

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SELF-EFFICACY AS PREDICTORS OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

The goal of every organization, whether profit or non-profit oriented, is to work towards achieving the objective for its existence. Although there may be other peripheral objectives, emphasis is placed on the achievement of good productivity. The extent to which this goal can be actualized depends principally on the workforce. They constitute the oil that lubricates the factors of production as a whole. Civil servants, like other employees in various organizations, are crucial in the actualization of the ministry goals and objectives. However, studies (Cooper and Cartwright, 1994, Kinman, 1998, Spielberger & Reheiser, 1994) have identified, among other things occupational stress as one of the cardinal mitigating factors against employee well-being and effective performance.

Stress is an unavoidable characteristic of life and work. It is a generalized non-specific response of the body to any demand made on it. Occupational stress describes physical, mental and emotional wear and tear brought about by incongruence between the requirement of the job and the capabilities, resources and needs of the employee to cope with job demands (Akinboye, Akinboye and Adeyemo, 2002). Occupational stress is pervasive and invasive. Stress in the workplace

'objective' noxious events into the subjective experience of being distressed. In addition, Selye does not take into account *coping mechanisms* as important mediators of the stress–outcome relationship. Both topics are central to psychological stress theories as, for example, elaborated by the Lazarus group.

A derivative of the systemic approach is the research on *critical life events*. An example is the influential hypothesis of Holmes and Rahe (1967), based on Selye's work, that changes in habits, rather than the threat or meaning of critical events, is involved in the genesis of disease. The authors assumed that critical life events, regardless of their specific (e.g., positive or negative) quality, stimulate change that produces challenge to the organism. Most of this research, however, has not been theoretically driven and exhibited little empirical support for this hypothesis (for a critical evaluation, see Thoits 1983).

2.1.2 Psychological Stress: The Lazarus Theory

Two concepts are central to any psychological stress theory: *appraisal*, i.e., individuals' evaluation of the significance of what is happening for their well-being, and *coping*, i.e., individuals' efforts in thought and action to manage specific demands (cf. Lazarus 1993). Since its first presentation as a comprehensive theory (Lazarus 1966), the Lazarus stress theory has undergone several essential revisions (cf. Lazarus 1991, Lazarus and Folkman 1984, Lazarus and Launier 1978). In the latest version (see Lazarus 1991), stress is regarded as a

relational concept, i.e., stress is not defined as a specific kind of external stimulation nor a specific pattern of physiological, behavioral, or subjective reactions. Instead, stress is viewed as a relationship ('transaction') between individuals and their environment.

'Psychological stress refers to a relationship with the environment that the person appraises as significant for his or her wellbeing and in which the demands tax or exceed available coping resources' (Lazarus and Folkman 1986, p. 63). This definition points to two processes as central mediators within the person–environment transaction: *cognitive appraisal* and *coping*.

The concept of *appraisal*, introduced into emotion research by Arnold (1960) and elaborated with respect to stress processes by Lazarus (1966, Lazarus and Launier 1978), is a key factor for understanding stress-relevant transactions. This concept is based on the idea that emotional processes (including stress) are dependent on actual expectancies that persons manifest with regard to the significance and outcome of a specific encounter. This concept is necessary to explain individual differences in quality, intensity, and duration of an elicited emotion in environments that are objectively equal for different individuals. It is generally assumed that the resulting state is generated, maintained, and eventually altered by a specific pattern of appraisals. These appraisals, in turn, are determined by a number of personal and situational factors. The most important factors on the personal side are motivational dispositions, goals,

appraisal of the further course of an encounter with respect to goal congruence or incongruence.

Specific patterns of primary and secondary appraisal lead to different kinds of stress. Three types are distinguished: harm, threat, and challenge (Lazarus and Folkman 1984). *Harm* refers to the (psychological) damage or loss that has already happened. *Threat* is the anticipation of harm that may be imminent. *Challenge* results from demands that a person feels confident about mastering. These different kinds of psychological stress are embedded in specific types of emotional reactions, thus illustrating the close conjunction of the fields of stress and emotions.

Lazarus (1991) distinguishes 15 basic emotions. Nine of these are negative (anger, fright, anxiety, guilt, shame, sadness, envy, jealousy, and disgust), whereas four are positive (happiness, pride, relief, and love). (Two more emotions, hope and compassion, have a mixed valence.) At a molecular level of analysis, the anxiety reaction, for example, is based on the following pattern of primary and secondary appraisals: there must be some goal relevance to the encounter. Furthermore, goal incongruence is high, i.e., personal goals are thwarted.

Finally, ego- involvement concentrates on the protection of personal meaning or ego- identity against existential threats. At a more molar level, specific appraisal patterns related to stress or distinct emotional reactions are described as *core relational themes*.

Participants respond by indicating their level of agreeableness to each of the 25-item statements using a two-point scale 1 representing Yes, and 0 representing No. The OSS has also demonstrated a high internal consistency (Cronbach α ranged from 0.79 to 0.87). The scale also has a test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.76.

3.4 Procedure

The scales were personally administered to the participants by the researcher. Each of the various departments was visited by first intimating their head about the research work. The questionnaires were then administered to the respondents.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

The statistical tool employed for this study were the t-test for independent samples used to test hypotheses 1 and 2, analysis of variance (ANOVA) test and Pos-hoc test for multiple comparison were used for hypotheses 3, while multiple regression was used to test hypothesis 4.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.770	10

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
b1	28.05	19.956	.533	.738
b2	28.09	20.205	.443	.750
b3	27.95	20.225	.502	.742
b4	28.34	20.825	.352	.762
b5	28.54	20.229	.420	.753
b6	28.12	21.083	.392	.756
b7	28.45	19.876	.502	.742
b8	28.30	20.490	.427	.752
b9	28.28	20.875	.376	.758
b10	28.37	20.596	.412	.754

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
31.39	24.601	4.960	10

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.713	28

Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable: Occupational stress

Self efficacy	Emotional intelligence	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Low	Low	18.07	5.273	54
	High	12.03	5.714	30
	Total	15.92	6.135	84
High	Low	15.72	3.681	47
	High	13.06	6.234	63
	Total	14.20	5.438	110
Total	Low	16.98	4.729	101
	High	12.73	6.060	93
	Total	14.94	5.798	194

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Occupational stress

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1034.556 ^a	3	344.852	12.014	.000
Intercept	38971.708	1	38971.708	1357.695	.000
Efficacy	19.592	1	19.592	.683	.410
Intelligence	850.563	1	850.563	29.632	.000
Efficacy * Intelligence	128.425	1	128.425	4.474	.036
Error	5453.821	190	28.704		
Total	49809.000	194			
Corrected Total	6488.376	193			

a. R Squared = .159 (Adjusted R Squared = .146)

Post Hoc Tests

Correlations

		Age	Sex	Mstat	Jobstat	Educ	workexp
Age	Pearson Correlation	1	-.029	.671**	.306**	.266**	.741**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.685	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	194	194	194	194	194	194
Sex	Pearson Correlation	-.029	1	.166*	.029	.237**	-.035
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.685		.021	.689	.001	.626
	N	194	194	194	194	194	194
Mstat	Pearson Correlation	.671**	.166*	1	.154*	.329**	.511**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.021		.032	.000	.000
	N	194	194	194	194	194	194
Jobstat	Pearson Correlation	.306**	.029	.154*	1	.258**	.280**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.689	.032		.000	.000
	N	194	194	194	194	194	194
Educ	Pearson Correlation	.266**	.237**	.329**	.258**	1	.361**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.000	.000		.000
	N	194	194	194	194	194	194
workexp	Pearson Correlation	.741**	-.035	.511**	.280**	.361**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.626	.000	.000	.000	
	N	194	194	194	194	194	194
Self efficacy	Pearson Correlation	.025	.047	.033	.237**	.156*	.044
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.726	.520	.051	.004	.030	.546
	N	194	194	194	194	194	194
Emotional intelligence	Pearson Correlation	-.071	-.163*	-.022	-.027	-.055	-.003
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.272	.023	.762	.713	.446	.969
	N	194	194	194	194	194	194
Occupational stress	Pearson Correlation	-.216**	.145*	-.003	-.092	.080	-.267**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.044	.968	.201	.267	.000
	N	194	194	194	194	194	194

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).