of defending the status quo. That is, enforce the laws, values and ideologies that justify, legitimize and defend prevailing distribution of power and wealth in society (Aremu, 2009). However, police brutality is one of the major obstacles to the prospect of the Nigerian police being a positive factor in pro-social change initiatives.

The police in Nigeria, with the backing of autocratic leaders and repressive laws - frequently acted outside the rule of law. Often, they were laws unto themselves, maiming, killing and detaining persons arbitrarily and with impunity. In Nigeria, police repression had been institutionalized since colonial rule. However, police repression became increasingly intensified under the successive military regimes after 1966. As been observed, police repression has persisted, and in most cases intensified. For instance: The Nigeria Police Force is still largely vicious and corrupt. Political opponents of governments and military administrations - usually workers, students, radicals and human rights activists - continue to suffer excessive and recurrent waves of brutalities, abductions, unwarranted searches and violations of privacy and private family life, extra-judicial killings, bodily injury, intimidation, harassment and loss of personal liberties in the hands of the police and sundry state "intelligence" and security agencies in the country (Alemika 1993b).

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE POLICING**

The Nigerian Police play important roles without which the sustenance of order, legality, development and democracy may be difficult. The primary role of police is policing - securing compliance with existing laws and conformity with precepts of social order. The Police Service does not exist within a vacuum in the society it serves, hence the relationship it builds in engaging with the local community through different groups, societies and bodies are part and parcel of a successful approach to policing. Successful democratic societies have a police service whose powers and duties are subject to scrutiny and oversight by bodies mandated for such purpose within the ambit of the law primarily the Police Act 1990 and the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (CFRN 1999). In essence this requires NPF as a police service to maintain at all times fairness, objectivity, justice, impartiality, neutrality and respect in its dealings with stakeholders.

On this context therefore, Aremu (2009) avers that among other things, that effective policing is based on the expectation of police officers being able to:

- Contribute towards liberty, equality and fraternity in human affairs.
- Help reconcile freedom with security and uphold the rule of law.
- Facilitate human dignity through upholding and protecting human rights and the pursuit of happiness.

- Provide leadership and participation in dispelling criminogenic social conditions through cooperative social actions.
- Contribute towards the creation or re-enforcement of trust in communities.
- Strengthen the security of persons and property and the feeling of security in individuals.
- Investigate, detect and activate the prosecution of offence within the rule of law.
- Facilitate free passage and movements on highways and roads and on streets and avenues open to public passage.
- Curb public disorder.
- Deal with major and minor crises and help advise those in distress and where necessary as well as activating other agencies.

### **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a relatively recent behavioural model, rising to prominence with Daniel Goleman's (1995) in his book entitled 'Emotional Intelligence', the early Emotional Intelligence theory was originally developed during the 1970s and 80s by the work and writings of psychologists Howard Gardner (Harvard), Peter Salovey (Yale) and John 'Jack' Mayer (New Hampshire). Emotional Intelligence is increasingly relevant to organizational development and developing people, because the EI principles provide a new way to understand and assess people's behaviours, management styles, attitudes, interpersonal skills, and potential. Emotional Intelligence is an important consideration in human resources planning, job profiling, recruitment interviewing and selection, management development, customer relations and customer service, and more. Emotional Intelligence links strongly with concepts of love and spirituality: bringing compassion and humanity to work, and also to Multiple Intelligence theory which illustrates and measures the range of capabilities people possess, and the fact that everybody has a value.

Based on the premise of EI, to be successful requires the effective awareness, control and management of one's own emotions, and those of other people. EI embraces two aspects of intelligence: (1) Understanding yourself, your goals, intentions, responses, behaviour and all. (2) Understanding others, and their feelings. Hence Goleman (1995) identified the five 'domains' of EI as:

1. Knowing your emotions.
2. Managing your own emotions.
3. Motivating yourself
4. Recognizing and understanding other people's emotions.
5. Managing relationships, i.e. managing the emotions of others.

Emotional Intelligence embraces and draws from numerous other branches of behavioural, emotional and communications theories, such as NLP

(Neuro-Linguistic Programming), Transactional Analysis, and empathy. By developing our Emotional Intelligence in these areas and the five EQ domains we can become more productive and successful at what we do, and help others to be more productive and successful too. The process and outcomes of Emotional Intelligence development also contain many elements known to reduce stress for individuals and organizations, by decreasing conflict, improving relationships and understanding, and increasing stability, continuity and harmony.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

Daniel Goleman (1995), an American psychologist, developed a framework of five elements that define emotional intelligence:

**Self-Awareness:** People with high emotional intelligence are usually very self-aware. They understand their emotions, and because of this, they don't let their feelings rule them. They're confident - because they trust their intuition and don't let their emotions get out of control. They're also willing to take an honest look at themselves. They know their strengths and weaknesses, and they work on these areas so they can perform better. Many people believe that this self-awareness is the most important part of emotional intelligence.

**Self-Regulation:** This is the ability to control emotions and impulses. People who self-regulate typically don't allow themselves to become too angry or jealous, and they don't make impulsive, careless decisions. They think before they act. Characteristics of self-regulation are thoughtfulness, comfort with change, integrity, and the ability to say no.

**Motivation:** People with a high degree of emotional intelligence are usually motivated. They're willing to defer immediate results for long-term success. They're highly productive, love a challenge, and are very effective in whatever they do.

**Empathy:** This is perhaps the second-most important element of emotional intelligence. Empathy is the ability to identify with and understand the wants, needs, and viewpoints of those around you. People with empathy are good at recognizing the feelings of others, even when those feelings may not be obvious. As a result, empathetic people are usually excellent at managing relationships, listening, and relating to others. They avoid stereotyping and judging too quickly, and they live their lives in a very open, honest way.

**Social Skills:** It's usually easy to talk to and like people with good social skills, another sign of high emotional intelligence. Those with strong social skills are typically team players. Rather than focus on their own success first, they help others develop and shine. They can manage disputes, are excellent communicators, and are masters at building and maintaining relationships.

### **POLICING: NEED FOR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TRAINING**

Police officers face unique challenges in the regulation of anger, resentment, and stress. In addition to the obvious stresses and risks of police

work, a less visible burden on officers comes from the tension between the opposite socialization of the paramilitary structure of the police versus the demands of ordinary citizens and of the officer's own family. In dealing with citizens, the rules of rank are far less clear. The result is mounting resentment and anger, which can easily become "militarized" into dominant behaviour against citizens and even loved ones.

In empowering Police officers with emotional intelligence skills, officers could learn to understand and respectfully cope with the anger of non-offending citizens, recognize the earliest and most subtle signs of aggression in citizens, respond (not react) to the anger of suspects and uncooperative citizens, while regulating their own anger for maximum performance with minimum threat to life. Thus, emotional intelligence has an enormous role in policing, particularly in developing new officers and solving the most common issues that create problems for the department and the individual. These problems develop when police officers are unable to empathize with others or to control their impulses and emotions.

Police officers must develop healthy relationships and manage conflict while achieving productive goals. Aremu (2006) observes that police could be trained to possess the ability to understand what Mayer and Salovey (1997) refers to as combinations of different emotions. This according to the police psychologist is because a good number of Nigerian Police find it difficult to manage their emotions and fail to understand the feelings of the public. To accomplish this mandate, officers need emotional intelligence skills to build, maintain, and strengthen partnerships within and outside their organizations. Warren Bennis found that emotional intelligence was more important for success than any other asset, including intelligence quotient (IQ) or technical expertise. Cherniss and Goleman (2001) suggested that as much as 90 percent of a leader's success is due to emotional intelligence, and they believed that the higher the position, the more important emotional intelligence becomes. If emotional intelligence is the sine qua non of leadership, as some scholars say, then law enforcement agencies should begin promoting the development of emotional intelligence competencies through the efficient delivery of high-impact training and development.

Emotional intelligence (EI) training takes the form of what psychologists Mayer, Caruso and Cobb (2000) call socio-emotional learning: it teaches police officers how to examine their own EI competencies. These competencies include the following, among many others:

- o Becoming more aware of emotional triggers that can instigate an angry violent response, such as when officers are called "thieves"
- Learning tactics to manage one's own mental state during stressful situations, such as a hazardous police chase
- Being more attentive to the impact of daily emotions on long-term moods and attitudes toward colleagues and others

According to Fabio (2005) workshop interventions improve Emotional Intelligence (EI) competencies such as self-confidence, conflict management, communication, and conscientiousness. EI training also affects stress management. One study incorporating EI into stress management programmes reveals that "those frontline operational police officers [who] were able to understand and manage their emotions report lower levels of stress and were, according to their reported lifestyles, at less risk of suffering from stress in the future. These results were evident across the sample with no real differences evident regarding the age, gender, rank or length of service of the officers involved (Margaret & Robin 2001). In other studies, EI awareness training appears to reduce officer burnout (Donna, 2003). Therefore, emotional intelligence represents a significant step for police training, leadership, and recruiting and hiring. It is a new concept, so implementation will be gradual. But hiring and keeping the next generation of police officers requires considering EI.

### **PRO-SOCIAL POLICING**

Police organizations have historically emphasized the use of authoritarian types of administration and Machiavellian leadership practices (Giroda, 1998). Police organizations have behavioural orientations reflective of dominance, individual achievement and masculinity (Topp & Kardash 1986). However, recent challenges such as developing community-oriented policing and transforming a traditional police culture that typically emphasized operational "efficiencies", to one that promotes team collaboration, innovation, and "effective" processes suggest the need for new leadership patterns within law enforcement agencies (Engels, 2001). A contemporary leadership model relative to this challenge is pro-social policing. Pro-social policing exists as a philosophy, a set of tactics, and an organizational phenomenon (Thomas & Burns 2005). Researchers in the 1970's wanted to improve upon the professional model limitations. The limitations included inefficiencies in random patrol and investigations. After experimentation with concepts like team policing and problem oriented policing the best elements created pro-social oriented policing. (Thomas & Burns 2005)

Aremu (2009) noted that policing in Nigeria has always been an unpleasant experience by the public. The reason being that the police has always been accused of being inhuman and lack behavioural integrity. This culminates in suspicion of the police by the public even when the police are embarking on their rightful duties. The overall implication of this is the social gulf between the police and the public. Brief and Motowidlo (1986) describe pro-social behaviour as one which is performed by a member of an organization with whom the individual interacts while carrying out a normal organizational role and performed with the intention of promoting the welfare of the individual, group or organization towards which it is directed.

Brief and Motowidlo further posit that pro-social behaviour involves among other things being humane, rendering assistance and working according to rules. Pro-social policing is the connection between police and citizenry, who work together on safety involving the public. The design of pro-social policing is to entail a more open relationship between the police and the public which gives the police a more proactive role in the community (Thomas & Burns 2005). Its aim is to increase the relations between the police and the community.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Perhaps the most valuable commodity a police officer can possess today is integrity. Integrity must be maintained at all cost. Police officers are in a position of public trust--a trust that if broken, will create an atmosphere of hostility between the police and the public. The police officers success depends upon the trust and confidence of the citizens in their respective communities. Hence police professional are expected to be committed to the highest level of standards within the law enforcement profession. However, Police officers often find themselves in high-stress, volatile situations. At the other end of the spectrum, they deal with a lot of mundane, routine patrols. They deal with dishonest and dangerous people, and also victimized and abused people. Throughout each of those situations, they deal with corruptions and lies from bad citizens, and see innocent people hurt in the process. It takes a strong person to deal with all that, day in and day out, while keeping the traits that make them a good police officer. On these bases, emotional intelligence training is highly germane and imperative in the educational and professional training programmes of police recruits in Nigeria.

Nigerian Police have next to zero in interpersonal relationship with the public. Aremu (2006) after x-raying a few activities of the Nigerian Police in the last five years (particularly as touching extra-judicial killings) concludes that the bad image of the police in Nigeria occasioned by poor interpersonal relationships with the public is pronounced. To remedy this situation therefore:

- Nigerian Police officers should be trained and equipped with some psychological skills that could help them develop good interpersonal relationships.
- Nigerian Police recruits and cadets should be holistically trained to attain emotional intelligence competence so that they could face competing challenges while on the field.
- Prospective police recruits and cadets officers should be subjected to psychological test as this could help the police authorities to determine police trainee's attitudinal behaviours and eventually train them in the police act.

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