Are Civil Servants Involved in Their Work? An Investigation of Emotional Intelligence and Gender

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author CSA designed the study and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author COJA performed the statistical analysis, managed the literature searches and the re-editing of the article. Author CIN wrote the protocol. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The study examined emotional intelligence and gender as predictors of job involvement among civil servants in Anambra State. A total of 267 participants comprising of 140 males and 127 females aged 25-58 years with the mean age of 40.14 years and a standard deviation of 8.05 were used in the study. Two sets of instrument were used for the study: self-rated emotional intelligence questionnaire (SREIS) and job involvement scale (JIS). Two hypotheses were tested in the study, the first hypothesis which stated that emotional intelligence will significantly predict employee job involvement was accepted at $r = (0.143)$ at $p < 0.05$. The second hypothesis which stated that gender will significantly predict job involvement among civil servants was also accepted at $r = (-0.279)$ at $p < 0.05$. This means that males and females differed significantly, hence being a male or female determines how involved a worker will be in his or her job among civil servants in Awka, Anambra State. The study recommends that employers should consider employees who have high emotional intelligence to ensure effectiveness.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence; job involvement; civil servants; gender.
1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most difficult challenges that most employers/managers face in today's competitive market is to get the right set of people with the desired potentials to help in the day-to-day activities in an organization or company. Chand [1], identified engagement, choice, training, the emotional and physical balance of employees, compensation, performance, and equilibrium between management and employees, as well as dealing with trade unions as some of the challenges experienced by human resource managers in today's work organization.

Most organizations or companies find it extremely difficult to select appropriate applicants thus the need to select applicants who exhibit signs of dedication and commitment to duty is paramount. Job involvement refers to the psychological and emotional extent to which someone participates in his or her work, profession or company.

Hence, it is a subjective condition that makes people devoted to their work, spend energy and do their best in the work and organizational role. It is not associated with a plethora (excessive likeness) towards job; rather it causes workers to enjoy their work and reduces some of their fatigue. Thereby increasing worker’s job satisfaction, commitment (mostly affective), citizenship behaviour, and reduce their desire to leave the job [2].

Pfeffer [3] and Lodahl and Kejner [4], viewed job involvement as a fundamental basis for establishing a competitive advantage in business market and opined that increasing job involvement can enhance organizational productivity and effectiveness. Thus, they conceptualized job involvement into two namely;

- The extent to which an individual’s self-esteem is affected by his or her level of job performance.
- The degree to which an individual identifies psychologically with his or her work and the importance of work in an individual's total self-image. The researchers believed that job involvement has two different aspects or dimensions (job performance), self-esteem connection and psychological identification with work. This justified the performance of both definitions in their article which set the tone for decade's worth of criticisms and research on the concept.

Past research has shown an association between work outcomes, work quality and organizational efficiency on employee’s job involvement. For instance, Chand [1] in his study declared that job involvement does not only result to timely presence at work; employee’s feeling of success in their job, a sense of goal attainment and optimism about the organization but also lead to believe of congruency between personal and organization's goal. However, some individuals devote their time to work as such are pre-occupied with the organizational goals that they forget their personal life. It then suffices to say that individuals who work in jobs with high work-loads and have a necessity for working overtime may present job involvement behaviours.

Studies carried out in Canada, Taiwan and South Africa identified emotional intelligence among major determinants of employee’s job involvement. But in Nigeria, few studies have addressed the issue and none to the best of the researcher’s knowledge has been done about civil servants in Anambra State. Emotional intelligence is the capability of the individual to recognize his or her own and other people’s emotions, to discern between different feelings and label them appropriately, to use emotional information to guide thinking and behaviour and to manage or adjust emotions to the environment or achieve one’s goal [5].

Goleman [6] indicated that emotional intelligence accounted for 67% of the abilities deemed necessary for superior performance in leaders and mattered twice as much in technical expertise or on intelligence quotient. Other research found that the effect of emotional intelligence on leadership and management performance is non-significant when ability and personality are controlled for and that general intelligence correlates very closely with leadership. Makers of emotional intelligence and methods of developing it have become widely coveted in the past decade.

Criticism has centered on whether emotional intelligence is real intelligence and whether it has incremental validity over IQ and the big five personality traits. However, reviews found that in most studies, poor research methodology has exaggerated the significance of emotional intelligence. Currently, there are three main
models of emotional intelligence which are: Ability model, mixed model and trait model.

Gender is another variable of study in this research. According to FAO [7], gender refers to the relation between men and women. FAO [7] also mentioned that “Gender is not determined biologically as a result of sexual characteristics of either women or men but is constructed socially or used concerning social and cultural differences. Thus, it is the central organizing principles of societies and often governs the processes of production and reproduction, consumption and distribution”. Despite this definition, gender is often misunderstood as being the elevation of only women. However, as we can see from the definition of FAO [7], gender issues focus on women and men, most especially on their roles, attraction, obligation, demands, separation of work, control over resources and relationship that exist between them. Bravo- Baumann [8] went on to say that gender relations affect household security, family well-being, planning, production and many other aspects of life. Consequently, the objectives of this study are to ascertain whether:

i. Emotional intelligence will predict job involvement among civil servants in Anambra State.
ii. Gender will predict job involvement among civil servants in Anambra State

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Several types of research have been carried out to ascertain if there is possible relationship or influence between emotional intelligence and employee job involvement. For instance, [9] conducted a study on the relationship between emotional intelligence and nurses’ job involvement. Using 230 nurses from the casualty ward of Tehran's hospital, selected through random sampling, the analysis indicated that emotional intelligence and nurses’ job involvement are significantly correlated to one another. Also Madani et al. [10], investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and job involvement among the staff of Islamic Azad University of Zanjan province of Iran. The result of their study showed that there is a meaningful correlation between emotional intelligence and job involvement.

Dehshiri [11] argues that emotional intelligence and time management predicts significantly the job stress of teachers. Result of his research showed that among the components of emotional intelligence, the components of self-control, empathy and self-awareness are effective in predicting job stress. Also, Ghaderi and Shamsi [12] carried out a study to ascertain the relationship between emotional intelligence and job involvement of 180 hospital nurses in Jiroft city in Iran. Their result showed that there is a direct relationship between emotional intelligence and job involvement.

In the same vein, Najafpour [13] investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and job involvement in a manufacturing company in Penag Island. Using a total of 120 participants for the study, the result of the analysis of data revealed that emotional intelligence has a positive relationship with job involvement. While research of Queensland University of Australia showed that those who have poor emotional intelligence and job performance can get to the level of their colleagues who are excellent in both, only by trying to improve their emotional intelligence [14].

Similarly, several studies have also been carried out to ascertain if differences exist between men and women in job involvement. For instance, Lorence [15] found that women are more involved than men after controlling differences in work autonomy. While Oguegbe et al. [16] carried out a research on job involvement of bankers and their findings showed that no significant effect existed between gender and job involvement of bankers. Again, Judeh’s study found that there was no significant difference towards gender and job involvement in his study of effect of employee involvement on teamwork.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework guiding this study is the combination of expectancy theory by Vroom [17] and hierarchy of need theory by Maslow [18]. The two theories were used in the study because they extensively tried to explain why employees tend to perform maximally or minimally. For instance, the expectancy theory asserts that an individual will behave or act in a certain way because they are motivated to select a specific behaviour over other behaviours due to what the result of that behaviour will be. Similarly, the hierarchy of need theory asserted that there is a hierarchy of five needs within individuals and that individuals are motivated by unsatisfied needs to work harder in order to satisfy that need.
2.2 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

i. Emotional intelligence will significantly predict job involvement among civil servants

ii. Gender will significantly predict job involvement among civil servants.

3. METHODS

3.1 Participants

A total of 267 civil servants participated in the study. Their job experience ranged from 1 to 35 years while their academic qualification ranged from senior secondary school certificate (SSCE) to PhD. They comprised of 140 males (52.4%) and 127 females (47.6%), they were selected through stratified random sampling technique and convenient or haphazard technique (non-probability sampling technique) was used to select 4 ministries out of 14 ministries in the Anambra civil service. The age range of the civil servants is from 25 to 58 years with the mean age of 40.14 years and standard deviation of 8.05. The ministries used are: Ministry of social welfare, children and women affairs, Ministry of local government and chieftaincy, Ministry of science and technology and Ministry of information.

3.2 Instrument

Two sets of instrument were used for this study. Self-rated emotional intelligence questionnaire (SREIS) of Brackett and Rivers [19] and job involvement scale (JIS) of Lodahl and Kejner [4]. Again, demographic variables such as gender and age were included in the instruments used for the study.

3.3 Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire

This is a 19 item scale used to measure employee’s emotional intelligence. The self-rated emotional intelligence scale was developed by Brackett and Rivers [19]. The scale has five dimensions which include perceiving emotions, use of emotions, understanding emotions, managing emotions and social management. The scale consists of 19 items with 5 alternative options ranging from 1= ‘very accurate’ to 5 ‘very inaccurate, indicating the extent to which the item apply to a participant. Items 2, 4, 15 and 16 are negative items, the remaining are positive items and as such scored appropriately. The developers reported Cronbach’s alpha reliability of the scale at 0.77. However the researcher subjected it to pilot study and obtained Cronbach alpha reliability of 0.72.

3.4 Job Involvement Scale

This is a 20 item scale used to measure employee’s job involvement. The scale was developed by Lodahl and Kejner [4]. It has 20 items with 4 alternative options ranging from 1= ‘strongly agree to 4= ‘strongly disagree’ indicating the extent to which the item apply to the respondents. The developers obtained Spearman- Brown internal reliability coefficient of .72 and .80 for females and males respectively. While for this study, a Cronbach alpha reliability of .68 was obtained.

4. PROCEDURE

4.1 Pilot Study

The researcher conducted a pilot study using 101 local government employees of three local governments in Anambra state. The researcher was granted the permission to carry out the pilot study from the head of department of each local government area used. A total of 105 questionnaires were distributed out of which 101 was found useable. They consist of 47 males and 54 females. The researcher obtained an alpha coefficient reliability of 0.68 in job involvement scale and 0.72 coefficients on emotional intelligence. The above reliability coefficient result showed that the instrument is reliable and thus can be used for the study. This is because according to Sekaran [20], reliability coefficients lower than .60 is considered poor, while those in the range of .60 to .80 are acceptable and in the range of .80 and above is considered very good.

4.2 Main Study

The researcher randomly selected 4 ministries from 14 ministries in the Anambra civil service by folding the name of each ministry, placed it in a container and picked 4 ministries at random. The researcher then approached the director of administration of each of the ministries and sought their permission to administer the questionnaire which they consented to. The researcher with the help of a research assistant explained the essence of the study to the
respondents assuring them of the confidentiality of their responses. It is important to emphasize that only those participants who were present and willingly to respond to the questionnaires were requested to fill the questionnaire. The researcher and her assistant waited patiently for each of the 4 ministries to fill the questionnaire. The exercise lasted for 4 days. A total of 280 questionnaires were distributed i.e. 70 questionnaires per each ministry but only 267 were found useable. The percentage return rate of the filled questionnaires is over 98%.

4.3 Design and Statistics

The researcher employed correlational design while simple regression analysis was used as statistical tool for testing the two hypotheses.

5. RESULTS

Correlation matrix (Table 1) showed that emotional intelligence and gender had a significant correlation with job involvement at \( r (1, 267) = .143, p<.05 \) and \( r (1, 267) = -.279, p<.05 \) respectively.

The model summary as observed in Table 2 indicated that the regression value stand at .316 whereas the R square stand at .100 while the Adjusted R square yielded .093 which indicated 9.3% contribution in the understanding of civil servants job involvement. However, the relevance of this contribution was further tested using beta weight coefficient in the multiple regression.

Also Table 3 confirmed the significance of each independent variable. From the reported beta weight coefficient values, all variables of the study were confirmed as predictors of job involvement of civil servants at B = .149, p<.05 for emotional intelligence and B = -.282, p<.05 for Gender. It is also important to note that emotional intelligence indicated a positive correlation with job involvement implying that employees with high emotional intelligence show greater job involvement than those with low emotional intelligence. While Gender showed a negative correlation implying that males and females differed significantly. This further implies from the coding (males-0 and females-1) that males were less involved than females. Hence being a male or female determines how involved a worker will be in his or her job among civil servants in Awka, Anambra State.

6. DISCUSSION

Past empirical evidence is in line with the findings of this study. For instance, [9], using a total of 230 nurses from casualty ward of Tehran hospital, examined the relationship between emotional intelligence of nurses and job involvement. The result showed that emotional intelligence of nurses and job involvement are significantly correlated to one another. Again, the findings of Najafpour [13] who examined the relationship between the emotional intelligence and job involvement of workers in a manufacturing company in Penang Island revealed that emotional intelligence had a positive relationship with job involvement. Similarly, the study of Ghaderi and Shamsi [12] affirms the findings of this study, by upholding the fact that a direct relationship exists between emotional intelligence and job involvement in their study.

The reason why the result of this hypothesis is in this direction is because people who have high emotional intelligence adapt easily to an environment. They are also goal oriented and are able to discern between different feelings and classify them appropriately. This then shows that civil servants in Anambra State just like other organizations in past works exhibit greater job involvement if there emotional intelligence is high.

This study also showed that gender significantly predicted job involvement of civil servants in Awka, Anambra state. However, this result contradicts the finding of Oguegbe et al. [16] who investigated job involvement of 201 bankers from Onitsha, Anambra state. Their result indicated no significant main effect for gender on job involvement. In the same vein, the result of these

Table 1. Zero order correlation matrix for all study variables: Emotional intelligence and gender on job involvement of civil servants in their work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Intelligence</td>
<td>7.12</td>
<td>11.97</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Involvement</td>
<td>46.37</td>
<td>7.22</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td>-.279</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at \( p<0.05 \)
Table 2. Model summary which shows regression contribution of the predictor variables - emotional intelligence and gender on job involvement of civil servants in Awka

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R square</th>
<th>Adjusted R square</th>
<th>Std. error of the Est.</th>
<th>R square change</th>
<th>F change</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig. F change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.316a</td>
<td>.100</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>6.872</td>
<td>.100</td>
<td>14.68</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Predictor (constant) emotional intelligence and gender, dependent variable: Job Involvement

Table 3. Multiple regression coefficients showing the predictive influence of the variables of the study on job involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized coefficient</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.(constant)</td>
<td>45.995</td>
<td>2.803</td>
<td>16.408</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-4.071</td>
<td>.842</td>
<td>-282</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Intelligence</td>
<td>.090</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>.149</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

findings is not supported by the study of Al-Otaibi [21] on job involvement among white-collar employees in the Kuwait civil service. Using a total of 300 participants, the result of the study revealed that the demographic variables have no effect on job involvement.

From the above discussion, it is observed that gender should not be primarily considered as a yardstick to predict or measure employee job involvement.

7. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study will help to widen the knowledge of researchers and managers about the concept of employee job involvement thereby expanding the frontiers of psychological research. It will also guide human resource managers in selecting employees who are high in factors that predict job involvement (such as emotional intelligence) in order to ensure organizational efficiency and effectiveness. The findings also implied that being a male or female determine how involved one is in his or her job. As such, balanced opportunities should be given to both male and female gender in organizations. It then suffices to say that this study is of great importance to organizations and corporate bodies.

8. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY/FUTURE RESEARCH

Number of participants used for the study might seem small for generalizability to all civil servants in Anambra State and other States in the East. Future researchers should try to use other scales of emotional intelligence and job involvement in order to reaffirm or refute the findings of this study. Again, subsequent research should be widened beyond the scope of this study.

9. CONCLUSION

The study investigated if emotional intelligence and gender predict employee job involvement among civil servants in Awka, Anambra state. The findings of this study showed that emotional intelligence and gender significantly predicted employee job involvement of civil servants in Anambra state. Though the two variables of study predicted job involvement of employees, there is need to further investigate this result as there are studies reviewed in the literature that disagree with some of the findings. Again, employers in work organizations are encouraged to consider the recommendations offered in this study with the view of adopting them to equip their organization for maximum effectiveness. Finally, researchers should consider the suggestions for further research as outlined in this study by the researcher while embarking on new studies.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard written participant consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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