

Impact of emotional intelligence and perceived self-efficacy on the implementation of community policing practice

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received August 24, 2024

Revised January 6, 2025

Accepted January 24, 2025

Keywords

Emotional
Intelligence
Self-Efficacy
Community
Policing
Practice
Police officer

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the association between emotional intelligence, perceived self-efficacy (PSE) and implementation of community policing practice among police officers in the Nigeria Police Force. This study involved 107 police officers as participants who were selected through purposive random sampling. Data were collected using emotional intelligence, perceived self-efficacy (PSE) and implementation of community policing practice scales. Data were analysed using a regression analysis and partial correlation technique to test the Hypotheses. The study found weak, counterintuitive negative correlations between both emotional intelligence and perceived self-efficacy and community policing implementation in Nigerian police. Emotional intelligence positively associates with implementation, but perceived self-efficacy does not, demanding further context-specific qualitative and longitudinal research to understand these dynamics and improve policing strategies. The study highlights the importance of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy for successful community policing practice among police officers in Nigeria. The results imply how the Nigeria Police Force can enhance the officers' implementation of the community policing practice by managing their self-efficacy and increasing emotional intelligence.

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Introduction

Community policing is a philosophy and practice that emphasizes the collaboration between law enforcement agencies and the community to identify and solve problems. In Nigeria, the implementation of community policing has been challenging due to various factors. Community policing, a strategy that emphasizes collaboration between law enforcement agencies and the community to address crime and disorder, has gained significant attention in recent years.

Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies, which support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime. Community policing has been defined as a “philosophy, management style and organizational strategy” with the end goal of building community relationships and not only solving crime but addressing the causes of crime within a community. Community policing involves anybody of people (whether that be schools,

businesses, residents, community organizations, churches or anyone in the community) collaborating with the police to identify problems within the areas they live and how to solve them. Whereas, traditional policing tends to draw from police officers and law enforcement agencies working solely at identifying problems in the community and tackling how to solve them on their own.

Traditional policing can separate police departments from the communities they serve. Departments that use more traditional policing also tend to be more reactive and can create a disconnect with the community. Little time is taken to look beyond strategies that will potentially mediate a situation they are placed in without the necessary use of force. In the 1950's, during the Reform Era, police were seen as "enforcers" who were called to deal with large riots and social disorder. Usually, when things went wrong, whether large or small, this continued identity and behaviour was used to handle any situation presented.

Community policing challenges this approach by creating a dynamic within law enforcement officials to build trust and relationships with their communities, dismantling this in-and-out "enforcer" approach. More understanding is needed to establish this philosophy within police departments to create it as an overall staple in police response tactics. This study examined internal factors that are believed to contribute to the success of the implementation of community policing among Nigerian police officers that have not been examined before. Community policing, a philosophy that emphasizes collaboration between law enforcement and the community, has emerged as a promising strategy for addressing crime and disorder. However, the successful implementation of community policing hinges on the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours of police officers.

Important factors that can influence the successful implementation of community policing are the perceived self-efficacy of police officers and the ability to manage their emotions. emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions in order to assist and understand emotions and emotional meanings (Salovey and Mayer (1997). Any array of personal, emotional and social abilities and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with the environment. It addresses the emotional, personal, social and survival dimensions of intelligence that are more important for daily functioning than traditional aspects of intelligence. Goleman (1995) identified the five 'domains 'of emotional intelligence as: knowing one own's emotions, managing emotions, motivating oneself, recognizing and understanding other people's emotions and managing relationships, i.e. managing the emotions of others. Individuals with high emotional intelligence are usually successful in most things they do as they're the ones that others want on their team (Goleman, 1995).

Emotional intelligence plays an important role in ensuring success in the workplace and it should be nurtured and practised by all parties facing the challenges of globalization and competition in business. Then, it is also a positive encouragement to create human relationships that can lead to the achievement of common goals and organizational effectiveness (Chong & Zainal, 2024). According to Bar-On (2010) emotional intelligence makes individuals to effectively understand of their selves and others; they usually have a good relationship with other people and are able to adapt and cope with their environment as well as become more successful in dealing with environmental demands. Previous research found that emotional intelligence was associated with higher employee performance, work engagement and job satisfaction (Sarangi & Vats, 2015; Sharmin et al., 2024; Vratskikh et al., 2016).

Other factors that influence the successful implementation of community policing is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is defined as people's belief in their capabilities to organize, execute and achieve success in a particular task (Bandura, 1991). Self-efficacy belief is the

trust people have in themselves that they are capable of performing in a certain manner to attain a set goal ([Bandura, 1991](#)). Perceived efficacy plays a key role in human functioning because it affects behaviour not only directly, but by its impact on other determinants such as goals and aspirations, outcome expectations and perception of impediments and opportunities in the social environment ([Bandura, 2001](#)). Self-efficacy also influences the course of action people choose to pursue the challenges and goals they set for themselves and their commitment to them, how much effort they put forth in given endeavours, the outcomes they expect their efforts to produce and how long they persevere in the face of obstacles ([Bandura, 1991](#)).

Self-efficacy influences the emotional response of individuals. Self-efficacy beliefs on several different levels, varying in psychological character from general self-efficacy which appears to be interchangeable with self-confidence in one's competence broadly defined; to domain self-confidence to perform the tasks involved in pursuing a career; and to more narrowly defined domain confidence to perform specific tasks ([Lucas et al., 2006](#)). Previous research found that high self-efficacy is associated with a range of positive outcomes, including job performance, effort, work engagement and organizational commitment, work quality and quantity as well as negative associations with negative outcomes such as tiredness and absenteeism ([Anfajaya & Rahayu, 2020](#); [Chan et al., 2017](#); [McDonald & Siegall, 1992](#); [Seo & Ilies, 2009](#)).

Despite numerous efforts to implement community policing in Nigeria, its effectiveness has been hindered by various challenges. Those challenges required individuals to be able to manage their own and other emotions as well as believe in their own ability to do their job which impacts their ability to effectively engage with the community, build trust, and implement community policing strategies. Specifically, this study seeks to address the following research objectives: To investigate the relationship between police officers' emotional intelligence, perceived self-efficacy and the implementation of community policing principles within the Nigerian Police Force. Thus, the hypotheses we proposed are 1) there is a positive correlation between police officers' perceived self-efficacy (PSE) in community policing and the extent to which community policing principles are implemented in their daily practice within the Nigerian Police Force; 2) There is a positive correlation between police officers' emotional intelligence (EI) and the degree to which community policing principles are implemented in their daily practices within the Nigerian Police Force.

Method

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach examining the relationship between emotional intelligence, perceived self-efficacy (predictor variables) and the implementation of community policing practice (outcome variable) among police officers in Nigeria.

Participants

The population of this study consists of 6,199 police personnel in Kaduna State Source: Police Headquarters. The majority of the police personnel are male, while a few are female. Most are between the ages of 20 and 40, while a few are 40 and over. The sample size for the study was 107 participants, the sample will be made up of 63 males and 44 females that was determined using formula ([Krejcie & Morgan, 1970](#)).

Procedures

The Ethical Committee of the University of Fort Hare, South Africa has granted approval for this study on 9 September 2022 (Ref. No.KHE)041SOKO01). These study only recruited police officers who volunteered and were used for the study and copies of the questionnaires were administered to them.

Instruments

In this study, three different questionnaires were used. They are the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS), the Self-Efficacy Scale (SES) and community policing practice Scale (CPPS).

The Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) is a self-reported inventory designed to assess the emotional intelligence of people, including those of police personnel. It is based on a model proposed by Schutte et al., (2007), which includes four aspects of emotional intelligence: the appraisal of emotion in self and others, the expression of emotion, the regulation of emotion in self and others, and the utilisation of emotion in problem-solving. It was validated and used in Nigeria by Mwantu et al., (2013). The EIS consists of 33 items, each of which was rated using a five-point Likert-type scale. This scale ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The survey can be completed in maximum of ten minutes.

The Self-Efficacy Scale (SES) by Tsai et al., (2014) is a questionnaire that measures someone's self-belief in their ability to build a sense of personal strength as they apply it to their day-to-day life. The self-efficacy scale is another instrument that was used for the study. It was designed to provide information that could help determine the level of perceived efficacy of junior class II Students in the study of integrated science. The scale was generated by the researcher with the help of an expert in educational psychology after the review of relevant literature. It is a four point rating scale. It ranges from Strongly Agree (SA= 4), Agree (A=3), Disagree (D=2), and Strongly Disagree (SD=1).

Police-Community Interaction Survey (PCIS) develop by Rosenbaum et al., (2017) to capture both officer and community perspectives, addressing key elements such as officer engagement in community events, departmental support for proactive problem-solving, officer comfort with problem-solving techniques, perceived supervisory support, and the integration of community feedback into policing strategies; simultaneously, it assesses community perceptions of police visibility, responsiveness, trust, communication, and involvement in problem-solving. To ensure comprehensive data collection, the questionnaire recommends incorporating open-ended questions for qualitative insights, contextual adaptations, and rigorous reliability and validity testing, ultimately providing a robust tool for assessing the effectiveness of community policing practices. (Scale: Not at all, Slightly, Moderately, Very Much, Extremely).

Data Analysis

Regression analysis was used to test the Hypotheses.

Results

The partial correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant, albeit weak, negative relationship between emotional intelligence and the implementation of community policing principles. Specifically, a beta coefficient of $-.164$ and a significance value of $.012$ indicate that as emotional intelligence increases, the implementation of these principles tends to

decrease. However, the R-squared value of .024 suggests that emotional intelligence accounts for only 2.4% of the variance in community policing implementation, highlighting a weak association despite its statistical significance.

Similarly, the result showed that perceived self-efficacy and the implementation of community policing principles demonstrates a statistically significant, yet weak, negative relationship. A beta coefficient of -.141 and a highly significant p-value of .001 indicate that as perceived self-efficacy increases, the implementation of community policing principles tends to decrease. However, the R-squared value of .039 signifies that perceived self-efficacy explains only 3.9% of the variance in community policing implementation, revealing a weak association, though slightly stronger than that observed with emotional intelligence.

Result of the linear regression analysis showed a statistically significant overall model ($F = 12.793$, $p < .001$) where emotional intelligence and perceived self-efficacy jointly predict the implementation of community policing principles, though the model only accounts for 6.5% of the variance ($R^2 = .065$). R^2 suggests that other, unmeasured variables significantly influence the implementation of community policing practices. See Table 1

Table 1

The correlation between emotional intelligence, perceived self-efficacy and the implementation of community policing principles

t variables	<i>R</i>	R^2	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	0.254	0.065	12.793	2,371	0.000
Emotional intelligence					
Perceived self-efficacy					

Discussion

The study aimed to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence, perceived self-efficacy and implementation of community policing principles among police officers in Nigeria. The finding of a statistically significant yet weak, negative relationship between emotional intelligence and the implementation of community policing principles presents a complex scenario. While the linear regression analysis confirms a statistically significant effect, the practical significance is limited. This indicates that emotional intelligence, while showing a detectable negative correlation, explains only a small fraction of the variability in community policing implementation. This suggests that other potentially unmeasured variables are likely to exert a more substantial influence on the adoption and execution of these policing strategies (Cohen, 1988).

The negative direction of the relationship, wherein higher emotional intelligence is associated with decreased implementation of community policing principles, is counterintuitive and requires careful consideration. It may point to a potential disconnect between the theoretical benefits of emotional intelligence in fostering community engagement and the practical realities of policing (Goleman, 1995). Perhaps officers with higher emotional intelligence perceive barriers or challenges in implementing these principles, or possibly, they prioritize alternative policing strategies that they deem more effective. This finding necessitates a deeper exploration of the context within which these principles are applied, including the organizational culture, training, and available resources (Skogan, 2004).

Ultimately, while the statistical significance of the finding cannot be dismissed (Field, 2018), the need for further research to identify and understand the more dominant factors that impact the implementation of community policing principles. Future studies could

benefit from incorporating qualitative methods to explore the perspectives of officers and community members, as well as examining the influence of organizational and systemic factors (Bryman, 2016). By broadening the scope of inquiry, researchers can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play and develop more effective strategies for enhancing community policing practices.

A statistically significant but weak negative correlation was found between perceived self-efficacy and community policing implementation. This indicates that while a reliable association exists, perceived self-efficacy explains only 3.9% of the variance, suggesting other influential factors are at play (Cohen, 1988). The counterintuitive nature of this negative correlation, where higher self-efficacy is linked to decreased implementation, necessitates deeper investigation. It could reflect officers favoring traditional policing methods or systemic barriers hindering community policing despite high self-efficacy (Skogan, 2004). Given the limited explanatory power of perceived self-efficacy, a broader research approach is crucial. Future studies should incorporate qualitative methods to explore officer perspectives and contextual factors like organizational culture and training (Bryman, 2016). This will provide a nuanced understanding of the dynamics influencing community policing and facilitate the development of more effective implementation strategies.

The result also found that emotional intelligence and perceived self-efficacy collectively predict community policing implementation, though they only explain 6.5% of the variance, highlighting the influence of unmeasured variables (Cohen, 1988). Emotional intelligence shows a significant positive association, consistent with its role in effective interpersonal skills (Goleman, 1995). Conversely, perceived self-efficacy, while negatively related, is not a significant predictor diverging from theoretical expectations and necessitating further exploration of mediating factors. The model's low explanatory power necessitates a broader examination of contextual and organizational factors, such as departmental culture and resource allocation (Skogan, 2004). Future research should employ qualitative methods to understand officer and community perspectives (Bryman, 2016) and longitudinal studies to clarify causal relationships. Despite emotional intelligence's significant predictive role, the limited R^2 underscores the need for a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to enhancing community policing.

The findings of this study, revealing statistically significant but weak negative correlations between both emotional intelligence and perceived self-efficacy with community policing implementation, carry several key implications for policing practices in Nigeria. Firstly, the weak R-squared values suggest that relying solely on these psychological factors for effective community policing implementation is insufficient. This highlights the need to consider a wider array of variables, such as organizational culture, training, and resource allocation, in developing and implementing community policing strategies. Practically, it means that police leadership should not assume that officers with high emotional intelligence or self-efficacy will automatically excel in community policing roles. Secondly, the counterintuitive negative correlations demand a re-evaluation of current training and implementation models. The possibility that officers with higher emotional intelligence or self-efficacy perceive barriers to community policing or favor traditional methods suggests a potential disconnect between theoretical benefits and practical application. This necessitates a review of training programs to ensure they adequately address these perceptions and equip officers with the skills and knowledge to overcome these challenges.

The study underscores the importance of contextual factors in shaping policing outcomes. Future research should prioritize qualitative methodologies to understand the

perspectives of officers and community members. This will provide a deeper understanding of the systemic and organizational barriers that hinder effective community policing. Policymakers and police leadership should utilize these insights to develop more contextually relevant and effective strategies, potentially leading to improved police-community relations and enhanced public safety. In essence, the implications of this study call for a multi-faceted approach to improving community policing in Nigeria, emphasizing the need for comprehensive training, contextual understanding, and a shift away from relying solely on individual psychological traits.

Conclusion

This study found weak, negative links between emotional intelligence/self-efficacy and community policing in Nigeria. The low R-squared suggests other factors heavily influence implementation. The negative correlation is counterintuitive, demanding further contextual exploration. While the model demonstrates a statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived self-efficacy in predicting community policing implementation, the low R^2 suggests other factors heavily influence outcomes. Emotional intelligence shows a significant positive association, but perceived self-efficacy does not, demanding further investigation. Therefore, a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach, incorporating contextual and qualitative analyses, is crucial for enhancing community policing practices. Future research should use qualitative methods to investigate officer perspectives and systemic barriers. This will provide a more comprehensive understanding and improve community policing practices.

Acknowledgment

The authors thank all participants who willingly took part in this study.

Declarations

Funding statement. This research is supported by the University of Fort Hare (Grant number: REC-270710-028-RA Level 01)

Transparency. The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

Conflict of interest. The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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