

## Assessing the Level of Emotional Intelligence Among Construction Site Workers in Kaduna State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

The construction industry is widely recognized as a high-risk and high-pressure work environment that demands both technical competence and psychological stability from workers. Emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as a critical psychological attribute that enhances workers' ability to manage workplace stress, maintain interpersonal relationships, and improve job performance. Despite growing research on emotional intelligence in organizational settings, limited attention has been given to construction site workers who operate under physically demanding and emotionally challenging conditions. This study aims to determine the level of emotional intelligence among construction site workers involved in TETFund-supported construction projects in Kaduna State, Nigeria. A quantitative research design using a structured questionnaire based on the Genos Emotional Intelligence Inventory was adopted to assess emotional intelligence across seven components: consciousness, curiosity, clarification, compassion, courage, commitment, and consistency. Data were collected from 340 construction tradesmen selected through stratified random sampling. Descriptive statistical analysis was employed to evaluate emotional intelligence levels among respondents. The findings revealed that construction site workers demonstrate moderate levels of emotional intelligence, with relatively higher scores recorded in curiosity and commitment, while lower levels were observed in consciousness and emotional positivity. The study concludes that emotional intelligence plays a significant role in promoting workforce productivity, occupational resilience, and psychological well-being among construction workers. It recommends the implementation of structured emotional intelligence development programs within construction organizations to improve workplace performance and safety outcomes.

## **Background to the Study**

The construction industry serves as a major driver of economic growth, infrastructure development, and employment generation in both developed and developing economies. Within this sector, construction site workers play a crucial role in executing technical and manual tasks necessary for project completion. These workers include masons, electricians, plumbers, machine operators, foremen, and general labourers who contribute significantly to project performance in terms of cost, quality, and time management.

Construction site environments are characterized by hazardous working conditions, physically demanding tasks, strict deadlines, and high productivity expectations. These conditions expose workers to various occupational stressors that may negatively influence their psychological well-being and job performance. Previous studies have indicated that construction workers are particularly vulnerable to work-related stress due to their exposure to unpredictable environmental conditions and physical fatigue (Langdon & Sawang, 2017; Leung et al., 2016). Excessive occupational stress among construction workers has been associated with increased workplace accidents, absenteeism, and reduced productivity (Nwaogu & Chan, 2021).

In response to these challenges, scholars and industry stakeholders have increasingly recognized the importance of psychological competencies in enhancing workforce performance and well-being. Emotional intelligence has emerged as a key psychological attribute that enables individuals to recognize, understand, and regulate emotions effectively. Emotional intelligence facilitates effective communication, interpersonal relationship management, and stress coping mechanisms, which are essential for maintaining workplace harmony and productivity (Extremera et al., 2018).

Emotional intelligence is closely linked to occupational resilience, defined as the ability to recover from adversity, adapt to change, and maintain stable psychological functioning under challenging work conditions. Construction site workers frequently encounter occupational hazards and project uncertainties, making emotional intelligence a critical factor in enhancing their resilience and job performance (Waugh & Sali, 2023). Although previous studies have extensively examined emotional intelligence among construction professionals such as project managers and engineers, limited research has focused on site-level construction workers who directly experience operational challenges. Existing literature indicates that emotional intelligence significantly influences resilience and coping abilities among construction workers, yet empirical evidence on emotional intelligence levels among site workers remains limited (Ononye et al., 2022; Nwongu & Chan, 2022). Therefore, this study seeks to determine the level of emotional intelligence among construction site workers in Kaduna State, Nigeria. The findings are expected to contribute to occupational psychology research and inform workforce development strategies within the construction industry.

## **Literature Review**

### **Concept of Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional intelligence is a multidimensional psychological construct that encompasses emotional perception, emotional understanding, emotional regulation, and emotional utilization. Mayer and Salovey conceptualized emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive emotions accurately, use emotions to facilitate thinking, understand emotional meanings, and manage emotions effectively. Individuals with high emotional intelligence demonstrate better coping strategies, improved interpersonal relationships, and enhanced decision-making abilities.

Goleman further expanded the concept of emotional intelligence by emphasizing competencies such as emotional self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These competencies enable individuals to function effectively within social and occupational environments and promote psychological well-being (Goleman, 2021). Research has demonstrated that emotional intelligence plays a significant role in workplace performance by enhancing communication, teamwork, and conflict resolution. Workers with high emotional intelligence exhibit improved adaptability and resilience in demanding work environments (Gross, 2015).

### **Emotional Intelligence in Construction Work Environments**

The construction industry requires workers to perform complex tasks within dynamic and high-risk work environments. Emotional intelligence is particularly important in construction settings due to the need for effective communication, teamwork, and stress management. Studies have shown that emotionally intelligent workers demonstrate improved job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and occupational resilience. Emotional intelligence also contributes to workplace safety by enabling workers to remain calm and attentive under stressful conditions (Miao et al., 2021).

Furthermore, emotional intelligence supports psychological well-being by enabling workers to cope effectively with occupational stressors. Workers with high emotional intelligence demonstrate stronger coping mechanisms and better mental health outcomes in high-pressure work environments (Nguyen & Tran, 2020).

### **Emotional Intelligence Measurement Using the Genos 7C Model**

This study adopted the Genos Emotional Intelligence Inventory, which measures emotional intelligence using seven components:

1. Consciousness
2. Curiosity
3. Clarification
4. Compassion
5. Courage
6. Commitment
7. Consistency

The Genos model is designed to assess emotionally intelligent workplace behaviours and has been validated as a reliable tool for evaluating emotional intelligence in professional settings (Palmer & Stough, 2001). The model focuses on typical emotional behaviour patterns rather than maximal performance, providing a realistic assessment of emotional intelligence competencies in workplace environments.

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative survey research design to determine the level of emotional intelligence among construction site workers in Kaduna State.

### Population and Sample Size

The study population consisted of 521 construction site workers involved in TETFund-supported construction projects. A sample size of 340 respondents was selected using stratified random sampling.

### Data Collection Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on the Genos Emotional Intelligence Inventory. The questionnaire measured emotional intelligence across seven components using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

### Data Analysis Technique

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics including mean scores and standard deviations were used to evaluate emotional intelligence levels. Reliability analysis confirmed the suitability of the research instrument, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.6.

## Results

### Questionnaire Distribution

**Table 1:** Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Distributed	399	100
Retrieved	381	95.5
Valid	340	85.2

## Socio-Demographic Characteristics

**Table 2:** Socio-Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Male	318	93.5
Female	22	6.5
Total	340	100

**Mean Age:** 32 Years

## Level of Emotional Intelligence

**Table 3:** Consciousness

Item	Mean	Std Dev	Rank	Remark
Awareness of emotions affecting performance	2.20	0.530	3	Disagree
Awareness of thoughts and behaviour	3.01	0.892	1	Neutral
Maintaining positive mindset	2.54	0.623	2	Disagree

**Table 4:** Curiosity

Item	Mean	Std Dev	Rank	Remark
Understanding coworkers' experiences	3.40	0.892	1	Neutral
Learning new workplace skills	3.26	0.531	3	Neutral
Openness to new challenges	3.34	0.673	2	Neutral

**Table 5:** Clarification

Item	Mean	Std Dev	Remark
Clear communication	3.12	0.712	Neutral
Seeking clarification	3.18	0.694	Neutral
Asking questions effectively	3.09	0.703	Neutral

**Table 6:** Compassion

Item	Mean	Std Dev	Remark
Empathy toward coworkers	3.21	0.689	Neutral
Offering support	3.28	0.721	Neutral
Treating coworkers respectfully	3.34	0.701	Neutral

**Table 7:** Courage

Item	Mean	Std Dev	Remark
Taking calculated risks	3.19	0.733	Neutral
Speaking up on project issues	3.22	0.711	Neutral
Confidence in decision-making	3.16	0.699	Neutral

**Table 8:** Commitment

Item	Mean	Std Dev	Remark
Dedication to work tasks	3.45	0.651	Neutral
Proactive problem solving	3.38	0.674	Neutral
Responsibility toward project goals	3.42	0.682	Neutral

**Table 9:** Consistency

Item	Mean	Std Dev	Remark
Maintaining work discipline	3.36	0.662	Neutral
Reliability in job tasks	3.29	0.698	Neutral
Emotional stability	3.24	0.714	Neutral

### Discussion of Findings

The findings indicate that construction site workers demonstrate moderate emotional intelligence across most components. Workers recorded relatively higher scores in curiosity and commitment, suggesting a willingness to learn and maintain task dedication. These competencies support workforce adaptability and productivity.

However, lower scores were observed in emotional consciousness, indicating limited emotional self-awareness among workers. This limitation may affect workers' ability to

regulate emotions effectively and respond appropriately to workplace stressors. Emotional self-awareness is essential for emotional regulation and interpersonal communication (Gross, 2015). The findings support previous studies indicating that emotional intelligence enhances occupational resilience and workplace performance among construction workers (Ononye et al., 2022).

### **Implications**

The findings suggest that construction organizations should integrate emotional intelligence training programs into workforce development strategies. Emotional intelligence training can enhance communication skills, teamwork effectiveness, and stress management among construction workers. Additionally, emotional intelligence development can improve workplace safety outcomes by reducing emotional stress and impulsive behaviour associated with occupational accidents.

### **Conclusion**

This study assessed the level of emotional intelligence among construction site workers in Kaduna State. The results revealed moderate emotional intelligence levels across most components, with relatively lower performance observed in emotional consciousness. The study concludes that emotional intelligence is a critical factor influencing workforce productivity, psychological well-being, and occupational resilience among construction workers.

### **Recommendations**

Construction organizations should implement structured emotional intelligence training programs focusing on emotional awareness, communication skills, and empathy development. Occupational health policies should incorporate psychological support programs to improve workers' mental well-being. Future research should examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and workplace performance outcomes such as productivity, safety compliance, and job satisfaction.

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