The Predictive Influence of Emotional Intelligence and Self Efficacy on Job Tension among Male and Female Workers in the Aviation Industry

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This study was designed to find out the influence of gender, emotional intelligence, and self efficacy on job tension experienced by workers in the aviation industry. Three Hundred (300) participants were drawn from the employees of the 3 selected airline operators in Lagos state, Nigeria using convenient sampling technique. Two hypotheses were tested and it was found that emotional intelligence and self efficacy independently and jointly predicted job tension among male and female workers; male workers experience less job tension than their female counterparts. These study outcomes imply that emotional intelligence and self efficacy are critical in the management of job tension in precarious work setting and management of organisations in such environment should ensure regular assessment and development of these traits for maximum utilisation of human potential for effective performance.

Keywords: Gender, Emotional Intelligence, Self Efficacy, Job Tension, Workers, Aviation Industry.

Introduction
Job tension is defined as the feeling of tension, discomfort, uncertainty, indecisiveness and distress that a worker experiences as a result of the social and physical circumstances of the work setting (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snock and Rosenthal, 1964). It is the subjective feeling that work demands exceed the individual’s belief in his capacity to cope (Folkman and Lazarus, 1991). Person-Environmental (P-E) fit theory (Caplan 1987) has been used over time as a framework for understanding the process of coping among employees in their work environment. According to this framework, occupational stress is defined in terms of work characteristics that create distress for the individual due to a lack of fit between the individual’s abilities and attributes and the demands of the workplace. Other researchers (e.g. Beehr, 1995) have suggested that the relationship stressors and their negative consequences (strain) are moderated by different factors, such as demographic characteristics, personality factors and social environment. Emotional intelligence is one of the personality variables associated with reduced impact of occupational stress. Salovey & Mayer (1990) defined emotional intelligence (EI) as one’s ability to recognize own feeling, others’ feeling and to be able to differentiate among them and to use the information to manage one’s thinking and behaviour. The ability-based model views emotions as useful sources of information that help one to make sense of and navigate the social environment (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). The model proposes that individuals vary in their ability to process information of an emotional nature and in their ability to relate emotional processing to a wider cognition. This ability is seen to manifest itself in certain adaptive behaviours.
According to Bandura (1997), perceived self-efficacy refers to belief in one's own capacity to organise and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations. The principal source of self-efficacy is enactive mastering, which depends on both real and perceived execution of the task. Other sources of self-efficacy are the verbal persuasion by others, vicarious learning and emotional activation. Research shows that one's own beliefs of efficacy function as an important determinant of motivation, affect, thought and action (Bandura, 1992). Adeyemo and Ogunyemi (2005) examined the interactive and relative effect of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy on occupational stress of university academic staff. Their findings revealed that emotional intelligence contributed significantly to the prediction of occupational stress of the participants. Similarly, Nikolaou and Tsousis (2002) reported a negative correlation between emotional intelligence and stress at work indicating that high scores on emotional intelligence measure suffered less stress related to occupational environment. Slaski and Cartwright (2002) found that managers high in emotional intelligence revealed less subjective stress and had better physical and psychological well-being.

Similarly, Bar-On et al., (2000) indicated that police officers who scored significantly higher on emotional intelligence were less vulnerable to experienced stress and better coped with it. Oginska-Bulik (2005) examined emotional intelligence in the work place by exploring its effects on occupational stress and health outcomes in human service workers. Three hundred and thirty participants representing various human services professions like physician, nurses, teachers, probation officers and managers took part in the study. The results confirmed an essential but not very strong role of emotional intelligence in perceiving occupational stress and preventing employees of human services from negative health outcomes. The researcher concluded that the ability to effectively deal with emotions and emotional information in the work place assists employees in coping with occupational stress.

Grau, Salanova and Peiro (2001) in their work analysed self-efficacy as a moderator in the occupational stress process. Specifically, the study analyzed the complementary nature of two self-efficacy measures; generalized and professional. It was hypothesised that specific self-efficacy will moderate more stress-strain relationships than generalized self-efficacy. Based on data collected from 140 workers that use new technologies in their jobs, it was found that self-efficacy moderates the stress-strain relationship in general, in the sense that low levels of self-efficacy are related to high levels of occupational stress. The results of hierarchical multiple regression analyses showed that general and professional self-efficacy are complementary moderators in stress processes, depending on the specific strain studied. However, it was found that professional self-efficacy has more interaction effects. Specifically, individuals with low levels of generalized self-efficacy showed more emotional exhaustion when their job autonomy was higher, while those with low levels of professional self-efficacy showed greater cynicism with high routine and role conflict, and reported low levels of organisational commitment with high level of role conflict. The increase in stressors was not associated with strain for workers with high levels of self-efficacy.

The findings of Sackey, Boahemaa and Sanda (2011) demonstrated that female managers experience enormous level of occupational stress than their male counterparts. Other factors which add up to make women more vulnerable to work-related stress include the higher proportion of women who work in precarious forms of employment (Sackey, et al., 2011). Aremu and Moyosola (2012) found no significant differences in the impact of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy on teachers' job outcome. Ciarrochi et al (2001) found that an objective measure of emotion management skills is associated with a tendency to maintain an experimentally induced positive mood which has obvious implications for preventing stress. People skilled in managing others' emotions help people regulate moods in a positive direction and try to establish intimacy with them (Schutte et al 1998). Leiter (1992)
indicated that individuals with high self-efficacy tend to use active coping strategies, whereas those with low self-efficacy tend to employ avoidance strategies and have a greater tendency to worry about job-related stressors. And as pointed out by Bandura (2000) people with high confidence in their capabilities handle stress related factors effectively and approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided.

Stress is a prevalent and costly problem in today’s workplace. About one-third of workers report high levels of stress (NIOSH, 1999). One-quarter of employees view their jobs as the number one stressor in their lives (Northwestern National Life Insurance Company, 1991). Three-quarters of employees believe the worker has more on-the-job stress than a generation ago (Princeton Survey Research Associates, 1997). Evidence also suggests that stress is the major cause of turnover in organizations (NIOSH, 1999). With continued stress at the workplace, workers will develop psychological and physiological dysfunctions and decreased motivation in excelling in their position (Colligan, Colligan and Higgins, 2006). These researchers have identified the following issues associated with occupational stress.

- Factors unique to the job
- Role in the organization
- Career development
- Interpersonal work relationships
- Organizational Structure/climate

However, they limited their definition of organisational structure/climate to overall communication, management style, and participation among groups of employees leaving out other variables that could determine the climate. For example, this categorisation excludes factors that relate to the turbulent nature prevalent in airports and airline industry. Insufficient data on the aviation industry are secondary data and information on stress management programs that did not identify salient personality variables such as emotional intelligence in managing stress. In addition, studies of tension in turbulent work environment have focussed majorly on the health sector (Jennings, 2007) and banking industry, (Chovwen, 2013) among others. The magnitude of turbulence and disasters experienced in the aviation industry is a major source of concern for stakeholders in the industry among whom are the employees, increase in the level of job tension may affect motivation and service delivery quality. It is assumed that self-efficacy and emotional intelligence will significantly positively contribute to reduction in job tension among aviation employees. This explains the need to assess the predictive influence of self-efficacy and emotional intelligence on job tension among employees in the aviation industry.

**Hypotheses**

1. Emotional intelligence and self-efficacy will be significant predictors of job tension among female workers in the aviation industry.
2. Male workers will experience less job tension than their female counterparts in the aviation industry.

**Research Method**

**Design:**
The design of the study is an ex-post facto research design utilizing the survey method of inquiry. The design was chosen based on the fact that the variables of study could not be actively manipulated. The independent variables are gender, emotional intelligence and self-efficacy while the dependent variable is job tension.

**Participants**
The research work involves both administrative and technical staff of selected airline operators in Lagos State, Nigeria. Three Hundred (300) participants were conveniently sampled from employees of the 3 airlines that were randomly selected from six most frequently patronised airlines. The mean age for the male respondents is 37.92 years while the mean age for the female participant is 34.63. Forty (40) of the participants had Ordinary National Diploma certificate,
eighty three (83) had Higher National Diploma, one hundred and seven participants (107) had Bachelor of Science Degree Certificate and seventy (70) participants had master’s degree.

A self report inventory (questionnaire) was used to gather socio-demographic characteristics (age, sex and educational qualifications) and emotional intelligence, self efficacy and job tension representing predictor and criterion variables respectively.

**Emotional Intelligence:** The emotional intelligence scale was developed by Tsaousis (2008). It is a 20 item inventory used to measure the ability of individual to understand his/her own feelings and others’ feeling, to differentiate among them, and to use the information to manage one’s thinking and behaviour. It is a 5-point Likert response type (ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree). The author reported a split half reliability coefficient (r) of 0.53. The researcher in this study obtained a split half reliability coefficient (r) of 0.49. A concurrent validity coefficient of 0.41 was obtained by correlating emotional intelligence with self efficacy.

**Self efficacy:** The self efficacy scale was developed by Sherer, Maddox, Mercandate, Prentice – Dunn, Jacobs and Rogers (1982). It is a 30 item inventory designed to measure self perceived competence and effectiveness on work performance and efficacy in handling social relationships. It is designed to measure the social component of self efficacy from both interpersonal and intrapersonal perspectives. “I feel insecure about my ability to do things” is an example of items on the scale. It is a 5 point Likert response type (ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree). Sherer et al (1982) reported Cronbach alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient of 0.86.

**Job Tension:** The job tension scale was developed by Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snock and Rosenthal (1964) for measuring organizational stress of workers. It is a 15-item inventory questionnaire designed to assess the nature, causes and consequences of two aspects of organizational stress which is defined as the feeling of tension, discomfort, uncertainty, indecisiveness and stress that a worker experiences as a result of the social and physical circumstances of the work setting. Example of items of this scale is “Thinking that I will not be able to satisfy the conflicting demands of various people over me”. The authors reported a coefficient of alpha 0.87. Responses to these items are scored using the 5 point Likert response type ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

**Procedure**

The researcher sought the permission to carry out the study from the management of the three selected airlines operating in Nigeria. The researcher also discussed and convinced the management on the essence of the study and the choice of their organisation as the study area. The 3 test instruments: self efficacy scale (SES), Job tension scale (JT) and emotional intelligence scale (EIQ) were afterwards administered to accidentally sampled staff. The researcher established adequate rapport with the prospective participants in the various departments and only those on ground who were willing to participate in the study were sampled. The researcher implored the participants to respond to the items of the tests honestly and assured them that their response would be strictly for the research purpose. The test administration lasted for about 5 weeks. Out of about 350 test instruments distributed, 300 properly filled research instruments were made use in the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Var</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emot int</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self eff</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
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</table>
Results:

Table 1: Summary table of regression analysis showing the influence of emotional intelligence and self efficacy on job tension among aviation workers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Var</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>R</th>
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</table>

In Table 1, the result suggests that emotional intelligence and self efficacy significantly predicted job tension. As shown in Table 1, the independent variables (self efficacy and emotional intelligence) jointly predicted job tension. (R² = 0.31, F (1,298) = 3.87, P < 0.5). This indicates that combination of these variables accounted for 50% of the job tension of the respondents, while the other 50% would have been accounted for by other variables not considered in the study. In addition, both independent variables individually significantly predicted job tension as revealed by the beta weights. (B= .33, p< .05; B= .48, p< .05).

Table 2: Summary table of regression analysis showing the influence of emotional intelligence and self efficacy on job tension among male workers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Var</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emot int</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self eff</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In Table 2, the result reveals that emotional intelligence and self efficacy independently and jointly predicted job tension among male workers. (R² = 0.39, F (1,151) = 4.07, P < 0.5), beta weight emotional intelligence .35 and self efficacy .44. This indicates that combination of these variables accounted for 43% of the job tension of the respondents, while the other 57% would have been accounted for by other variables not considered in the study.

Table 3: Summary table of regression analysis showing the significant influence of emotional intelligence and self efficacy on job tension among female workers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Var</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emot int</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self eff</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
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In Table 3, the result suggests that emotional intelligence and self efficacy independently and jointly predicted job tension among female workers. (R² = 0.39, F (1,141) = 4.11, P < 0.5), beta weight emotional intelligence .37 and self efficacy .46. This indicates that combination of these variables accounted for 43% of the job tension of the respondents, while the other 57% would have been accounted for by other variables not considered in the study.

Table 4: Summary table of independent t-test analysis showing the significant difference of male and female workers on job tension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Std error mean</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>1.645</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.56</td>
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</table>

In Table 4, the result revealed that female workers experienced more job tension than male workers t (198) = 1.66, P < 0.05).

Discussion

Outcome of the analysis confirmed that emotional intelligence and self efficacy significantly predicted job tension. Firstly, this finding implies that emotional intelligence will enhance the ability of employees to cope with job tension and work environmental challenges through their display of mastery at monitoring and managing their own emotions as well as that of colleagues and their clients. As such they will be less likely to display anger, frustration and other
negative emotional outburst when confronted with job related challenges and tension. This finding is consistent with the work of Slaski and Cartwright (2002) which revealed that managers high in emotional intelligence revealed less subjective stress and had better physical and psychological well-being. In the same vein, Bar-On et al. (2000) reported that police officers with high emotional intelligence were less likely to experience stress and able to cope better in their job. Secondly, Grau et al., (2001) argued that self-efficacy generally moderates the stress-strain relationship. They asserted that low levels of self-efficacy are related to high levels of occupational stress. This literature strongly confirms results of the current study that self efficacy significantly influenced job tension and as such will reduce employees' vulnerability to stress. It could be concluded from the foregoing that in the aviation industry, self efficacious individuals are aware of their capabilities in accomplishing required tasks against all odds and challenges. It seems this inner conviction has positioned them for success and makes them less vulnerable to pressure. According to Grau et al., (2001), personal attribute gives workers the psychological strength and zeal to cope effectively at work by mastering and evolving ways of doing their job such that it will minimise tension (Grau et al., 2001). More importantly, the positive significant joint contributions of the predictor variables to job tension indicate the existing strong relationship among the variables the potency of each factor is reducing tension associated with performance in the aviation environment.

In a similar manner, emotional intelligence and self efficacy significantly influenced job tension for male and female workers. These findings give credence to the assertion that for either males or females, self efficacy and emotional intelligence play a significant role in stress management. As earlier stated, understanding of one's and other people emotions, and one's ability to regulate and manage them and the belief in one's ability to successfully complete a designated task have buffering effect on work related stress. The finding of Ciarrochi, Chan and Caputi (2001) and Bar-On (2003) lend additional support to the present finding. People skilled in managing others' emotions help others regulate moods in a positive direction and try to establish intimacy with them (Schutte et al., 1998) and more likely to effectively handle tension in their relationship with others at work. The result that self-efficacy is a more potent predictor could be attributed to the fact that a strong sense of efficacy enhances human accomplishment and personal well-being in many ways. Supporting the positive impact of self-efficacy on stress Leiter (1992), indicated that individuals with high self-efficacy tend to use active coping strategies, whereas those with low self-efficacy tend to employ avoidance strategies and have a greater tendency to worry about job-related stressors. And as pointed out by Bandura (2000) people with high confidence in their capabilities handle stress related factors effectively and approach difficult task as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided and this could be argued for both males and females.

Final analysis that compared gender differences on job tension revealed that females scored higher on job tension than male employees. Several factors may be responsible for this outcome. Boahemaa and Sanda (2011) reported that domestic responsibilities of the female workers make their job more challenging than the male workers. Apart from discharging their job responsibilities it is still expected that females take care of the home, children and perform other domestic chores, the function males rarely performed. Other researchers, e.g., Sackey, et al., (2011) confirmed this finding by demonstrating in their study that female experience enormous level of occupational stress than their male counterparts. Other explanation made for the higher vulnerability of women to stress include their involvement in precarious forms of employment

Conclusion

It has long been established that stress is inimical to the individual well being and health. The findings of this study demonstrated that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence,
self-efficacy and job tension. Emotionally intelligence and self-efficacy significantly predicted job tension for both males and females. Male workers experience less job tension than their female counterparts.

Limitation and Recommendation

The study has made significant contributions to the existing literature on the concept of job tension in relation to self-efficacy and emotional intelligence among employees in aviation industry but this is not without its shortcomings. The study adopted accidental sampling technique because the prevailing climate at the time of data gathering could not make it possible for other appropriate sampling technique. Secondly, data collected was solely based on self-report measure which did not allow the researcher to adequately probe for information and thus underreport important issues. It is suggested that other researchers correct for these lapses by adopting a sampling technique that will allow for the inclusion of majority of respondents thus expanding the scope of generalisation. Also a combination of data gathering collection methods will significantly improve quality of data and enhance body of knowledge in this area.

Recommendation

Management should make it a matter of organisational principle to recruit psychologists conversant with the development and the use of personality inventories; their assigned task will include assessing and matching the candidate with the requisite personal attributes (i.e. self-efficacy, emotional intelligence) to the available jobs. This is important since findings have shown that personal attributes may counteract the effect of job tension.

Management and supervisors should be aware of staff psychological orientation, capability and threshold in terms of coping with demanding work tasks; this knowledge on the part of supervisor will determine how they effectively make use of their human resource in achieving organizational goals and at the same time not jeopardising their health. Additionally, periodical seminar or workshops on stress and tension management for workers is recommended for effective coping strategies.

References


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