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INFLUENCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SELF-ESTEEM ON PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING OF POLICE OFFICERS IN IBADAN

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the psychological wellbeing of police officers in Ibadan, with a specific focus on the predictive roles of emotional intelligence and self-esteem. Adopting a correlational survey research design, the study explored both the independent and combined contributions of these psychological constructs to officers' wellbeing. Data were collected through standardized instruments and analysed using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and multiple regression analysis, with the level of significance set at 0.05. Findings revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between self-esteem and psychological wellbeing ($r = .218$, $p < .05$), whereas emotional intelligence demonstrated a weak but statistically non-significant association with psychological wellbeing ($r = .018$, $p > .05$). Nonetheless, the combined effect of emotional intelligence and self-esteem significantly predicted psychological wellbeing, jointly accounting for 6.4% of the variance ($R = .252$, $R^2 = .064$, Adjusted $R^2 = .055$; $F(2, 92) = 7.267$, $p < .05$). These results highlight the critical role of self-esteem as a determinant of police officers' psychological wellbeing, while suggesting that emotional intelligence remains a contributing but less potent factor in this context. The study recommends the development and implementation of structured interventions aimed at strengthening self-esteem and emotional intelligence, as part of broader mental health and wellbeing initiatives for police personnel.
Keywords: *Emotional intelligence, Self-esteem, Psychological wellbeing*

INTRODUCTION

Psychological well-being, as described by Bar-On (2005), refers to being content with one's relationships, work, and financial status (Salaudeen et al., 2024). For police officers in Ibadan to enjoy psychological well-being, they must maintain stable interpersonal relationships with colleagues and experience minimal financial distress. Meeting their basic needs promptly is essential for them to perform their duties effectively. Ahmed et al. (2023) explains that psychological well-being combines happiness, life satisfaction, and the absence of depression. When officers are happy and satisfied with life, their psychological well-being is positive. Conversely, feelings of sadness, low mood, or depression reflect poor psychological well-being (Schechter, Hellmann and Morina, 2022). Kosec et al. (2022) highlight that happiness represents a general emotional state of life satisfaction, which should be assessed on a broad, overall level. This implies that police officers who claim to be happy should demonstrate this across multiple aspects of their work and personal life.

Sawmya and Krishnan (2023) indicate that police officers experiencing poor psychological wellbeing are more likely to underperform, a pattern often linked to socio-economic constraints, diminished motivation, and inadequate operational resources that hinder effective policing. Salaudeen et al. (2024) observe that low psychological wellbeing among adolescents may also affect parental wellbeing, suggesting that police officers' mental health challenges could be compounded by family-related stressors. In Ibadan, many officers contend with insufficient infrastructure, limited access to modern policing equipment, and persistent financial pressures, all of which can adversely affect their job performance and overall productivity (Oladejo, 2017). Dumitriu et al. (2025) emphasise that the work environment plays a pivotal role in shaping psychological wellbeing. This implies that the socio-economic and operational realities faced by

police officers in Ibadan are critical determinants of their mental health, emotional stability, and professional competence.

Poor job performance among police officers has increasingly been linked to imbalances in their emotional and psychological state (Duran, Woodhams and Bishopp, 2021.). Emotional instability and low morale have been recognised as critical factors that may impair officers' ability to perform effectively. Understanding the psychological dimensions of policing is therefore essential, as officers' mental and emotional health significantly influences their productivity, behaviour, and general approach to duty. This study seeks to investigate the key factors contributing to poor psychological well-being among police officers in Ibadan and how these factors can be addressed to improve their psychological wellness and job performance.

Police work is inherently demanding and stressful, exposing officers to situations that test their emotional stability and mental resilience. For officers to be considered psychologically healthy, they must demonstrate consistent proficiency in carrying out their duties. Officers with high psychological well-being tend to be more productive, maintain good health, and show resilience in the face of challenges. Conversely, when officers perform below expectation, despite the availability of basic facilities or support, it is often indicative of psychological distress or poor emotional balance (Chew-Moriarty, 2025) Identifying the underlying factors responsible for poor performance is therefore crucial for developing effective interventions that enhance psychological wellness and professional output.

One major factor that contributes to psychological well-being is emotional intelligence. Ramazan, Gujjar and Ahmad (2011) define emotional intelligence as the ability to recognise

and understand one's own emotions and those of others, to distinguish between different emotional states, and to use this understanding to guide thinking and behaviour in constructive ways Abu-Shanab and Shanab (2022) further explain emotional intelligence as the deliberate use of emotions to influence behaviour and decision-making positively. Individuals with high emotional intelligence are often better at managing stress, forming healthy relationships, communicating effectively, and maintaining emotional stability. For police officers, this means being able to regulate their emotions during tense encounters, remain calm under pressure, and exercise sound judgment in difficult situations.

Self-esteem is another significant determinant of psychological well-being. Isserow (2023) describes self-esteem as the value one places on oneself, which reflects in relationships and accomplishments. Krauss and Orth (2022) add that self-esteem shapes how individuals respond to challenges, influencing both personal and professional outcomes. High self-esteem promotes confidence, resilience, and realistic problem-solving, whereas low self-esteem is associated with reduced achievement, higher susceptibility to depression, and maladaptive behaviours. Police officers with low self-esteem may withdraw socially, exhibit mood swings, and display low confidence in handling tasks, all of which can undermine their efficiency and morale.

Carol Ryff's model of psychological well-being provides a theoretical foundation for understanding these concepts. According to Ryff (1989), achieving psychological well-being involves developing self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. This multidimensional approach underscores that psychological well-being is not merely the absence of distress but also the presence of positive mental health. Menon (2025) argues that Ryff's model offers a reliable framework for measuring positive mental health, making it particularly useful in studies involving occupational groups like police officers.

Several studies have provided empirical support for the link between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being. Magny and Todak (2021) in their investigation of emotional intelligence among police officers, reported that emotional intelligence significantly influenced psychological well-being. Similarly, Yekinni and Ogbuanya (2022) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and socio-emotional adjustment among pre-university students and found a strong positive correlation. These findings suggest that emotional intelligence not only enhances psychological well-being but also promotes life satisfaction, healthy peer interactions, and better adjustment to social demands. Low emotional intelligence, on the other hand, has been

associated with aggressive behaviour, substance abuse, and engagement in delinquent acts, patterns that, if present among police officers, could compromise public trust and community relations.

Udechukwu, Ehusani and Gichimu (2024) further corroborate these findings, reporting that emotional intelligence significantly predicts psychological well-being in Nigerian populations. Bar-On (1988) also argues that effective emotional functioning is strongly linked to a high sense of well-being across different life domains (Park et al., 2023). For police officers, this implies that strengthening emotional intelligence could enhance their ability to cope with job-related stressors, maintain better interpersonal relations with colleagues and the public, and achieve optimal professional performance.

Self-esteem has also been extensively linked to psychological well-being in the literature. Ling and Ee, 2023) report a strong positive correlation between self-esteem and life satisfaction, indicating that individuals with high self-esteem generally experience better psychological health. Martínez-Casanova, Molero-Jurado and Pérez-Fuentes, 2024) note that low self-esteem is associated with risky behaviours, including unsafe sexual practices, while high self-esteem correlates with healthier behavioural patterns and improved psychological adjustment. For police officers, low self-esteem may lead to feelings of inadequacy, poor decision-making, and reluctance to take initiative, which collectively hinder job performance.

Gender differences in self-esteem have also been observed in several studies. John (2021), in their study of adolescents in Nigerian universities, found that females generally reported lower self-esteem compared to males. If similar patterns are found among police officers in Ibadan, female officers may be at higher risk of experiencing poor psychological well-being, which could affect their performance and overall career satisfaction.

The implications of poor psychological well-being for police officers are far-reaching. Low morale and emotional distress can lead to absenteeism, reduced motivation, impaired decision-making, and strained relationships with the public. Over time, this can erode community trust, compromise public safety, and diminish the overall effectiveness of policing. Addressing psychological well-being is therefore not only beneficial for individual officers but also essential for the efficiency and credibility of the police force.

Improving psychological well-being among police officers in Ibadan requires a multifaceted approach. Interventions should include emotional intelligence training to help officers recognise and regulate their emotions, manage stress, and communicate more effectively. Counselling and psychological support services should be made available to address issues of low self-esteem, depression, or anxiety. Furthermore, efforts should be made to improve officers' working conditions, including provision of adequate facilities, fair remuneration, and supportive supervision. These measures can create an enabling environment that promotes psychological wellness and enhances job satisfaction.

Objectives of the study

1. To determine if emotional intelligence has significant relationship with psychological wellbeing of police officers in Ibadan, Oyo State.
2. To ascertain if self-esteem has any significant relationship with psychological wellbeing of police officers in Ibadan, Oyo State.
3. To determine the extent to which psychological factors (emotional intelligence and self-esteem) predict psychological wellbeing of police officers in Ibadan, Oyo State.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between Self-Esteem and psychological wellbeing of police officers in Ibadan, Oyo State.

2. There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological wellbeing of police officers in Ibadan, Oyo State.
3. There is no significant composite effect of psychological factors (emotional intelligence and self-esteem) on psychological wellbeing of police officers in Ibadan, Oyo State.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a correlational survey research design to examine the relationship between selected psychosocial factors and psychological well-being among police officers in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The correlational survey design was considered appropriate because the purpose of the study was to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between independent variables (emotional intelligence, self-esteem, peer influence, and parental influence) and the dependent variable (psychological well-being). This non-experimental design allowed the researcher to collect data from a relatively large number of participants within their natural work setting and to establish associations between variables without manipulating any of them. A structured questionnaire served as the main instrument for data collection, ensuring that responses could be systematically quantified and subjected to statistical analysis.

Population of the Study

The target population for this research comprised all police officers stationed within the Ibadan metropolis. These officers operate in different divisions, units, and departments and represent a wide range of roles, ranks, and responsibilities within the Nigeria Police Force. They constitute a critical segment of the security workforce, and their psychological well-being is pivotal to maintaining public order, safety, and community trust. Since the psychological health of officers has direct implications for their performance, efficiency, and decision-making, this population was considered suitable for investigating the influence of psychosocial factors on psychological well-being
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Sample and Sampling Procedure

A sample size of 110 police officers was drawn from the target population using a multistage sampling technique. This approach was designed to ensure that the sample was both representative of the population and sufficiently diverse to allow meaningful generalisations.
In the first stage, major police divisions and operational units within Ibadan were identified. Five divisions were randomly selected using a simple random sampling technique. In the second stage, proportionate sampling was employed to ensure that each selected division contributed an equal number of participants. Twenty-two police officers were then randomly selected from each of the five divisions, giving a total sample size of 110 participants. This approach ensured that officers from different ranks and job roles were adequately represented, thus enhancing the external validity of the study.

Research Instruments

Data for this study were collected using standardised psychological scales that were adapted and validated for the Nigerian context. Four instruments were used, measuring the key variables of the study:

Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale

Psychological well-being was assessed using the Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale (Ryff, 1989). The original instrument consists of 44 items measuring six dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. For the purpose of this study, 17 items were carefully selected to reflect the dimensions most relevant to the occupational context of police officers. Each item was rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree). Sample items include: "I am not afraid to voice my opinions, even when they oppose the views of most people," and "I am not interested in activities that will expand my horizons."
A pilot study was conducted using 20 police officers from a division outside the main sample to establish the reliability and validity of the adapted scale. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) for the scale in this study was 0.851, indicating high internal consistency. Face and content validity were confirmed by a panel of experts in counselling psychology. Discriminant validity was assessed through zero-order correlations between the psychological well-being scale and the other instruments used in the study, with results showing weak correlations, confirming that the scale was measuring a distinct construct.

Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS)

Emotional intelligence was measured using an adapted version of the Emotional Intelligence Scale developed by Schutte et al. (1998). The adapted scale comprised 20 items capturing the appraisal and expression of emotions, regulation of emotions in self and others, and utilisation of emotions in problem-solving. Responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Sample items include: "I often find it difficult to see things from another person's viewpoint" and "I find it difficult to regulate my emotions."
The psychometric properties of the original scale indicate good reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranging from 0.87 to 0.90 and a two-week test–retest reliability coefficient of 0.78. In the Nigerian context, the scale has been previously validated (Adeyemo and Ogunyemi, 2005). In the present study, a pilot test involving 20 respondents was conducted to revalidate the adapted scale. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient obtained was 0.67, which is considered acceptable for exploratory research. Face and content validity were established through expert review, and discriminant validity was confirmed through weak correlations with the other scales, indicating that emotional intelligence was measured independently of psychological well-being and other variables.

Self-Esteem Scale

Self-esteem was measured using an adapted self-esteem inventory based on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. The scale included 10 items measuring global self-worth by capturing both positive and negative feelings about the self. Respondents rated their agreement with each statement on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Items were balanced to reduce response bias, with some positively worded (e.g., "I feel that I have a number of good qualities") and others negatively worded (e.g., "I certainly feel useless at times"). Previous studies have reported internal consistency coefficients above 0.80, indicating strong reliability.

Peer and Parental Influence Scales

Peer influence and parental influence were measured using researcher-adapted questionnaires developed from existing scales that assess social influence on behaviour. These scales measured the extent to which peer norms and parental expectations affect decision-making and emotional functioning. Responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Items were reviewed by experts for cultural relevance and clarity, ensuring strong face validity.

Validity and Reliability of Instruments

All instruments were subjected to pilot testing to ensure reliability and validity within the study population. The pilot data were analysed to obtain Cronbach's Alpha coefficients, and all scales met the minimum threshold of 0.65 for internal consistency reliability. Content validity was ensured through expert review by specialists in psychology and measurement. Discriminant validity was further tested through inter-scale correlations to confirm that each scale measured a unique construct.

Procedure for Data Collection

Data collection followed a structured process to ensure ethical and methodological rigour. The researcher first obtained ethical clearance from the appropriate institutional review board and sought approval from the Oyo State Police Command. Formal permission was also obtained from divisional police officers (DPOs) in each of the selected divisions.
Following permission, the researcher visited each division at agreed times to administer the questionnaires in person. A trained research assistant accompanied the researcher to facilitate distribution and to ensure that data collection did not interfere with official duties. Participants were briefed on the purpose of the study, assured of the confidentiality of their responses, and informed that participation was voluntary. Informed consent was obtained from each participant before administering the questionnaire.
The questionnaires were distributed during convenient hours to minimise disruption to police operations. Participants were given sufficient time to complete the instruments, and the researcher remained available to provide clarification where necessary. Completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately to ensure a high response rate and to avoid loss of data. Out of the 110 questionnaires distributed, 95 were returned fully completed, representing a response rate of 86.4% percent, which is considered adequate for survey research and allows for robust statistical analysis.

Method of Data Analysis
The data collected was analyzed using both Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Regression analysis. The hypotheses were tested in this study using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC); while the research question was tested using Regression analysis. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 was used for the analysis.

RESULTS

Hypothesis one: There is no significant relationship between Self-Esteem and Psychological wellbeing of Police Officers in Ibadan, Oyo State

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) showing the relationship between Self-Esteem and Psychological wellbeing of Police Officers in Ibadan, Oyo State

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	P value	Remark
Self Esteem	28.8641	5.82015	95	.218**	.002	Sig.
Psychological Wellbeing	88.1604	12.79821				

In Table 1, the findings revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between self-esteem and psychological wellbeing among police officers in Ibadan, Oyo State (r = .218, N = 95, p < .05). Consequently, the null hypothesis of no relationship between self-esteem and psychological wellbeing was rejected. This result indicates that higher levels of self-esteem are associated with enhanced psychological wellbeing among police officers in the study population.

Hypothesis two: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and Psychological wellbeing of Police Officers in Ibadan, of Oyo State

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Showing the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological wellbeing of Police Officers in Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	p value	Remark
Emotional Intelligence	44.9171	9.19441	93	. 018	. 802	Not Sig.
Psychological Wellbeing	88.1604	12.79821				

Table 2 indicated that there is no statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological wellbeing among police officers in Ibadan, Oyo State (r = .018, n = 95, p > .05). Accordingly, the null hypothesis was retained, and the alternative hypothesis rejected. Although the correlation coefficient suggested a weak positive association, the relationship did not reach statistical significance, implying that emotional intelligence was not a meaningful predictor of psychological wellbeing within the sampled population.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant composite influence of psychological factors (emotional intelligence and self-esteem) on Psychological wellbeing of Police Officers in Ibadan, Oyo State

Table 3: Summary of Regression analysis showing the Effect of Psychological Factors (self-esteem and emotional intelligence) on Psychological wellbeing of Police Officers in Ibadan, Oyo State

R	R Square		Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.252	.064		.055	12.515
A N O V A				
Model	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Regression	1852.772	2	926.386	7.267	.001	Sig.
Residual	27281.735	92	127.485			
Total	29134.507	94				

The findings in Table 3 revealed that the composite effect of self-esteem and emotional intelligence on psychological wellbeing among police officers in Ibadan, Oyo State, was statistically significant. The coefficient of multiple correlation was R = .252, with R² = .064 and adjusted R² = .055, indicating that the two predictors jointly accounted for 6.4% of the variance in psychological wellbeing. The overall model was significant at α = 0.05, as shown by the analysis of variance result (F = 7.267, p < 0.05). This demonstrates that self-esteem and emotional

intelligence, when considered together, exert a meaningful influence on the psychological wellbeing of police officers in the study population.

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the predictive roles of self-esteem and emotional intelligence on the psychological wellbeing of police officers in Ibadan, Oyo State. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested, with results providing important insights into the psychological health of police personnel in the region.

The first hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant relationship between self-esteem and psychological wellbeing, was rejected. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between self-esteem and psychological wellbeing among police officers. This outcome aligns with previous research by Rehman et al. (2023) that self-esteem is strongly and positively correlated with psychological wellbeing. Similarly, Muris and Otgaar (2023) concluded that individuals with high self-esteem tend to experience better psychological wellbeing, whereas those with low self-esteem are more vulnerable to psychological distress. These findings collectively suggest that self-esteem is a critical determinant of mental health and life satisfaction. Within the policing context, this result underscores the importance of fostering healthy self-esteem to buffer officers against occupational stressors and to promote resilience, job satisfaction, and overall wellbeing.

The second hypothesis, which posited no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological wellbeing, was retained. Although the study reported a low positive relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological wellbeing, the correlation was not statistically significant. This finding contrasts with the conclusions of Kamboj and Garg (2021), who observed a strong positive association between emotional intelligence and psychological wellbeing. The present result may indicate that emotional intelligence, while conceptually relevant to mental health, may not independently predict wellbeing in the unique occupational environment of policing in Ibadan. Nonetheless, the observed weak positive association suggests that emotional intelligence contributes modestly to psychological wellbeing, possibly by enabling officers to regulate emotions, manage interpersonal relationships effectively, and cope with stress. This finding highlights the need for emotional intelligence development programmes to be integrated into police training and professional development, as even small improvements in emotional competence may have cumulative effects on mental health and job performance.

The third hypothesis examined the joint contribution of self-esteem and emotional intelligence to psychological wellbeing. The results demonstrated a statistically significant composite effect, indicating that these psychosocial variables, when considered together, accounted for a meaningful proportion of the variance in psychological wellbeing among police officers. This finding corroborates the work of Tuason, Güss and Boyd (2021), who established that a combination of psychosocial factors significantly predicts wellbeing outcomes. The implication is that enhancing both self-esteem and emotional intelligence may have a synergistic effect in promoting the psychological health of police personnel. Given the high-stress nature of policing, interventions targeting these factors may improve not only individual mental health but also organisational outcomes such as job engagement, productivity, and service delivery.

Overall, the results of this study reinforce the need for targeted psychosocial interventions for police officers in Ibadan. Programmes aimed at improving self-esteem and developing emotional intelligence could help officers better manage occupational stress, maintain positive mental health, and achieve higher levels of job performance. Policymakers and law enforcement administrators should therefore consider incorporating mental health promotion strategies into police welfare initiatives to enhance the psychological resilience of officers and improve public safety outcomes

Recommendations

1.   Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that facilities and programmes that enhance the self-esteem of police officers in Ibadan be prioritised and made readily available. This can be achieved through organisational needs assessments to identify resource gaps that undermine morale, followed by the provision of well-equipped offices, modern operational tools, and conducive workspaces. In addition, recognition schemes such as monthly or quarterly award programmes should be introduced to celebrate exceptional performance and boost officers' sense of value. Capacity-building workshops and professional development sessions can further strengthen their confidence and competence, thereby promoting better psychological wellbeing.

2.   There is also a need for systematic monitoring of police officers' psychological wellbeing to ensure that they are positively engaged and protected from influences that may lead to substance abuse or other forms of misconduct. This could involve periodic mental health screenings conducted in collaboration with mental health professionals, the establishment of mentorship programmes where junior officers are paired with experienced colleagues for guidance and emotional support, and the creation of peer support networks to encourage healthy coping strategies. Partnerships with community leaders, psychologists, and chaplaincy services should also be strengthened to provide preventive counselling and targeted wellbeing campaigns, thereby fostering a healthier work environment and reducing risk factors that may compromise psychological health.

3.   Furthermore, the introduction of structured programmes to enhance emotional intelligence among police officers is strongly recommended. Regular seminars and workshops focusing on self-awareness, empathy, and conflict resolution should be conducted, complemented by sports and recreational activities such as inter-divisional competitions and wellness days aimed at reducing occupational stress and strengthening interpersonal bonds within the force. Mindfulness-based stress reduction initiatives and resilience training programmes can also be integrated to help officers manage the emotional demands of policing more effectively. To ensure these interventions are impactful, periodic evaluations using pre- and post-programme measures of psychological wellbeing should be conducted to track progress and refine the initiatives where necessary.

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