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Impact of Emotional Intelligence and Job Boredom Proneness on Counterproductive Work Behaviour

Joe-Akunne Chiamaka O.*, Oguegbe Tochukwu M., Okonkwo Kizito I.

Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

Abstract

This study is based on Emotional Intelligence Dimensions and Job Boredom Proneness as Predictors of Counterproductive Work Behaviour among local government employees. Two hundred and thirty-seven (237) workers from Awka South local government area, served as participants in this study. The participants were selected through accidental sampling technique. The ages of the participants ranged from 26 to 61 years, with a mean age of 36.31 years and standard deviation of 7.95. Three scales were used in this study; they include 56 item Emotional Intelligence scale, 33 item counterproductive work behavior checklist and 28 item job boredom scale**.** Hierarchical multiple linear regression was used as a statistical tool to analyse the data gathered. The result indicated that the first hypothesis which stated that Emotional Intelligence dimensions will predict counterproductive work behaviour among workers was partially confirmed because only three dimensions of emotional intelligence namely self-awareness (β = - .14, t = - 1.78, P < .05), self-control (β = - .11, t = - 1.36, P < .05) and self-motivation (β = - .18, t = - 2.48, P < .05) predicted counterproductive work behaviour while the remaining two empathy and social skills did not predict counterproductive work behaviour. The second hypothesis which stated that Job boredom proneness will predict counterproductive work behaviour among workers was confirmed at β = .34; t = 6.55, P<.05. Results were discussed and recommendations were made.

Keywords

Emotional Intelligence, Job Boredom, Counterproductive Work Behaviour

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1. Introduction

The issue of counterproductive work behaviour cannot be overemphasised in some Nigerian organizations. This is based on the premise that counter productive work behaviour among workers is one of the factors that are suspected to be among the major causes of poor organizational performance. It is like an erosion menace, which if left uncontrolled in some of our organizations, has the potentials to eat deep into the organizational proficiencies and bring such organizations to a defunct state. To this effect, Kanten and Ulker (2013) added that counterproductive work behaviours are directly harmful to the organization or to other individuals in the organization and can range from relatively minor to very serious problem. As a result of its pervasive nature, the concept (counterproductive work behaviour), in recent years has generated high interest among organizational researchers and practitioners. To buttress this Muafi (2011) stated that counterproductive work behaviour has always been an interesting topic to be observed by both academicians and practitioners. He added that the behaviour is a very serious problem in manufacturing organizations. For instance, billions of dollars have been wasted on counterproductive work behaviour (Omar, 2011). Due to its costly and harmful consequences, Vardi and Weitz (2004), suggested that more studies are needed to understand the determinants of

* Corresponding author
E-mail address: co.joe-akunne@unizik.edu.ng (Joe-Akunne C. O.), dephaniex@yahoo.com (Joe-Akunne C. O.)

counterproductive behaviour at the workplace. In reaction to this suggestion, this present study is aimed at exploring some organizational factors that are likely to predispose some government employees (local government employees) to such maladaptive workplace behaviours.

Counterproductive work behaviour (CWB) refers to wilful behaviours by employees that have the potential to harm an organization, its members, or both (Spector & Fox, 2005). It has been investigated under various labels, including workplace deviance (Bennett & Robinson, 2003) and antisocial behaviour (Giacolone & Greenberg, 1997). It is also seen as an occupational crime that may vary along a continuum of severity, from minor acts such as embarrassing co-workers and leaving early, to serious acts, such as sabotage and theft (Kwok, Au & Ho, 2005). It is seen as an element of job performance and includes phenomena such as theft, property destruction, misuse of information, unsafe behaviour, poor attendance, and poor quality work (Idiakheua, & Obetoh, 2012). Also, an act can be a workplace deviance if it violates the major rules of organizational life (Spector & Fox, 2005). This includes absenteeism, abusing sick day privileges, abusing drugs and alcohol, filing fake accident claims, sabotaging, breaking organizations' rules, withholding effort, stealing, taking long breaks, working slowly, harassing other employees and hiding needed resources (Abdul, 2008).

Counterproductive work behaviour is harmful for the school and students in all its forms, whether it is overt or covert. Therefore, for such behaviour to be controlled, its antecedents need to be known and shared. This can be achieved through empirical investigation. When this is done the problem of counter productive work behaviour will be ameliorated because problem known and shared is problem half solved. Based on this assertion, this present study is aimed at examining some organizational factors that are likely to predispose employees to counter productive work behaviour. Some of the variables are emotional intelligence and job boredom proneness.

Job boredom refers to an unpleasant affective state resulting from the underuse of a person's physical or cognitive capacity at work (Loukidou, 2009). Also Fisher, defined boredom as an unpleasant affective state in which the individual feels a pervasive lack of interest in and difficulty concentrating on the current activity. Boredom in the workplace has been associated with decreased job satisfaction (MacDonald & Macintyre, 1997), increased depressive thoughts, and higher levels of anxiety (i.e. Caplan, 1975; Kornhauser, 1965). It is expected that boredom is related to counterproductive work behaviour because employees are motivated to decrease feelings of boredom. If they are upset by the level of monotony in their job, then employees are expected to engage in non-job related behaviours to make the organization livelier. For instance, gossiping and horseplay may increase a bored employee's level of arousal and attenuate feelings of boredom. Thus, bored employees may commit counterproductive work behaviours for instrumental purposes. All these have geared the researcher to see how this impacts on counterproductive work behavior among workers.

Apart from job boredom proneness, emotional intelligence is another factor that is likely to predispose local government employees to counterproductive work behaviour. Emotional intelligence has been defined as the ability to motivate oneself, to persist in the face of frustrations, to control impulse and delay gratification, to regulate one's moods, to keep distress from interfering with the ability to think, to empathise, to hope, to perform and to be creative (Erasmus, 2007). Maree and Ebersohn (2002) explained that emotional intelligence includes concepts like social deftness, emotional stability, compassion and integrity. Expressing the importance of emotional intelligence in day to day living, Punia and Sangwan (2011) stressed that emotional intelligence is the driving force behind the factors that affect personal success and everyday interaction with others.

Going by Mayer and Solovey's model, emotional intelligence encompasses Perception (an ability to be self-aware of emotions and to express emotions and emotional needs accurately to others); Assimilation (an individual's ability to use emotions to prioritize thinking by focusing on important information that explains why feelings are being experienced); Understanding (ability to understand complex emotions like simultaneous feelings of loyalty and anger); and Emotional management (ability to connect or disconnect from an emotion depending on its usefulness in any given situations). Emotional Intelligence has been found to be a predictor of life satisfaction, healthy psychological adaptation, and positive interactions with peers, family and higher parental warmth (Punia and Sangwan, 2011).

Typically, emotional intelligence is considered to involve emotional empathy, attention to and discrimination of one's emotions, accurate recognition of one's own and others' moods, respond with appropriate emotions and behaviours' in various life situations (especially to stress and difficult situations) among other factors (Chovwen, 2013). An employee with high emotional intelligence can manage his or her own impulses, communicate with others effectively, manage change, solve problems, and use humour to build rapport in tense situations. This clarity in thinking and composure in stressful and chaotic situations is what separates top performers from weak performers in the workplace. Salovey and Mayer (1990) argued that emotional intelligence subsumes both interpersonal and intrapersonal

intelligences earlier proposed by Howard Gardner (1983), that emotional intelligence has five principal features: being aware of one's own emotions; being able to manage one's own emotions; being sensitive to the emotions of others; being able to respond to and negotiate with other people emotionally; and being able to use one's own emotions to motivate oneself. Emotionally intelligent individuals are said to be particularly adept at regulating emotion. This process is often used as a means to meeting particular goals, as it can lead to more adaptive mood states. In other words, such emotionally intelligent individuals may improve their moods and the moods of others'. As a result, they can even go so far as motivating others to achieving worthwhile objectives. Thus, to a large extent, an employee's emotional ability is what may determine how often and to what extent he/she will experience burnout at work and involve in counterproductive work behaviour. It is against this backdrop, that this present study is aimed at determining the impact of emotional intelligence and job boredom proneness on counterproductive work behaviour.

In a number of studies, the aim has been to identify a direct relationship between variables that lead to or cause counterproductive work behavior in organizations. Fagbohungbe, Akinbode, Ayodeji (2012) examined the relationship between employees' organizational reactions and fraudulent behaviours in the workplace. Drawing on the organizational climate and workplace misbehavior literatures, they hypothesized that fraudulent workplace behaviours of males will be significantly different from that of their female counterpart. Also, that there will be a significant positive relationship between employees organizational reactions and various facets of fraudulent behaviours in the workplace. Six hundred and ninety six employees completed the surveys. Results showed that male participants were significantly different from their female counterparts on theft and deception, amoral behavior, fraudulent behaviours respectively. Specifically, theft and deception was higher among females compared to males.

Sohail, Ahmad, Tanveer and Tariq (2010) investigated the relationship between age, gender and boredom at work among university employees in Pakistan. Data was collected from 215 full time university faculty members. To analyze the data, SPPS was used. To test the hypothesis of the study, Chi-square technique was implemented. Results indicate that age boredom is dependent on age and are positively correlated, while gender and age are independent and has negative correlation. It can be concluded that organizations may get benefit by concentrating on age factor at work. Bauer (2011) investigated how discrete negative emotions are related to specific facets of counterproductive work behaviors (CWB). The sample consisted of 241 employees who reported their frequency of experiencing negative emotions and their frequency of committing counterproductive work behaviour in the workplace. For 103 employees, supervisor reports of employee CWB were also obtained. The findings provide evidence that a wide range of negative emotions are related to most of the sub facets of CWB. Having looked at all this, this study then intends to examine the impact of two organizational variables (emotional intelligence and job boredom proness) on counterproductive work behaviour among lecturers. To address this, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- Emotional Intelligence dimensions will predict counterproductive work behaviour among workers.
- Job boredom proneness will predict counterproductive work behaviour among workers.

2. Method

This section includes participants, instruments, procedure, design and statistics.

2.1. Participants

Two hundred and thirty-seven (237) employees from Awka South Local Government Area, served as participants in this study. The participants were selected through accidental sampling technique. The ages of the participants ranged from 26 to 61 years, with a mean age of 36.31 years and standard deviation of 7.95. 126(53.2%) were males while 111(46.8%) were females. 117 were single while 120 were married.

2.2. Instruments

Three sets of instrument were used in this study: Emotional Intelligence scale by Batool (2009), Ccounterproductive work behaviour checklist by Spector, Fox, Penney, Bruursema, Goh, and Kessler (2006) and Job boredom proneness scale by Farmer and Sundberg (1986). In addition, demographic variables which include gender, age and marital status were included in the overall (collapsed) instrument used for the study.

Counterproductive work behavior (CWB)

The 33-item Counterproductive Work Behavior Checklist by Spector et al., (2006) is a behavioral checklist compiled from a number of existing measures (Fox & Spector, 1999; Hollinger, 1986). Respondents indicate how often they engage in specific behaviors on the job. Response options range from 1 (never) to 5 (every day), with high scores representing higher incidence of Counterproductive Work Behavior. Spector et al. (2006) reported that coefficient alpha of .81 was obtained under the Counterproductive Work

Behavior checklist scale.

Emotional intelligence

The Emotional Intelligence scale by Batool (2009) has 56 items and its response options were based on four point likert format: 1 always, 2 often, 3 sometimes, and 4 never. The author reported that the scale has a cronbach alpha of 0.95 and split half reliability of 0.92.

Job boredom

This 28-item Job boredom proneness scale asked respondents to indicate whether each statement was generally true or false for them. Sample items included "I am good at waiting patiently" [reverse-coded] and "Much of the time I just sit around doing nothing." The BPS has been used with a gender-balanced sample of college students and yielded acceptable reliabilities (KR-20: $\alpha = 0.79$; test-retest: $r = 0.83$). Scoring was conducted by reverse-coding appropriate items, summing each participant's responses across all items, and dividing by the number of items.

The instruments were revalidated in Nigeria through pilot study. 80 participants that were different from the ones used in the main study were used in the pilot study. 48 were males while 32 were females. Using alpha reliability, an alpha coefficient of .85 was obtained under emotional intelligence scale, .79 under job boredom proneness and 0.81 was obtained under counterproductive work behaviour scale.

2.3. Procedure

The researcher with the help of three research assistant who are workers at Awka South Local Government distributed the questionnaire to workers. The questionnaire was given to each participant at different locations, some in their office and different areas of the local government. Based on the fact that the items in the questionnaire were many, the participants were allowed to go home with the questionnaire and return them the next day. The whole process of distributing the questionnaire took 33 days. After collection of the questionnaire, it was observed by the researcher that some of the questionnaires were not properly filled while some of the participants did not return theirs. Out of the 258 questionnaires administered, 242 were returned while 237 was properly filled and as such utilized in the study. The research assistants were given monetary appreciation in recognition of their efforts in the study.

2.4. Design / Statistics

The study has emotional intelligence and job boredom proneness as its predictor variable, while counterproductive work behaviour is the criterion variable. Correlation design was adopted for the study while multiple linear regression statistics was used in testing the hypotheses.

3. Results

The results of the statistical analysis of the data obtained in the study are presented in the table below.

Table 1. Summary of multiple linear regression analysis on emotional intelligence dimensions and job boredom proneness on counterproductive work behaviour.

Predictor Variables	R	R^2	F	B	t	P
	44	19	8.34			
Self - Awareness				-.14	-1.78	.04
Self - Control				-.11	-1.36	.03
Self - Motivation				-.18	-2.48	.01
Empathy				.06	.70	.49
Social Skills				.02	.45	.66
Job Boredom				.34	6.55	.00

Based on the above table, the first hypothesis which stated that Emotional Intelligence dimensions will predict counterproductive work behaviour among workers was partially confirmed. It was observed that jointly all the emotional intelligence dimensions accounted for 19% variance in counterproductive work behaviour with $F(6, 230) = 8.34$, $P<.00$; $R = .44$, $R^2 = .19$. While independently, three out of the five dimensions of emotional intelligence namely; self-awareness ($\beta = -.14$, $t = -1.78$, $P < .05$), self-control ($\beta = -.11$, $t = -1.36$, $P < .05$) and self-motivation ($\beta = -.18$, $t = -2.48$, $P < .05$) are predictors of counterproductive work behaviour among workers. The other dimensions Empathy and Social Skills had no significant predictive power.

The second hypothesis which stated that Job boredom proneness will predict counterproductive work behaviour among workers was confirmed at $\beta = .34$; $t = 6.55$, $P<.05$. This shows that job boredom proneness is a strong predictor of counterproductive work behaviour among local government employees.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, two hypotheses were tested. The results indicated that apart from social skills and empathy, all other components of emotional intelligence are among the potent predictors of counterproductive work behaviour among local government employees. This shows that self-control, self-motivation and self-awareness are among the negative antecedent of counterproductive work behaviour. For instance, local government employees who are high on self-control, self-motivation and self-awareness are not likely to indulge in counterproductive work behaviour like gossiping, lateness to work and so on. Thus, emotional intelligence is a negative antecedent of counterproductive work behaviour, which implies that an increase in emotional intelligence brings about reduction in counterproductive work behaviour

among workers.

The above result is in line with the observation made by Colbert, Mount, Harter, Witt and Barrick (2004). In their observation, they noted that employees' emotional intelligence would adversely affect counterproductive work behaviours. In the same vein, Deshpande, (2005) found that respondents with high emotional intelligence perceived counterproductive behaviours to be more unethical than those with low emotional intelligence. This suggests that people with high emotional intelligence tend to be better corporate citizens and showcase better ethical attitudes towards their firm and work. Petrides, Frederickson & Furnham, (2004) posit that people with high levels of emotional intelligence engage less in deviant behaviours than those with low emotional intelligence. Similarly, Eisenberg (2000) states that low trait of emotional intelligence may be a key factor in a variety of deviant behaviour. In conclusion, employees who lack emotional intelligence have a high level of counterproductive work behaviour.

In addition, the result of the study showed that the second hypothesis which states that job boredom will predict counterproductive work behaviour among workers was confirmed. Thus, job boredom proneness is related to counterproductive work behaviour among local government employees. This means that increase in job boredom proneness brings about increase in counterproductive work behaviour among local government employees. For instance, if workers are upset by the level of monotony in their job, it seen that they tend to engage in non-job related behaviours to make the organization livelier. Behaviours like gossiping, horseplay and engaging in works outside the organization may increase a bored employee's level of arousal and attenuate feelings of boredom. Thus, bored employees may commit counterproductive work behaviour for instrumental purposes. Some clinical researchers have also linked boredom to feelings of anger (Lantz, 1988; McHolland, 1988). In support of this notion, Dahlen, Martin, Ragan, and Kuhlman (2004) outlined that boredom is associated with counterproductive behaviour such as aggressive behaviours (Dahlen, Martin, Ragan & kuhlman, 2004). The results of this study are in consonance with past studies which have supported a link between job boredom and counterproductive work behavior. Research on the job affective well-being scale (JAWS) reported a relationship between job boredom and withdrawal behaviors (Spector et al., 2006). Dahlen, Martin, Ragan, and Kuhlman (2004) and Rupp and Vodanovich (1997) reported that boredom proneness (i.e. dispositional boredom) was related to aggressive behaviors. Similarly, Bruursema (2007) reported that both trait boredom and job boredom are related to overall counterproductive work behaviour. This tends to reconfirm that job boredom is a strong predictor of counterproductive work behavior in organizations.

The researcher, in consonance with the research outcomes concludes that emotional intelligence is not a strong predictor of counterproductive work behavior while job boredom is a potent predictor of counterproductive work behavior among workers. Thus, it is recommended that more research energy should be conducted to identify other causes of counterproductive work behavior among workers. Also organisations/institutions and government should try to create an atmosphere that will make the work environment lively and as such mental ability of workers will be stable, reducing counterproductive work behavior related to job boredom and emotional discomfort.

Limitations

Although generalisation of this study is limited by its scope, as future studies using other local governments may produce a bias result, the study is nonetheless a major contribution to existing literature on the impact of emotional intelligence and job boredom proness on counterproductive work behaviour among local government workers. Also the large number of items in the questionnaire affected the sample size used in the study. Further study is advocated in this area, so as to close gaps that have not been covered by the present study such as x-raying more factors that will predict or encourage counterproductive work behaviour among workers.

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