



## **Intra-Personal and Inter-Personal Skills in Home Care Services: Predictive Roles of Effective Communication, Assertiveness and Intra-Personal Peace in Job Satisfaction**

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### **Abstract**

*To care is a distinguishing mark of humanity. Genuinely caring for another, especially the vulnerable members of society, is a mark of evolved psycho-social and spiritual consciousness. This paper looks at intra-personal and inter-personal skills in Health care services within the purview of youth unemployment, job creation and the professionalization of Homecare Services. Reported is a study on the predictive roles of effective communication, assertiveness and intra-personal peace in job satisfaction. One hundred and fifty-seven women and men (Civil Servants) were respondents in the study. Four instruments were used for data collection. Multiple regressions were the statistics for data analysis. It was found that effective communication, assertive behavior, and intra-personal peace predicted job satisfaction. Including social skills training in the armamentarium of home-care services professionals is emphasized.*

### **Introduction**

Youth, according to UNESCO, is a person between the ages of 15 – 24 years. However, for the African Youth Charter, youth is a person between the ages of 15 and 35 years. That there is very high rate of unemployment in the contemporary world is self-evident. Table 1 presents unemployment rates of selected countries:

**Table 1: General, and Youth Unemployment Rates from Selected Countries in the World.**

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>GENERAL UNEMPLOYMENT</b>	<b>YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT</b>
1. United States	4.3%	9.40%
2. United Kingdom	4.6%	12.49%
3. Euro Zone	9.3%	18.70%
4. Greece	22.5%	46.60%

5. Finland	9.0%	20.20%
6. Japan	2.8%	5.00%
7. Canada	6.5%	11.70%
8. Chile	6.6%	15.86%
9. Croatia	11.0%	27.10%
10. Turkey	11.70%	22.10%
11. Cyprus	11.60%	30.30%
13. South Africa	26.70%	54.50%
14. Nigeria	13.90%	25%*

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Source: <http://countryeconomy.com/unemployment>

\*Source: <https://tradingeconomics.com/nigeria/youth-unemployment-rate>

It can be observed from table 1 that unemployment is a real global challenge. Countries have various rates of unemployment, ranging from 2.8% (Japan) to 26.7% (South Africa). This raises the question as to the etiological and maintaining factors in unemployment. Socio-cultural factors are definitely at the core of the margin between the industrialized and less industrialized nations. For instance, in Japan, there is very high level of work ethic. Many people from Asian countries go extra miles to seek employment, ready to do any work provided it provides means of livelihood, enabling one cater for self and family. In many countries in Africa, it is certain that there are very hardworking persons; however, the truth is that a lot about the cultural milieu of Africa engenders unemployment and attendant problems. Some of the issues include: corruption, and poor work ethic.

Looking at youth unemployment, the situation is dire. The rate of youth unemployment is double; even triple that of the general population. From the statistics in Table 1, more than half of South African youths are unemployed. Instead of addressing the issue of job creation, acquiring relevant skills to be employable, South African Youths resort to xenophobic attacks on hardworking foreigners. They complain they can't find jobs, yet migrants from neighboring nations, including Nigeria, find jobs in South Africa and succeed. It is a matter of



attitude to work. There is feeling of entitlement. Many African youths are not ready to exert themselves to the utmost. Even those employed in industries/factories are frequently rioting. That is why JOB CREATION and any program geared toward training and empowering young people to be gainfully employed is laudable. When youths work, they keep busy, learning work-related behavior/discipline, they earn their own money which boosts their self-esteem, they learn to save, and they contribute to national economy.

### **Job Creation**

The issue of job creation has been attracting attention globally. Given the economic recession, and the increasing rate of unemployment around the world, with the attendant youth restiveness, crime, violence, and general antisocial activities, every government worthy of its mandate must endeavor to create jobs for her ever-growing population. Besides, entrepreneurial activity drives economic growth and job creation (Baumol, 1996; Mair & Marti, 2009). Engaging unemployed persons in the workforce not only raises the GDP, but also raises standard of living of the populace (Mair & Marti, 2009). Governments and businesses are paying considerable attention to the specific role of “start-ups” as possible job creation strategies (Fritsch, 2004). For instance, start-ups in the United States create 39.75% of new jobs annually, adding 6.54 jobs per new establishment on average (Spletzer, 2000). In Nigeria, the last administration (Goodluck Ebele Jonathan) made effort to create jobs through skill acquisition programs, entrepreneurship programs, such that institutions of higher learning have compulsory courses on entrepreneurship – even at Post-Graduate Studies level.

Job creation is about entrepreneurship. Gallup defines entrepreneurship “as activity initiated to create value by providing products and services to a market, fulfilling an unsatisfied demand. The activity can include initiating and developing a new product/service (innovative) or replicating products/services that already exist, thus creating competition (replicative)” (Badal, 2010, p.3). likewise, Gallup defines entrepreneur “as an individual who proactively seeks to generate value through expansion of economic activity and who creatively responds to challenges and needs encountered in the process of accomplishing this outcome” (Badal, 2010, p.3).

Gallup developed a multidimensional framework for measuring entrepreneurial activity. It stresses the mutual interplay between individual variables (talent, attitude, experience, skills, and knowledge) and contextual variables (social capital, access to credit, role of government, technology and infrastructure, access to information, and access to markets). This is perhaps the only

framework that explicitly captures the role of human motivations, perceptions, and behaviors in explaining entrepreneurial decision making. The foundation of this framework includes a more realistic psychological underpinning, making it conducive to the study of entrepreneurial potential and activity (Badal, 2010). Many youth orientation programs in Nigeria failed due to non-involvement of psychologists in planning and execution of such programs.

Human capital theory suggests that higher levels of human capital lead to better performance by the individual in executing relevant tasks (Becker, 1994). In the realm of entrepreneurship, this means that an individual's unique personality characteristics, value orientation, and attitudinal outlook can influence his or her ability to recognize a business opportunity and act to exploit that opportunity in ways that others — those who lack these abilities — cannot. Studies have found that entrepreneurial attitudes toward autonomy, risk, work, and income overshadow other factors such as location in determining the success of a firm (Davidsson & Honig, 2003; Dimov & Shepherd, 2005; Haber & Reichel, 2007; Lerner & Haber, 2001).

The decision to become an entrepreneur depends on the expected gain from self-employment (Douglas & Shepherd, 2000). However, incomplete knowledge and different kinds of biases inherent in individual personality or environment can distort the perception of utility, adding to the complexity of understanding the phenomenon of entrepreneurial decision making (Minniti & Nardone, 2007; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). Examples of ways in which individual judgment diverges from rationality include overconfidence, optimism, probability perception, and anchoring or reference point of the individual (Lévesque & Schade, 2005). Such biases are typical of entrepreneurial behavior because the entrepreneur usually deals with complex situations and makes decisions without complete knowledge of all relevant factors (Casson, 2005). Factors that facilitate entrepreneurship according to Gallup model (Badal, 2010) include Ego Drive (strong sense of self), Business Thinking (profit orientation), Work Orientation (ability to work long hours), Creative Thinking (ability to take an existing idea or product to the next stage), and Relationship Building (ability to build relationships to achieve specific goals). Empowering youths – graduates as well as non-graduates – to be self employed (entrepreneurs) is very important at this time.

### **Youth Empowerment/Development**

Youth empowerment is about facilitating young people gain skills that enable their holistic development. When youths are given the necessary enablement



and support from significant others, and from the environment, they grow in appreciation of themselves, and in turn, impact their environment. An empowered youth is an empowered nation. Consider the pandemonium caused by youth restiveness, kidnapping, xenophobia, and terrorism. Harnessing the potentials of youth as early as possible will go a long way in ensuring a peaceful and prosperous nation. Terrorism that is tearing Nigeria, Africa, and whole world apart is because wrong people “empowered” the youths in a maladaptive manner, for example, by teaching them to hate others, by giving them arms (child soldiers), teaching them to improvise explosives, coaching them in the art of aircraft hijacking, and the like. So it is not just empowerment but most important, in what direction?

### **Empowering youths should involve:**

#### **Education**

Psychological education entails teaching youths to know how to tune inwards and gain in self-knowledge. A person that lacks self-knowledge/awareness will be like a robot – moving in the direction propelled by the prevailing force operating at a given time. The person may end up chasing one’s shadow. On the other hand, a self-aware youth thinks for self, knows when to move, and when to hide.

#### **Skill Acquisition**

In addition to acquiring vocational skills for economic independence, youths are facilitated toward discovering their talents/gifts, and applying such talents toward productivity. There are also social skills to be acquired such as communication, assertiveness, and anger management skills. A formally educated and talented person without appropriate social skills will not go far in life. The person may end up at every turn shooting oneself on the leg by one’s attitude and decorum.

#### **Spiritual Coaching**

Spirituality has been associated with many outcomes. For instance, Sahebalzamani, Farahani, Abasi and Talebi (2013) found a significant relationship between spiritual intelligence, psychological well-being and having a purpose in life. They found association between the components of spiritual intelligence including conscious state expansion, personal meaning production, transcendental awareness, and critical existential thinking with psychological well-being. Many young persons are living aimless lives because they have not developed the spiritual faculty that would enable them transcend the vicissitudes of life. Holistic youth empowerment program should address the spiritual awareness of the candidates.

Work is the ground of creativity. Work plays a pivotal role in a person's life. It provides opportunity to keep busy, earn income that is used for daily maintenance of life. Work provides opportunity to exhibit one's talent, giftedness and potentials. Work provides social security. It is no wonder that jobless, unemployed persons tend to be depressed, frustrated, and there is high level of violence among unemployed youths – as the saying goes, an idle mind is devil's workshop. Work gives one identity.

### **Job Satisfaction**

The term job satisfaction refers to the attitude and feelings people have about their work. Positive and favorable attitudes towards the job indicate job satisfaction. Negative and unfavorable attitudes towards the job indicate job dissatisfaction (Armstrong, 2006). Job satisfaction is a worker's sense of achievement and success on the job. It is generally perceived to be directly linked to productivity as well as to personal well-being. Job satisfaction implies doing a job one enjoys, doing it well and being rewarded for one's efforts. Job satisfaction further implies enthusiasm and happiness with one's work. Job satisfaction is the key ingredient that leads to recognition, income, promotion, and the achievement of other goals that lead to a feeling of fulfillment (Kaliski, 2007). According to Herzberg (1976) Two-factor theory, elements that are associated with job satisfaction are: Hygiene Factors – company policies, supervision, interpersonal relations, work conditions, salary, status, and job security; Motivation Factors – achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, growth. Job satisfaction represents one of the most complex areas facing today's managers when it comes to managing their employees (Aziri, 2011). This work looks at some factors related to job satisfaction.

### **Communication**

Communication is exchange of words, signs, symbols and meaning within individuals, between individuals, and between groups. In communicating, one can use words, and engage in face-to-face conversation; one can write the message using understandable symbols; one can use signs, even the movement or non-movement of one's body while speaking or listening is part of communication. There is inter-personal and intra-personal communication.

Interpersonal communication is an interactional process in which one person sends a message to another (Weiten & Lloyd, 2003). Thus, interpersonal communication is – At least two people are involved, it is a process – involves a series of actions (speak-listen-response-etc.), it is interactional – both parties involved in communication send as well as receive information as they interact.



Key elements of interpersonal communication include: The Sender – the person who initiates the message; the Receiver – the person to whom the message is addressed; the Message – the information that is transmitted from the sender to the receiver; the Channel through which the message is sent – sensory medium through which the message reaches the receiver. Noise – any stimulus that interferes with accurate expressing or understanding of the message. The context – the environment in which the communication takes place. One's relationships rise or fall to the extent one manages the communication process through effective communication.

Communication is very important in human life. Successes in life – professionally, relationally, depend on effective communication. As observed by Onyeizugbo (2010),

Human persons interact in the world. They relate with other human persons to generate families, establish organizations, and build communities and cities. For these relationships to be possible there is need for communication. It is effective communication that enables human persons to relate with one another in the world and without such communication, human existence is virtually impossible, as Onyeizugbo (2001) asserted, “**I communicate, therefore I am**”. Where communication is ineffective, there is breakdown of order, conflict ensues, giving birth to aggression and its attendant violence (Onyeizugbo, 2010, p. 117).

On the other hand, failures, conflicts, misunderstandings, are linked to ineffective communication. Studies have shown that effective communication are related to various outcomes: job satisfaction (Manojlovich, 2005); job prestige (Kamasak, & Bulutlar, 2008); leader-member exchange (Madlock, Martin, Bogdan, & Ervin, 2007); Nursing care quality improvement (Scott-Cawiezell, Schenkman, Moore, Vojir, Connolly, Pratt, & Palmer, 2004).

### **Assertiveness**

Assertive behavior is a communication style, as well as social skill whereby one expresses oneself in an interpersonal encounter in an honest manner without anxiety. Assertiveness has the following characteristics: Expressing one's thoughts and feelings directly and honestly, without infringing on other person's rights; respecting self as well as the other person, expressing positive and negative feelings, being confident, staying balanced - knowing what one wants to say, talking face-to-face with the person, using body language that shows one is standing on one's ground, and good eye contact.

Assertiveness enhances successful relationships with patients, families, and colleagues (Mahmoud, Al Kalaldehy, El-Rahman, 2013). Assertiveness is an expression of self-confidence. Studies have shown that individuals who have assertive behavior generally have higher self-worth and are more successful in life, they have better marital outcome (Onyeizugbo, 2001). Assertive persons maintain self-respect and respect for others by engaging in assertive behavior which directly expresses one's true, basic feelings, needs, desires, opinions and personal rights in a positive, productive way without denying the rights of others. It enables one to act in her or his interests without undue anxiety. Assertive individuals claim their own rights, make requests of others, can say no to things they do not want, accept praise and can easily verbalizes their feelings. All of these make individuals experience positive responses from others. This in turn can decrease anxiety and increase confidence in interpersonal relations (Deltsidou, 2008; Shimizu, Kubota, Mishima, et al., 2004). Assertiveness is thought to be a healthy form of behavior. Becoming more assertive can lead to increased respect and recognition as a person and as a Psychologist, a health worker, a nurse and the like. It maximizes reinforcement – achieve results (Sudha, 2005). Assertiveness is considered to be an essential skill for nurses; without it true autonomy and personal empowerment cannot be achieved (Begley, Glacken, 2004). Assertive behavior demands control over outbursts of anger, crying or other behavior patterns that exhibit lack of professionalism. Assertiveness skills can be seen as valuable component for successful professional nursing practice, with which many conflicts in a nursing situation can be successfully addressed (Sanders, 2007).

Rabin and Zelner (1992) found assertiveness in the job setting to be strongly correlated with role clarity; assertiveness in daily life was also significantly correlated with role clarity; and assertiveness in the work setting was significantly correlated with job satisfaction among Social Workers. The implications for social work training and supervision were described in light of the importance of assertive communication in maintaining job clarity and job satisfaction within multidisciplinary settings.

Intra-personal communication is talking, conversation, and processing of information that is occurring within a person. Thinking, problem solving, feeling, sub-vocal speech, etc. are intrapersonal communication. Intra-personal communication enables one gain perspective even when interacting with other people. Without intrapersonal communication, there shall be no interpersonal communication. However, studies on the relationship between intra-personal





communication and job satisfaction are lacking. This research focused on intra-personal peace.

In view of the prevailing situation of unemployment, and need for job creation and professionalization of Home Care Services, the author deemed it necessary to gather empirical data on the relationship of communication, assertiveness, and intrapersonal peace on job satisfaction. The information from the research will enable those working on the professionalization process to factor the relevant variables into the equation, for optimal motivation of staff, satisfaction of clients, and effective service delivery. Intra-personal peace is an area of research that is grossly neglected.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

One hundred and fifty-seven (157) Civil Servants were drawn from Nsukka urban comprised area. They comprised of 87 female and 70 male respondents. Their age range = 20-60, mean age = 38.41. They were mostly married people, with at least OND certificate, mostly Christians, mostly from Igbo ethnic group.

### **Instruments**

**Effective communication skill assessment scale (ECSAS):** The Effective communication skill assessment scale (ECSAS) is a 13-item scale developed by Immanuel (2017). It was designed to assess a person or persons' communication skill. Response option ranges from Definitely True (5) to Definitely False (1). Examples of items are: "I am a good listener", "I have good eye contact", "I speak clearly". Some items are reverse scored. Cronbach's alpha = .81 suggesting high internal consistency of the scale. Exploratory factor analysis suggests one factor. The ECSAS was used to measure effective communication in the study.

**Assertive Behavior Inventory (ABI):** The assertiveness behavior inventory (Immanuel, 2014) was used to measure a person's ability to express one's needs, desires, and feelings in an honest manner, without anxiety and aggression. The scale comprises of 23 items. Each item is answered using a 5 point Likert-type response anchor numbered: 5 = Always, 4 = Usually, 3 = Occasionally, 2 = Rarely, 1 = Never. The ABI has three factors, namely: Passive Behavior (9 items) – alpha = .80; aggressive Behavior (7 items) – alpha = .79; and Assertive Behavior (7 items) – alpha = .77. The full-scale Cronbach's alpha of the ABI is .87. Items that measure assertive behavior positively are scored high, whereas those that suggest passivity and aggression are reverse-scored. The ABI is designed to assess assertive behavior in both the young, and older adults aged 14 and above.

**Intra-Personal Peace Scale (IPPS):** The intra-personal peace scale (IPPS) is a 13-item scale developed by Immanuel (2016). It was constructed to assess individual's inner peace - intra-personal peace. Response option ranges from Totally Disagree (1) to Totally Agree (5). Sample items include: "There is harmony in my life"; "I see peace wherever I am". Some items are reverse scored. Cronbach's alpha = .81. Concurrent validity with World Health Organization's Quality of Life Measure - Spiritual, Religious, and Personal Beliefs (WHOQOL-SRPB): Domain VI, yielded alpha = .57,  $p < .01$ . The reliable and valid IPPS was used to measure intra-personal peace.

**Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ):** The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ: Short form) is a 20-item scale developed by Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, (1967) to measure job satisfaction. Response option ranges from Very dissatisfied to Very satisfied. The MSQ has been used extensively around the world to measure job satisfaction. Weiss, et al. (1967) reported Hoyt reliability ranging from .87 to .92 for the general satisfaction subscales and .84 and .77 for the intrinsic and extrinsic subscales respectively. Nwafor, Immanuel and Obi-Nwosu (2015) found a Cronbach's alpha for the 20-item I to be .91 .

### **Procedure**

Research assistants went to offices of civil servants and solicited for their cooperation in filling the questionnaire forms. Those who volunteered to be part of the study responded to the items. The forms were collected immediately each person finished. The completed forms were collated, scored, coded and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 20.

### **Design/Statistics**

Multi-factorial study. Multiple (Linear) regression was used for analysis.

### **RESULTS**

All the independent variables were highly correlated with job satisfaction:

Effective communication vs. job satisfaction = .28,  $p < .001$

Assertiveness vs. job satisfaction = .26,  $p < .001$

Intra-personal peace vs. job satisfaction = .26,  $p < .001$

The results of the Multiple Regression indicate that the variables (ECSAS, ABI, AND IPPS ) were able to collectively explain statistically significant 12% variance



in job satisfaction (Adjusted  $R^2 = .12$ ,  $p < .001$ ), with Effective communication ( $\beta = .17$ ,  $p < .05$ ), Assertiveness ( $\beta = .16$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and Intra-personal peace ( $\beta = .16$ ,  $p < .05$ ) all predicting positively job satisfaction.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings that effective communication, assertiveness, and intra-personal peace positively predicted job satisfaction is as expected.

This is in confirmation of existing literature that communication (Manojlovich, 2005), and assertiveness (Rabin and Zelner, 1992) are related to job satisfaction. However, the present study is unique in contributing data on the predictive role of intra-personal peace in job satisfaction.

As a worker – health care provider communicates effectively, there is no room for ambiguity or misunderstanding with organization or with client. One is commended highly, and this encourages one to work harder, with general sense of satisfaction for a job well done.

Similarly, assertiveness – honest, forthright expression of one's needs, feelings, and position on issues brings issues in the open, thereby engendering trust, respect, and positive reinforcement, which in turn is likely to boost one's satisfaction on the job.

Assertiveness training programs help the individual to actualize one's goals. It is a great social skill that every worker should possess - whether in the teaching profession, administration, health care, business, industry; in fact, wherever there are human interaction, assertiveness skill is handy. For instance, when a Vice-Chancellor acquires assertive behavior, his/her work will be a lot easier. He can refuse inordinate pressure to give admission or job to persons not really qualified. Tabak (2007) found that the integrating and dominance approaches to conflict resolution are associated with low occupational stress levels, whereas the obliging and avoidance approaches are linked to higher stress. I know a businessman whose business collapsed because he could not stand firm in handling customers. Many patients have suffered unnecessarily because they could not express how they feel to their doctors and other care givers (Makaryus & Friedman, 2005; Piette, Heisler, & Wagner, 2004). Assertiveness is a skill professional home care providers must acquire to earn respect of their clients. Also, clients need assertiveness to really communicate their needs so as to enjoy optimum care.

Previous researches on assertiveness training have supported that attainment of assertiveness skills has been linked to increased assertiveness, and self esteem (Scrutchfield, 2003). Nurses interact with patients, colleagues and other health care professionals on a daily basis; such an interaction is improved when nurses have good communication skills. The potential benefits of assertive behavior to nurses are enormous where it enhanced self awareness, improved staff performance, improved patient care and interdisciplinary collaboration and cohesiveness (Deltsidou,2008). Assertiveness training leads to improved outcomes among nurses (Abed, El-Amrosy, & Atia, 2015).

Intra-personal peace, an inner disposition of tranquility, serenity even in the face of conflict is a mark of highly adjusted personality. Intra-personal peace is born out of self-awareness over a long period of time of practice in intra-personal communication. It predicts job satisfaction and likely to predict many indexes of psychological adjustment. This study is likely to be the first considering the role of intra-personal peace in job satisfaction.

The role of psychologists in health care and home care delivery is paramount. Other healthcare personnel such as doctors, nurses, pharmacists, focus on the physical-material body. Even when nurses, for instance, go for home care, they mind the body. Who is to mind the Mind? That is why the idea of professionalizing home care services being initiated by psychologists is vital. The client is managed in a holistic manner, in such a way that one's humanity is ennobled. Also, workers, professionals who join the organization (Home care Profession), with proper training in relevant social skills, will pilot the affairs of the organization with assertive leadership and maturity.

### **I am because we care!**

Caring is native to Africa. From antiquity, Africans have been known for their hospitality. The elderly – custodians of wisdom and cultural knowledge, are taken care of by relations in the community. Nursing home (where an elder leaves the familiar home where she/he grew up and going to an institution) is alien to Africa. It is like going into exile from which one will not return. The elder in the Nursing home will likely go down very fast since there is little room for exercising oneself. Whereas in home care, the elder is with extended family members, participates in community activities as one is capable.

The task ahead is how to develop these wonderful skills – Effective communication skill, Assertiveness skill, and Intra-personal communication skill.



Effective intra-personal communion is prelude to effective inter-personal communion. Assertive communication is at the core of social skills.

It is recommended that homecare professionals be giving regular training in social skills, particularly effective communication and assertiveness, as well as sessions of psychotherapy that will enable them go inward for inner integration that generates intra-personal peace. Training is vital since education has been found to be related to assertiveness (Onyeizugbo, 2003).

It is also recommended that youths, from adolescent age be trained to reflect on their aptitude to discover their vocation, gifts, talents early in life so as to make informed career decision. Those with aptitude for caring should be encouraged to consider professional home care provision. When people occupy professions/vocations that they are suited for, society will be progressive, more peaceful and prosperous.

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