

The Predictive Roles of Perceived Emotional Self-Awareness and Self-Monitoring Competence on Preventive Health Behavior among Psychology Interns in Psychiatric Hospital in Ondo State, South-West, Nigeria.

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Article Info

Received: May 18, 2022

Accepted: May 27, 2022

Published: June 16, 2022

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Citation: Segun-Martins, I. O (2022). "The Predictive Roles of Perceived Emotional Self-Awareness and Self-Monitoring Competence on Preventive Health Behaviour among Psychology Interns in Psychiatric Hospital in Ondo State, South-West, Nigeria". *Clinical Psychology and Mental Health Care*, 4(2); DOI: <http://doi.org/04.2022/1.10067>.

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine the predictive roles of emotional self-awareness and self-monitoring competence on preventive health behaviour among psychology interns in a psychiatric hospital in Ondo State, South-West, Nigeria. This study was a cross-sectional survey design. The dependent variable was preventive health behaviour. The independent variables for this study were, emotional self-awareness and self-monitoring. The number of participants for this study were one hundred and thirty-seven (137) and the data collection period spanned between 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 academic sessions. Revised Infectious Diseases Preventive Health Behaviour Scale (IP-PHBS), Emotional Self-Awareness Questionnaire (EAQ), and Self-Monitoring (SM) Scale were used to measure study variables. The results of study revealed that emotional self-awareness significantly predicted preventive health among psychology interns [$\beta = .25, p < 0.01$]. The outcome of the results also indicated that self-monitoring competence was a significant predictor of preventive health behaviours [$\beta = .21, p < 0.01$] among psychology interns. The joint contributions of the predictor variables (emotional self-awareness and self-monitoring competence) were also significant [$R^2 = .45, F = 9.33; p < .05$]. Based on findings, it was recommended that stakeholders in the educational sector, should as prerequisite for selecting interns engage the services of professional psychologists to help train and educate interns on the importance of having emotional and social skills.

Keywords: preventive health; emotional self-awareness; self-monitoring

Introduction

Professionals and student trainees within healthcare management practice have an obligation to engage and conduct themselves in best practices of preventive health procedures. Today, interns are expected to acquire skills that are far and above just learning, rather they are expected to exhibit a variety of social and emotional skill sets in order to thrive in the internship programme they may embark. This ranges from personal hygiene to standard best practices professional relationship with patients and general awareness of the importance of preventive health protocols in line with the organizations goals and objectives.

Apprenticeship is the fore-runner of internship, which began under the guild system in the eleventh century and later on, it gradually phase out to be replaced by vocational training after the industrial revolution. However, at the turn of the twentieth century, internship was incorporated into various fields that supervised practiced experience into educational curriculums. The term 'intern' was first applied to medical students in the 1920s (Taylor Research Group, 2014).

Today, undergraduates of the field of medicine, pharmacy, and psychology as well as, other allied fields are mandated to engage in internship at the undergraduate and graduate levels of education. Knowledge accrued from the field of psychology are obtained in classrooms, psychological laboratories and practical 'real life' experience in a teaching hospital or neuro-psychiatric hospital. This enables students or interns to practicalize what have been taught in the classroom in a real life settings.

Internship provides students the opportunity to acquire real life experiences, knowledge and practice modus operandi with people living with psychological related problems.



Internship experience can be eye-opening, revealing and labourious for newly appointed interns who are interested in various sub-fields of the discipline of psychology. However, the rewards of internship experience cannot be overlooked, for the reason that it equips interns with valuable experience to learn of about their prospective career paths in the field of psychology, it enables interns to learn and acquire knowledge from professionals within the field, and importantly, it enables interns to gain additional course credits upon the completion of the internship programme.

An intern is a student or trainee who works and engage in practice with professionals, sometimes with pay or without remuneration, in order to fulfill the requirements of an award of degree or to obtain qualification to practice, as well as, to gain experience (Dailey, 2016). Internship can simply be referred to as a academic programme that offers practical real-world experience which allows students undergoing a graduate or post-graduate programme the opportunity to use the knowledge gained and information received within the four walls of a lecture room in a professional environment such as a hospital or psychiatric ward, which is meant to broaden and provide in-depth ecologically validated training and experience in applied contexts (Simicevic & Stetic, 2017).

The success of an internship programme can be linked to a variety of factors, such as the level of interest of the intern, the importance attached to the internship exercise and other personal and situational factors which may be too many to outline in this study. However, studies within the field of psychology have revealed that psychological factors such as self-constructs and emotional variables can play significant roles in health behaviours in diverse populations (Short & Mollborn, 2016). Based on the foregoing, this study attempts to examine the roles of emotional self-awareness and self-monitoring competence on preventive health behaviour among psychology interns in psychiatric hospital in Ondo State, South-West, Nigeria.

Emotional self-awareness is regarded as the ability to understand one emotions and how it affects or influences one's performance or relationship with significant others (Goleman, Boyatzis, Davidson, Druskat & Kohlrieser, 2017). Emotional self-awareness is one of the broader forms of emotional intelligence competencies, and scholars such as Goleman, *et al.* (2017) have demonstrated that, emotional self-awareness is an important component in the overall development of emotional competence. Thus, emotional self-awareness can portend significant value for interns who are been trained to become leaders in the near future.

Emotional self-awareness have become a household name in psychology, not only because of Goleman's contribution to the concept, but rather, the role it plays and the significance of its contribution to how it affects relationships with significant others and importance of its value as well as, the overall effect it has on work-related performance. Particular importance of emotional self-awareness is that it helps to understand and regulate emotions in such a way that, it reduces irrational behavior that may damage reputation or one's relationship with others (Botelho, 2020).

Self-monitoring is increasingly being considered in several scientific psychology literature, as an important concept in the understanding and management of human behaviour in diverse

contextual settings (Day & Schleicher, 2009). Self-monitoring can be described as the degree to which individuals pay attention to their non-verbal and verbal affective disposition. Self-monitoring is also defined as a type of personality characterized by an individual's ability to regulate behaviour to accommodate workplace, personal and social situations (Snyder & Gangestad, 2000). The term was first introduced by Snyder in the 70's. Snyder was of the opinion that people generally show variations in their ability or desire to show expressive behaviour (Snyder, 1974).

Self-monitoring is an important facet of human behaviour which is especially important to students on internship, because among other things, it helps interns to function independently with less supervision and it is a characteristic that can be taught through learning and practice as well as, it helps students and interns to keep tabs on their own behaviour and how its possible effect on others. Another importance of self-monitoring is the benefits it portends for social contexts which allows for flexibility and adaptability to engage in multiple tasks and roles without it leading to role conflict. Thus, high levels of self-monitoring to help to develop and sustain relationships in work and social contexts (Tyler, Kearns & McIntyre, 2016).

Research studies (Rose & Kim, 2011; Wilmot, DeYoung, Stillwell & Kosinski, 2016) have demonstrated the importance of self-monitoring in a variety of settings, these settings can be social, personal, workplace and social groups. Self-monitoring is a major factor in interpersonal interactions, serving as a measure or yardstick for people to monitor and regulate their social behavior (Tyler *et al.*, 2017). Research have shown that there is a significant relationship between an individual's work performance and their ability to change their self-presentations in a bid to adapt to the demands of the situation or event (Wilmot *et al.*, 2016).

Given the number of studies between emotional awareness and self-monitoring few studies have been conducted to examine the roles of emotional awareness and self-monitoring on preventive health behaviour among interns in Nigeria. Therefore, this study fills the identified gap in literature by examine the predictive importance of emotional self-awareness and self-monitoring on preventive among psychology students on internship in Nigeria.

Statement of Problem

With the increasing number of studies conducted on preventive health behavior and the roles of self-constructs such as emotional self-awareness and self-monitoring, it is quite astonishing at majority of this studies were conducted in Europe, only a handful of studies have been conducted in the shores of African, and studies in Nigeria on the subject-matter is almost non-existent. It is for this reason that this study is conducted to as to add to the body of existing literature and provide research materials for scholars and researchers within Nigeria to draw upon.

Albeit, most previous studies have been carried out extensively on healthcare workers and patients within the healthcare institutions. There are relatively little or no research study conducted in the purview of interns and their role in preventive health. Of the few studies conducted, the researchers have limitedly focused on specific health behaviours (Hennessy, Johnson, Acabchuk, McCloskey & Stewart-James, 2021) and ignored the roles of self-constructs in explaining preventive health behaviour in the context of interns. As a result, literature are few or almost non-existent, the



reason for this not yet ascertained in literature and it is important to draw the attention of scholars and researchers through this study to focus on interns because, they are the decision-makers and policy formulators of the next generation.

Objectives of the Study

This study generally examined the predictive roles of emotional self-awareness and self-monitoring competence on preventive health behaviour among psychology interns in a psychiatric hospital in in Ondo State, South-West, Nigeria. However, the specific objectives of the study were to;

1. Find the degree of predictive relationship between emotional self-awareness and preventive health behaviour among psychology interns in a psychiatric hospital in in Ondo State, South-West, Nigeria.
2. Determine the extent of relationship between self-monitoring and preventive health behaviour among psychology interns in a psychiatric hospital in Ondo State, South-West, Nigeria
3. Examine whether self-monitoring and emotional self-awareness would together predict preventive health behavior among psychology interns in a psychiatric hospital in Ondo State, South-West, Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Psychology interns who score significantly higher on the measure of emotional self-awareness would report increased levels on the perception of preventive health behavior.
2. Psychology interns who score significantly higher on the measure of self-monitoring will also, report significant levels of preventive health behavior.
3. Emotional self-awareness and self-monitoring will have a joint significant predictive effect on preventive health behaviour among interns in a psychiatric hospital in Ondo State.

Method

Research Design

This study was a cross-sectional survey design. This study made use of questionnaires to gather information from respondents in the study. The dependent variable was preventive health behaviour. The independent variable for this study were, emotional self-awareness and self-monitoring.

Participants

The participants for the study were undergraduate students of the Department of Pure and Applied Psychology, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria, who were embarking on The Student's Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES). The number of participants for this study were one hundred and thirty-seven (137) and the data collection period spanned between 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 academic sessions. Participant characteristics for gender showed that males were the majority 92(67%) and the females were 45(33%). The chronological age ranged from 19-28 years. The age range of 21 and 23 showed the highest frequency respectively. Data on religious orientation showed that the majority were of Christian faith 74 (54%), participants with Islamic orientation were, 52 (38%), and participants who responded as other orientation were,

11 (8%).

Sampling Techniques

The sampling technique used to select the representative sample of the population of all available SIWES bound students was through voluntary response sampling. This was carried in such a way that the participants were allowed to volunteer to be part of the study, and they went to the self-report questionnaire administration stage of data collection. Those who declined to volunteer were left out of the study.

Measurement/Instrument Description

The questionnaires used in this study were A4 sized papers. The questionnaire was a self-report measure that was divided into 4 Sections: Section A: Demographic Information containing age, gender and religious orientation of the participant. Section B: Comprised of the Revised Infectious Diseases Preventive Health Behaviour Scale (IP-PHBS), which was re-standardized by Ayandele *et al.* (2021). The IP-PHBS is a 12-item measure, on a 7-point Likert type rating scale. The items were inspired by the Protection Motivation Theory. The IP-PHBS was developed and initially validated in a nation-wide sample from Nigeria ($N=703$). Example of statements in each of the corresponding item include 'I want people to be tested for infection' and 'I avoid going to public places'. These authors reported a Cronbach alpha of .92 for the IP-PHBS. The scoring key for each of the 12 items are obtained in an aggregated calculation, such that, the higher the score of all aggregated items, the positive significance of the individual participants' adherence to infectious diseases preventive health behaviour (Ayandele *et al.* 2021). Section C: This section contained measures of Emotional Self-Awareness Questionnaire (EAQ) first published by Rieffe *et al.* (2007) and have been subsequently revised by Rieffe, Oosterveld, Miers, Meerum Terwogt and Ly, (2008). The EAQ was designed to identify how adolescents feel and think about their feelings. The 30-item EAQ is a multi-dimensional scale measuring, 6 factors (differentiating emotions, acting out emotions, analyses of emotion, attention to others emotions. The EAQ is rated on a 3-point rating scale. Samples of items include 'I am often confused or puzzled about what I am feeling', 'It is important to know how my friends are feeling'. The EAQ is scored such that scores above the average are indications of high levels of emotional self-awareness and scores below the average are indicative of low levels of emotional self-awareness. Rieffe and his colleagues reported a Cronbach alpha of .89. Section D: Comprised the items The Self-Monitoring (SM) Scale developed by Snyder (1974), the Self-Monitoring (SM) Scale measures the extent to which an individual consciously employ impression in social interactions. The items consist of 'My behavior is usually an expression of my true inner feelings, attitudes, and beliefs', and 'I can only argue for ideas I already believe'. The SM is scored such that scores between 0-8 (low), 9-14 (Intermediate) and 15-22 (High Score).

Data Analysis

For this study, data analysis was carried out to ascertain the degree to which the direction of associations among the study variables correlated and predicted each other. The interrelated of the independent variables (emotional self-awareness and self-monitoring) and the dependent variable (preventive health



behaviour), were analyzed to test for hypothesis 1, 2 and 3 were tested using multiple regression analysis

awareness can adapt to requirements and practices that encourage preventive health practices.

Result Presentation

Dependent	Independent	B	t	p	R	R ²	df	F
Preventive Health Behaviour	Emotional self-awareness	.25	.41	<0.05	.28	.45	137(3)	9.33**
	Self-monitoring competence	.21	.36	<0.01				

**<0.01* p<0.05, N=137

Table 1: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Predictors of Emotional Self-Awareness and Self-Monitoring Competence on Preventive Health among Psychology Interns in a Psychiatric Hospital.

The results of the (Table 1 above) revealed that emotional self-awareness significantly predicted preventive health among psychology interns in a psychiatric hospital in in Ondo State, South-West, Nigeria [$\beta = .25, p < 0.01$]. The outcome of this result indicate that emotional self-awareness was a significant predictor of preventive health behaviours among academic support staff in public owned universities in South-West, Nigeria. Therefore, the alternate hypotheses 1 was confirmed. Similarly, the outcome of the results also indicated that self-monitoring competence was a significant predictor of preventive health behaviours [$\beta = .21, p < 0.01$] among psychology interns in a psychiatric hospital in Ondo State. This result suggests that there is positive significant relationship between participant’s perception of self-monitoring competence and preventive health behaviour. Therefore hypothesis two was confirmed. For hypothesis 3, the joint contributions of the predictor variables (emotional self-awareness and self-monitoring competence) were also significant [$R^2 = .45, F = 9.33; p < .05$]. The R^2 point to the observed joint prediction accounted for 45% of the total influence on the emotional self-awareness and self-monitoring competence on preventive health behaviours among psychology interns in a psychiatric hospital in Ondo State. The other 55% are variables not considered for this study.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the three hypotheses revealed significant predictive value on preventive health behaviour among psychology interns in a psychiatric hospital in Ondo State. Hypothesis one, which stated that emotional self-awareness will significantly predict preventive health behaviour was confirmed. A conceivable reason for this outcome can be traced to the fact that individual’s with heightened levels of emotional self-awareness have higher tendency to understand their emotions and how it affects or influences one’s performance or relationship with significant others (Goleman *et al.*, 2017). This suggest that individuals who are emotionally self-awareness have an advantage to better understand themselves and how their emotions influence others, as such they are better equipped to regulate their to suit the prevailing circumstance. Thus, interns who are emotionally self-

In hypothesis two, which suggested that self-monitoring competence would significantly predict preventive health behaviour among psychology interns in a psychiatric hospital in Ondo State was also significant. Self-monitoring is an important facet of human behaviour which is especially important to students on internship, because among other things, it helps interns to function independently with less supervision and it aids students and interns to control their own behaviour. Another significance of self-monitoring is the benefits it signifies for interpersonal perspectives which allows for flexibility and adaptability to engage in multiple tasks and roles without role conflict. Thus, high levels of self-monitoring to help to develop and sustain relationships in work and social contexts (Tyler *et al.*, 2016).

Several authors have substantiated the findings of this study, for instance, Rose and Kim, 2011; Wilmot *et al.*, 2016) revealed the importance of self-monitoring in a variety of settings, these settings can be social, personal, place of work and within social groups. Self-monitoring is a major factor in interpersonal interactions, serving as a measure or yardstick for people to monitor and regulate their social behavior (Tyler *et al.*, 2017), as such, this factor may be responsible for the significance of the ability to change self-presentations in a attempt to adapt to the demands of the situation or event (Wilmot *et al.*, 2016).

Conclusion

Scientific literature have significant progress in understanding and management of preventive health behaviour. Emotional self-awareness holds important solutions to the understanding of preventive health behaviours. The importance of preventive health behaviour charts the course of the future for the study of preventive health. Understanding preventive health behaviours does not only provide proactive management to health related problems, it also portends the idea of preventing than investing in treatment. This study was conducted to examine emotional self-awareness and self-monitoring competence would predict preventive health behaviour among psychology interns in a psychiatric hospital in Ondo State, South-West, Nigeria. The results of the study have showed that self-monitoring competence and emotional self-awareness are important predictors of preventive health among academic support staff.

Recommendation and Suggestions for Future Research.

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are highlighted below;

1. Psychologists should be involved in conducting seminar workshops and webinar for prospective interns so as to adequately equip them with trainings that will foster emotional self-awareness and self-monitoring competence.
2. Stakeholders in the educational sector, should as prerequisite for selecting interns engage the services of professional psychologists to help train and educate interns on the importance of having emotional and social skills as they interact with healthcare workers as well as patients. This will provide stakeholders such as, the Ministry of Education, National Universities Commission and those who regulate the Student’s Industrial Work Scheme (SIWES).



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