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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SELF-EFFICACY AS PREDICTORS OF LIFE SATISFACTION AMONG POLICE OFFICERS

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Abstract: *This study investigated emotional intelligence and self-efficacy as predictors of life satisfaction among Police Officers in Enugu Urban. Four hundred and twenty-six (426) participants comprising 357 males and 69 females between the ages of 18 to 60 years ($M = 40.85$, $SD = 11.79$) were sampled using Multi-stage sampling. Wong and Law (2002) 14-item Emotional Intelligence Scale, Chen, Gully and Eden (2001) 8 – item New General Self Efficacy (NGSE) Scale and Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985) 9 – item Life Satisfaction Scale were administered for data collection. Cross-sectional survey design was used and multiple regression statistical tests was used for data analysis. The results revealed that emotional intelligence and self-efficacy jointly and independently predicted life satisfaction at $p < .05$. The findings were discussed in line with previous related studies. It was concluded that in order to enhance life satisfaction among police officers, candidates should be assessed and those high on emotional intelligence and self-efficacy considered at the point of recruitment and selection.*

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Self-Efficacy, Life Satisfaction, Police Officers

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INTRODUCTION

Life satisfaction is the way a person perceives how his or her life has been and how they feel about where it is going in the future (Seligman, 2002). It is a measure of well being and may be assessed in terms of mood, satisfaction with relationships with others and with achieved goals, self concepts and self perceived ability to cope with daily life (Seligman, 2002). It is having a favorable attitude towards one's life as a whole rather than the current feelings (Seligman & Csikzentinihalyi, 2000). According to Judge and Watanabe (2003) life satisfaction can reflect experiences that have affected a person in a positive way. These experiences have the ability to motivate people to pursue and reach their goals. Studies (e.g. Jex & Bliese, 1999) have shown that emotional intelligence and self-efficacy both construct of cognitive processes that are usually oriented towards the reaching of goals and the perception of these goals influence how people perceive their lives. Higher self-efficacy is linked to higher life satisfaction whereas lower self-efficacy is related to symptoms of depression (Bailey & Stone, 2007). Chang, Asakawa and Sanna (2001) proposed that the overall life satisfaction comes from within an individual based on

individual's emotional intelligence, self efficacy, personal values and what he/she holds important. For some it is emotional intelligence, while for others it is self-efficacy, either way it varies from one person to another (Chang, Asakawa & Sanna, 2001). Emotional intelligence is the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feeling and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions (Mayer & Salovey, 1990). According to Zhou and George (2003) the first factor of emotional intelligence is the ability to properly determine and express one's own emotions as well as to be sympathetic, appraise and express emotions of others. Every individual's ability varies in precisely identifying, appraising and expressing their own emotions as well as the emotions experienced by others. Some people are attentive of the feelings they experience and can express their emotions, whereas, some people cannot express their feelings and emotions or they are unaware of their emotions (Zhou & George, 2003). For adjusting in changing situations, emotions play an important role in the effective development of information for the individuals who are high on emotional intelligence. On the contrary, individuals with low emotional intelligence cannot effectively use their emotions to aid cognitive processes and may find it difficult to coordinate among how they feel and also do (Zhou & George, 2003). Emotional intelligence plays a major role in improving performance at work (Cha, Cichy & Kim, 2009) as well as achievements in personal life Goleman (1995).

Self-efficacy as another factor influencing life satisfaction refers to beliefs in one's own capacity to organize and execute the courses of action acquired to manage prospective situations (Bandura, 2001). Researchers (e.g. Jex & Bliese, 1999) have shown that one's belief in efficacy function is an important determinant of motivation, affect, thought, action and can make difference people's way of thinking feeling and acting (Schwarzer & Aallum, 2008). Thus, with respect to feelings, a low sense of self efficacy is associated with depression, anxiety, helplessness and also harbor pessimistic thoughts about their performance and personal development (Schwarzer & Aallum, 2008). In contrast, a strong sense of belief in one's self-efficacy facilitates cognitive and executive processes in multiple contexts, influencing for example organizational decision making (Bandura, 2001) and confidence in one's coping skills (Maibach & Murphy, 2005). Self efficacious workers also recover quickly from setbacks and ultimately are likely to achieve their personal goals (Nande & Rothman, 2006) and better health, better self development and greater social integration (Bandura & Lock, 2003). Jex and Bliese (1999) using two self-efficacy measures (generalized individual and collective), found that self-efficacy improves the relationship between certain areas of life satisfaction such as economic standing, amount of education, experiences, people's residence and especially a strong positive relationship between generalized self-efficacy and life satisfaction. According to Bandura (1997) perceived self-efficacy is people's belief about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives and produces personal accomplishment which invariably leads to life satisfaction (Bandura, 2006) while those low on self-efficacy slacken their efforts and give up quickly in the face of difficulties, and are prone to dissatisfaction (Bandura, 1998, Nande &

Rothman, 2006). Judge, Locke and Durham (1997) have hypothesized that personality variables such as self-efficacy and emotional stability are related to people's predisposition to be satisfied with life and people prone to be satisfied with their life in general have high self-efficacy (Judge & Watanbe, 2003). In the Nigeria Police Force, in spite of the efforts and hard work by the police officers to prove their competence and commitment, they are stagnated in one rank for more than fifteen years especially moving from junior cadre to senior cadre, neglecting job experience and gallantry services as a tool for promotion into the senior cadre. Due to the regimental pattern in force service, officers also are not allowed to participate in the decision making despite the fact that they are the crime fighters who do the bulk of the work in the police force such as court duties, road block, distress response, special duties, and sentry, guard and night duties/shifts. In addition, they are the ones that perform extra duties in unsafe environment and adverse working conditions. All these variables contribute to the officers' stressful condition in the police force making the officers to be dissatisfied with their life. Moreover, there are police officers who are retired, but are satisfied with life due to the fact that their retirement benefits have not been fully paid or not paid at all. However, there are other police officers who have had same experience yet satisfied with life, hence this present study to find out if emotional intelligence and self-efficacy as personality variables could be related to life satisfaction among police officers. Thus this present study hypothesized that emotional intelligence and self-efficacy will jointly and independently predict life satisfaction among police officers in Enugu.

RELATED LITERATURE

According to Bar-on (2002), emotional intelligence is an array of inter-related emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that influence one's ability to recognize, understand and manage emotions, to relate with others, to adapt to change and solve problems of a personal and interpersonal nature and to efficiently cope with daily demands, challenges and pressures (Bar-On, 2006) which could lead to life satisfaction. Bandura (1986) in social cognitive theory noted people observe their own performance which followed by a judgmental process that leads to a self-response such as self-efficacy causing life satisfaction. Studies (e.g. Goleman, 1995, Abraham, 2000) demonstrated positive relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. Similarly, emotional intelligence predicted peoples' level of life satisfaction after fifteen years (Rice, 1999) because people high on emotional intelligence are more adaptable to stressful events (Nikolaou & Tsaousis, 2002). And emotional intelligence could create a pleasant workplace; enhance employees' life satisfaction, efficient management and organizational development. In contrast, emotional intelligence was negatively related to life satisfaction (Sy, Tram & O'Hara, 2006). In a series of coordinated experimental and individual differences studies, Frederickson, Tudgade, Waugh and Larkin (2003) found a significant relationship between self-efficacy and life satisfaction, in that highly self-efficacious individuals exhibited faster and higher psychological and emotional well-being. Research also indicated that self-efficacious individuals are better equipped to deal with the dissatisfactions in a constantly changing workplace environment, as they are open to new

experiences, are flexible to changing demands, and show more emotional stability when faced with adversity (Frederickson, Tugade, Waugh & Larkin, 2003). Ilardi Leone, Kasser and Ryan (1993) in a meta-analysis found significant correlations between self-efficacy and life satisfaction. Judge and Bono (2001) also found a significant relationship between self-efficacy and life satisfaction ($r = .26$). Thus, emotional intelligence and self-efficacy have been related to life satisfaction but no literature has shown emotional intelligence and self-efficacy as joint predictors of life satisfaction among Nigerian police officers, hence this present study.

METHOD

Participants

A total of 426 participants comprising 357 male and 69 female police officers between the ages of 18 to 60 years ($M = 40.85$; $SD = 11.79$) were drawn from from nine (9) Police Formations in Enugu Urban (B' Operations, A Department, State CID, Area Command, Central Police Station, Ogui Police Station, Uwani Police Station, Mopol 3 and Special Anti Robbery Squad) using Multi-stage sampling.

Instrument

Three scales including Wong & Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS), New General Self Efficacy (NGSE) Scale and Life Satisfaction Questionnaire 9 (LISAT -9) were used for data collection. Emotional intelligence was measured using Wong & Law (2002) 16 - item Emotional Intelligence Scale. The WLEIS was designed as a short measure of emotional intelligence for use in organizational research. It measured four dimensions (self emotion appraisal, emotion appraisal of others, and use of emotion and regulation of emotion). Wong and Law (2002) reported Cronbach Alpha of 0.93 as an index of the scale's internal consistency. The present researchers in a pilot study using Nigerian sample reported Cronbach's Alpha of 0.77, and Mean = 50.90, $SD = 8.52$, $V = 72.53$ showing that the instrument's reliability in Nigeria. The scale originally contained 16 items, but after the pilot study, items 11 and 14 were found to have low inter-item correlation ($< .2$) and were removed from the scale, thus in accordance with Nunally (1970) that any item less than .2 should be discarded. Chen, Gully and Eden (2001) 8-item New General Self Efficacy Scale measured self-efficacy. The scale contains 8 items designed to measure the participants' perceived level of self- efficacy. Chen, Gully and Eden (2001) reported inter-item correlations ranging from .32 to .86 with Cronbach Alpha of 0.91 as measure of internal consistency. The present researchers in a pilot study using Nigerian sample reported Cronbach Alpha of 0.82 (Mean = 26.21, $SD = 6.43$, $V = 41.30$). The response categories on each self-efficacy items ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree with numerical values of 1 to 5 assigned to each response. The higher the score the higher the self efficacy while the lower the score, the lower the self efficacy. Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985) 9-item measured Life Satisfaction. Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985) reported Cronbach Alpha of 0.60. The present researchers in pilot study using Nigerian sample reported Cronbach Alpha of 0.82 (Mean = 29.00, $SD = 6.58$, $V = 43.25$). The instrument was scored on a 6 scale point of very dissatisfying =1, dissatisfying =2,

Rather dissatisfying =3, Rather satisfying =4, satisfying =5, and very satisfying = 6. Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985) reported Cronbach Alpha of 0.60. The present researchers in pilot study using Nigerian sample reported Cronbach Alpha of 0.82 (Mean = 29.00, SD = 6.58, V = 43.25).

Procedure

A total of 500 copies of the questionnaire were administered within one month. This administration was carried out in nine (9) randomly selected Police Formations in Enugu urban. The formations are B’ Operations, A Department, State CID, Area Command, Central Police Station, Ogui Police Station, Uwani Police Station, Mopol 3 and Special Anti Robbery Squad (SARS). Permission was sought from the Commissioner of Police Enugu State Command. The researchers assisted by the Divisional Police Officers (DPOs) in each of the selected formations trained one Officer to serve as research assistant in each formation. The questionnaire was shared to the participants and instructions given. They were allowed to go home with the copy and return it on a later date. 458 copies (91.6%) of the questionnaire were returned and 32 copies (6.4%) were discarded due to errors in completion, hence, 426 (85.2%) copies of the questionnaire were scored and analyzed in testing the hypothesis.

Design/Statistics

Cross-sectional survey design was used. Multiple regression was used as statistical test for data analysis.

Results

Table I: Summary table of Multiple Regressions on Emotional Intelligence and Self-efficacy as Predictors of Life Satisfaction among Police Officers

Criterion Variable	Predictor Variables	B	Beta	T	P	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p
Life Satisfaction	Emotional Intelligence	-.53	-.31	-6.60	<.05	0.47	0.22	0.21	58.69	<.05
	Self-efficacy	-1.33	-.50	-10.54	<.05					

According to table I, emotional intelligence and self-efficacy jointly predicted life satisfaction among police officers $R^2 = .22$, $F(2, 425) = 58.69$, $p < .05$ level of significance. These results indicated that there was a significant relationship between the predictor variables (emotional intelligence and self-efficacy) and criterion variable (life satisfaction), $R = .47$. Emotional intelligence and self-efficacy jointly accounted for 21% of the variation in life satisfaction (Adjusted $R^2 = .21$). Moreover, as shown in the table, the regression coefficients for emotional intelligence (b) $-.53$, $t = -6.60$, $p < .05$ and self-efficacy (b) -1.33 , $t = -10.54$, $p < .05$. These standardized coefficients also indicated that emotional intelligence and self-efficacy independently predicted life satisfaction with self-efficacy as the stronger predictor.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study revealed that the hypothesis tested which stated that emotional intelligence and self-efficacy will jointly and independently predict life satisfaction among police officers was confirmed. This indicated that emotional intelligence and self-efficacy of police officers jointly predicted life satisfaction. Hence, Police Officers expression of life satisfaction was associated with their being emotionally intelligent and self-efficacious. This finding is in congruence with previous studies (e.g. Judge, 1993, Judge & Watanabe, 2003, Goleman, 1995, Abraham, 2000, Law & Wong, 2008) which found emotional intelligence a significant predictor of life satisfaction. The significance of emotional intelligence as a predictor of life satisfaction in this study could be explained using Bar-on theory (2002) which stated that emotional intelligence is an array of competencies and skills that influence the individual's ability to be successful in coping with environmental demands and pressures. Moreover, the finding is in line with Tudgade and Frederickson (2004) study which found individuals with higher level of self-efficacy to be more likely to experience life satisfaction, more confident in specific tasks (self-efficacy) and able to bounce back (Snyder, 2000). This gives credence to social cognitive theory which stated that pride, satisfaction and sense of accomplishment influence behavior (Bandura, 1986) and people with high self-efficacy have higher aspiration and greater success than those with lower self efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The prediction of life satisfaction by emotional intelligence and self-efficacy among police officers has practical implications for recruitment, selection, placement, motivation, job commitment and satisfaction of police personnel. Following this outcome, therefore, it is important to assess candidates on emotional intelligence and self-efficacy at the point of recruitment and selection. This assessment will enable the selection of candidates who are high on emotional intelligence and self-efficacy, hence resulting in life satisfaction which could enhance motivation, job satisfaction, job commitment and possibly productivity of the Nigerian police.

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