Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Work-Life Balance and Job Stress among Academic Staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of Emotional Intelligence (EQ) on work-life balance and job stress among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. A total of 120 academic staff was purposively selected for the study and responded to the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EQS), Work-Life Balance Scale (WLBS) and Job Stress Questionnaire (JSQ). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. The result showed that there is a significant influence of EQ on work-life balance [t (118) = 18.36, p<.01] and job stress [t (118) = -7.86, p<.01] among the participants. The dimensions of EI of altruism [t (118) = 3.44, p<.01], sportsmanship [t (118) = 2.32, p<.01]; and courtesy [t (118) = 4.01, p<.01] were observed to have significant influence on the work-life balance among the academic staff respectively. There was no significant influence of conscientiousness (a dimension of EQ) on job stress [t (118) = -1.02, p>.05]. Civic virtue (a dimension of EI) [t (118) = -2.54, p<.01] was also observed to significantly influence job stress among the academic staff in OAU, Ile Ife, Osun State. The authors recommended training programs in emotional intelligence for academic staff of educational institutions.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Work-Life Balance, Job Stress, Academic staff.

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century is an era of stress (Sirin, 2007). Individuals face job stress in their organisation and daily lives due to globalisation, information technology revolution, and speed of life (Sirin, 2007). The most important effects of these can be seen in the business world, and they can manifest themselves as changes that organisations make in their structures, strategies, activities, and technologies (Sirin, 2007). Constantly changing organisations impose new roles and duties on their employees, which affect their work-life balance. The employees who want to handle new roles and responsibilities need to have

efficiency in intelligence quotient (IQ) and efficiency in emotional quotient (EQ) in the processes of decision making and problem-solving (Sirin, 2007). A completely stress-free life is impossible, and stress becomes a characteristic of human existence. Individuals have used various methods to handle stress, including their intelligence, especially their emotional Intelligence (Sirin, 2007).

It is generally considered that employees with higher Emotional Intelligence (EQ) will have a higher work-life balance, reflecting in the level of stress they experience at work (Goleman, 1995). This is because employees with higher emotional intelligence can cope with consequences that may arise from stress. In contrast, those with less emotional intelligence will not overcome stressful situations (Goleman, 1995). In addition, in a group setting, employees with higher emotional intelligence will be able to influence the emotions of others in such a manner that they will be able to maintain a satisfying personal and professional life (Goleman, 1995).

According to Bradberry and Greaves, (2009), Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is the ability to recognise and understand one's emotions and the emotions of others, and having the ability to make use of this awareness to manage one's behaviour and relationships. EQ is also defined as the capacity to recognise our feelings and that of others and using these recognised feelings to motivate and manage our emotions and that of others in every relationship (Goleman, 1998). EQ is vital for both self and relationship management (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). Emotional Intelligence (EQ) allows the employee to think more creatively and use his emotions to solve problems. EQ is an essential set of psychological abilities related to work-life balance and life success (Goleman, 1995).

Pressures at work can bring about stress. Job stress can be a real problem to the organisation as well as to the workers. Job stress can manifest itself in numerous ways. A range of somatic and mental ailments such as tension headaches, allergies, back problems, colds and flu, depression (Arroba & James, 1990), anxiety, irritation, tension and sleeplessness (Cooper, Cooper & Eaker, 1988) and may lead to health-compromising coping strategies such as increased consumption of drugs (Quick, Nelson & Quick, 1990). Chronic exposure to stress may have even dire consequences such as cancer, heart disease, respiratory illnesses, strokes, arthritis, ulcers and high blood pressure (Quick, Nelson & Quick, 1990; Cooper, Cooper & Eaker, 1988).

However, all individuals do not develop such problems in the face of stress. However, this study examines the role of emotional intelligence on work-life balance and job stress (Quick, Nelson & Quick, 1990). Also, several researchers have evaluated the efficacy of training programs to reduce occupational stress (Kagan, Kagan & Watson, 1995; Lindquist & Cooper, 1999; Sharkey & Sharples, 2003). However, none of these programs included strategies to deal with the emotions that arise from feelings of stress. Research suggests that stress and emotion are related constructs that do not occur independently from one another. The experience of stress is the manifestation of negative emotions triggered by danger, threats or challenges (Slaski & Cartwright, 2003). The vital role that emotions play in the occupational stress process is only just being recognised. As emotions are challenging to measure in the workplace, they have generally been ignored in organisational research (Slaski & Cartwright, 2003).

In this study, the Spill-over theory and the transactional theory of stress and coping are briefly reviewed to explain work-life balance and job stress, respectively and how these relate to EQ. The Spillover theory has its origin in 1890, where the English Economist Alfred Marshall developed a theory of knowledge spillovers which was later extended by Kenneth Arrow (1962) and Paul Romer (1986). The Spillover theory put forth the relationship between work and family. Several researchers suggested that workers carry the emotions, attitudes, skills, and behaviours they establish at work into their family life (Belsky, 1985; Kelly & Voydanoff, 1985) and vice-versa (Belsky, Perry-Jenkins & Crouter, 1985). Spillover can be positive or negative (Alfred Marshall, 1890). The spillover model emphasises the influence of one domain on the other. The impact can be positive or negative, and it may be bi-directional (Lambert, 1990). In other words, both the negative and positive experiences in both domains tend to influence the other domain (Zedeck, 1992). For instance, the emotions, attitudes, skills, and behaviours established in one domain can spill over into the different domains (Piotrkowski, 1979, Kelly & Voydanoff, 1985). The majority of studies mention the studies have focused on the work-family conflict and shown positive relationships between job stressors and work-family conflict. Frone, Russel and Cooper (1992), as well as Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), point out the importance of distinguishing between workfamily conflict (feeling that work responsibilities lead to neglecting family) and family-work conflict (feeling that family responsibility leads to neglecting work). Research on the work and non-work relationship regarding stress shows that the spillover of fatigue/stress from one domain to the other is common (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Usually, work intrudes on nonwork life rather than the reverse (e.g., Frone, 2003; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

The transactional theory of stress and coping, developed by Lazarus and Folkman (Lazarus, 1966), has been mainly instrumental in shaping stress and coping research over the past five decades. According to Lazarus and Folkman's transactional theory of stress and coping, individuals constantly appraise stimuli within their environment. This appraisal process generates emotions. When stimuli are appraised as threatening, challenging, or harmful (i.e., stressors), the result of ant distress initiates coping strategies to manage emotions or attempt to address the stressor itself directly. Coping processes produce an outcome (i.e., a change to the person-environment relationship), which is reappraised as favourable, unfavourable, or unresolved. Favourable resolution of stressors elicits positive emotions, while unresolved or unfavourable resolutions elicit distress, provoking the individual to consider further coping options to attempt to resolve the stressor (Folkman, 1997; Folkman & Lazarus, 1985; Folkman and Lazarus, 1988; Lazarus, DeLongis, Folkman, and Gruen, 1985; Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). According to this perspective, stress is defined as exposure to stimuli appraised as harmful, threatening, or challenging, exceeding the individual's capacity to cope (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). As noted, the primary features of the original theory are (a) cognitive appraisal and (b) coping.

According to Shukla, Adhikari and Ray (2005), EQ improves effective work-life balance and reduces job stress. EQ is also associated with positive organisational outcomes such as; enhancement of job performance, increase in organisational citizenship behaviour, reduction in counterproductive workplace behaviour, reduced levels of absenteeism, improved quality of service, reduction in turnover, increased participation in decision-making, enhanced maturity in expressing resentment. It also enhances morale (Shukla, Adhikari & Ray, 2005).

Researchers have explained why emotional intelligence might affect employees' job stress (Hafezi, Eftekhar & Shojaei, 2011; Maki, Shafi, & Sudani, 2010; Barriball, Fitzpatrick & Roberts, 2011) constructively. Kafetsios and Zampetakis (2008) explained that emotional awareness and regulatory processes associated with EQ benefit people's social relationships, thus reducing job stress. Again being aware of one's own emotions can regulate stress and negative emotions and lead to better performance at work (Kafetsios & Zampetakis, 2008).

Research Objectives

The main study objective is to examine the influence of emotional intelligence on work-life balance and job stress among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State. The specific objectives are to:

assess the influence of altruism on work-life balance among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University

determine the influence of sportsmanship on work-life balance among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University

assess the influence of courtesy on work-life balance among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University

determine the influence of conscientiousness on job stress among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University

determine the civic virtue on job stress among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University

Methods and Materials

Research Design

The study was a survey, which employed Ex-post facto design. The independent variable was Emotional Intelligence (EQ) which is measured under five dimensions (Altruism, Sportsmanship, Conscientiousness, Courtesy and Civic Virtue), while the dependent variables were Work-Life Balance and Job Stress.

Research Participants.

The targeted population of this study consists of all lecturers working in OAU, Ile Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. The total numbers of lecturers are 1264 (Information gotten from OAU, Ile Ife online profile). The lecturers include both male and female.

Measures

Three research instruments were used in the data collection of the study. These are the Emotional Intelligence Scale, Work-Life Balance scale and the Job Stress Scale

The Emotional Intelligence Scale (EQS) is a 50-item scale based on Daniel Goleman's Emotional Intelligence book of 1995. The scale was developed by the National Health Service (NHS), London. The questionnaire is made up of questions that cut across the components of Emotional Intelligence, which includes; Self-awareness, managing emotions,

motivating oneself, empathy and social skill. The scale is being adopted for measuring respondents' perceptions of unstructured activities or spontaneous demonstrations that lead to perceived emotional conduct on the job. EQS is measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD). EQS has acceptable psychometric properties. In this study, a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86 was reported for the scale.

The Work-Life Balance Scale (WLBS) is a 45-item scale developed to measure work-life balance (Whitten, 2017). The scale was designed to assess and heighten the awareness of the behaviours that are affecting work-life balance. The instrument also provided a means to rate the collective behaviour and present a score that can help give insight into achieving work-life balance. WLBS has a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.77

Job Stress Questionnaire (JSQ) is a 25-item stress-related questionnaire developed by the International Stress Management Association (ISMA) (2016) JSQ measures the specific factors of Job Stress and evaluates the overall job stress factors. This approach to job stress includes factors that might contribute to fatigue in the lecturers. It contains 25 items of stress-related questions. In this study, a Cronbach's alpha of 0.81 was reported for the scale.

Method of Data Analysis

The obtained data in this study were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistics using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21.0. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise collected data such as mean, frequency distribution, standard deviation. In contrast, inferential statistics (independent sample t-test) was used to test the hypotheses.

RESULTS

Frequency Distribution of Respondents Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The result revealed that 62 (51.7%) of the respondents were male while 58 (48.3%) were female. 11 (9.2%) of the respondents were within the age bracket below 25 years; 53 (35.3%) of the respondents were within the age bracket 30-39 years; 43 (28.7%) of the respondents were within the age bracket 40-49 years; 12 (8.0%) of the respondents were within age bracket above 50-59 years while 2 (1.3%) of the respondents were within the age bracket 60 years and above. 50 (33.3%) of the respondents were single; 85 (56.7%) were married; 11 (7.3%) of the respondents were divorced; 2 (1.3%) of the respondents were separated while 1 (0.7%) of the respondent was a widow or widower respectively. 59 (39.3%) of the respondents were Christians; 73 (48.7%) were Muslims, while 18 (12.0%) were of other religions, not specified in the study. 21 (14.0) of the respondents were holders of bachelor's degree; 31 (20.7%) of the respondents were holders of postgraduate diploma, 60 (40.0%) were holders of master's degree; 40 (33.3%) were holders of PhD while only 40 (33.3%) of the respondents were holders of Professional Certificate. 43 (28.7%) of the respondents had worked between 0-5 years; 57 (38.0%) of the respondents had worked between 6-10 years; 30 (20.0%) of the respondents had worked between 11-15 years; 10 (6.7%) of the respondents had worked between 16-20 years; 5 (3.3%) of the respondents had worked between 21-25 years;5 (3.3%) had worked between 26-30 years while no respondent had worked between 31 years and above.

Test of Hypotheses

The first hypothesis stated that there is a significant influence of EQ on the work-life balance among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State. The hypothesis was tested by t-test for Independent Measures, and the result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1:

A Summary Table of T-Test for Independent Measures showing the significant difference of Emotional Intelligence on Work-Life Balance among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State.

Emotional Intelligence	N	Mean	SD	df	t	P
Higher	57	90.54	37.84			
Lower	63	72.66	29.36	118	18.36	<.01

The result in Table 1 revealed that there was a significant influence of emotional intelligence on the work-life balance among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife Osun State [t (118) = 18.36, p<.01]. The mean \pm SD show that participants with higher EQ 90.54 \pm 37.84 had better work-life balance than their counterparts with lower EQ (72.66 \pm 29.36). Therefore, Hypothesis one was supported by the result of the study.

The second hypothesis states that there is a significant influence of Emotional Intelligence (EQ) on job stress among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State. The hypothesis was tested by t-test for Independent Measures, and the result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2:
A Summary Table of T-Test for Independent Measures Showing Emotional Intelligence on Job Stress among Academic Staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State

Emotional Intelligence	N	Mean	SD	df	t	P
Higher	57	15.34	7.87			
Lower	63	19.75	9.52	118	-7.86	<.01

The result summarised in Table 2 revealed that there was a significant influence of emotional intelligence on job stress among academic staff in OAU [t (118) = -7.86, p<.01]. The mean \pm SD of participants with higher EQ (15.34 ± 7.87) was lower than that of the participants with lower EQ (19.75 ± 9.52) . This result suggests that academic staff with higher EQ had lower job stress than their lower EQ counterparts. Therefore, Hypothesis two was supported by the result of the study.

The third hypothesis states that there is a significant influence of altruism (a component of EQ) on work-life balance among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State. The hypothesis was tested by t-test for Independent Measures. The result is shown in Table 3.

Table 3:
A Summary Table of t-Test for Independent Measures Showing Altruism on Work-Life
Balance among Academic Staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State

Altruism	N	Mean	SD	df	t	P	
Higher	69	4.76	1.54				
Lower	51	2.38	0.78	118	3.44	<.01	

The result summarised in Table 3 revealed that there was a significant influence of altruism on work-life balance among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife Osun State [t (118) = 3.44, p<.01]. The mean \pm SD show that participants with higher altruism (4.76 \pm 1.54) were higher than those with lower altruism (2.38 \pm 0.78). This result suggests that academic staff with higher altruism had better work-life balance than their lower altruism counterparts. The result of the study supports this hypothesis.

The fourth hypothesis states that there is sportsmanship (a component of EQ) on the work-life balance of the academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State. The hypothesis was tested by t-Test for Independent Measures. The result is shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4:

A summary table of t-test for independent measures showing the influence of sportsmanship on work-life balance among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State.

Sportsmanship	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Р
Higher	53	3.73	1.12			
Lower	67	2.02	0.51	118	2.32	<.01

The result in table 4 above revealed that there was a significant influence of sportsmanship (a component of emotional intelligence) on work-life balance among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife Osun State [t (118) = 2.32, p<.01]. The mean \pm SD score shows that participants with higher sportsmanship (3.73 ± 1.12) were higher than those with lower sportsmanship (2.02 ± 0.51) . This result suggests that academic staff with higher sportsmanship had better work-life balance than their lower sportsmanship counterparts. The result of the study supports this hypothesis.

Hypothesis five states that there is a significant influence of courtesy (dimension of EQ) on work-life balance among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State. The hypothesis was tested with the t-Test for Independent Measures. The result is shown in Table 5.

Table 5:

A summary table of t-test for independent measures of courtesy on work-life balance among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State

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Courtesy	N	Mean	SD	df	t	P
Higher	72	4.88	1.76			
Lower	48	2.56	0.93	118	4.01	<.01

The result summarised in Table 5 revealed that there was a significant influence of courtesy dimension of EQ on the work-life balance among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife Osun State [t (118) = 4.01, p<.01]. The mean \pm SD score shows that participants with higher courtesy (4.88 \pm 1.76) were higher than those with lower courtesy (2.56 \pm 0.93). This result suggests that academic staff with higher courtesy had better work-life balance than their lower Courtesy counterparts. The result of the study supports this hypothesis.

Hypothesis Six states that there is a significant influence of conscientiousness on job stress among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State. The hypothesis was tested by t-Test for Independent Measures. The result is shown in Table 6.

Table 6
A Summary Table of t-Test for Independent Measures Showing the Influence of Conscientiousness on Job Stress among Academic Staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State

Conscientiousness	N	Mean	SD	df	t	P
Higher	60	3.14	0.77			
Lower	50	3.98	0.86	118	-1.02	>.05

The result in table 6 above revealed that there was no significant influence of conscientiousness dimension of EQ on job stress among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife Osun State [t (118) = -1.02, p>.05]. The mean \pm SD shows that participants with higher conscientiousness (3.14 \pm 0.77) were similar to those with lower conscientiousness (3.98 \pm 0.86). This result suggests that academic staff with higher conscientiousness had similar job stress to their counterparts with lower conscientiousness levels. The result of the study does not support this hypothesis.

Hypothesis seven states that there is a civic virtue (a component of emotional intelligence) on job stress among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State. The hypothesis was tested by t-Test for Independent Measures. The result is shown in Table 7.

Table 7:

A Summary Table of t-Test for Independent Measures Showing the Influence of Civic Virtue on Job Stress among Academic Staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State

Civic Virtue	N	Mean	SD	df	t	P	
Higher	65	4.58	1.54				
Lower	55	3.12	0. 96	118	-2.54	<.01	

The result summarised in Table 7 revealed that there was a significant influence of civic virtue component of emotional intelligence on job stress among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife Osun State [t (118) = -2.54, p<.01]. The mean \pm SD score of participants with higher Civic Virtue (4.58 ± 1.54) was higher than that of the participants with lower Civic Virtue (3.12 ± 0.96) . This result suggests that academic staff with higher Civic Virtue had higher job stress than their counterpart with lower Civic Virtue. The result of the study supports this hypothesis

DISCUSSIONS

The result of the study supported our first hypothesis. The finding indicated that EQ significantly influenced work-life balance among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State. The result showed that academic staff with higher EQ levels reported a more favourable work-life balance than those with lower EQ. The finding was supported by Sakalle, Dixit, Kaur and Nagendra (2017). Our study results revealed a correlation between Emotional Intelligence and employees' work-life balance and that EQ plays a crucial role in maintaining work-life balance.

The result of our study equally supported the second hypothesis. The finding indicated that emotional intelligence significantly influenced job stress among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State. The result showed that academic staff with higher EQ levels reported a low rate of job stress than academic staff with lower EQ. The finding was supported by findings that negatively relate to lower job stress (Hafezi, Eftekhar & Shojaei, 2011; Maki, Shafi, Sudani, 2010; Barriball, Fitzpatrick & Roberts, 2011). The result of the study revealed that emotional intelligence has a significant impact on job stress.

The result of the study supported the third hypothesis. The finding showed that the altruism component of EQ significantly influenced work-life balance among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State. The result indicated that the altruistic academic staff reported a more favourable work-life balance than academic staff that are less altruistic. The study conducted by Kerr, Smith and Feldman (2004) supported the findings.

Our research findings also supported the fourth hypothesis. The result showed that sportsmanship being a component of emotional intelligence significantly influenced work-life balance among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State. The finding indicated that academic staff who exhibited sportsmanship behaviour reported a more favourable work-life balance than academic staff who exhibited lower sportsmanship behaviour. The discovery was supported by the study conducted by Juyal and Dandona (2012)

Furthermore, our findings show that courtesy as a dimension of EQ significantly influenced work-life balance among the participants. The result indicated that academic staff who showed courtesy towards others reported a more favourable work-life balance than those who did not. This finding supports a similar study by Salarzehi, Naroei, and Sin (2011). The result opined that courtesy would have a significant impact on work-life balance.

The sixth hypothesis showed that conscientiousness failed to influence job stress among the participants significantly. The result indicated that the levels of conscientiousness do not influence job stress among academic staff. In other words, both high and low level conscientious academic staff have similar job stress. However, these findings are contrary to that of Salarzehi et al. (2011).

Finally, the seventh hypothesis showed that the civic virtue component of EQ has a significant influence on job stress among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State. The finding indicated that academic staff with a higher level of civic virtue reported low job stress than academic staff with lower civic virtue levels. This finding supports Tambe and Shanker (2015). This result suggests a positive relationship between civic virtue and job stress.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that there was a significant influence of EQ on the work-life balance of academic staff in OAU. That EQ also has a significant influence on their job stress. The dimensions of EQ (altruism, sportsmanship and courtesy) significantly influence the work-life balance among the academic staff. The authors also concluded that there is no significant influence of conscientiousness on job stress. Still, civic virtue significantly influenced job stress among academic staff in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State.

In light of the results mentioned above, the following are recommended: Training programs that will promote an organisational culture that supports work-life balance, hence reducing the work-life conflict for academic staff should be developed. Employers and employees should be on the same page to attain solutions supporting flexible work time. Adopting modern practices to maximise productivity without negatively affecting employees' psychosocial wellness. Organisations should take the initiative through workshops, conferences and seminars, to improve their employees' emotional intelligence.

Conflicts of Interest: Authors declare that no conflict of interest exists.

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