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Emotional Intelligence and Occupational Resilience Among Construction Site Workers in Kaduna State, Nigeria

[1]Bilkisu Ahmed Abdu & [2]Fatahu Aliyu Matazu
[1&2]Department of Quantity Surveying, College of Environmental Studies, Kaduna Polytechnic. Kaduna Nigeria

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Abstract

The construction industry is widely regarded as one of the most psychologically demanding occupational sectors due to hazardous working environments, strict project deadlines, and physically intensive tasks. Emotional intelligence has increasingly been recognized as a critical psychological attribute that enhances workers' ability to manage occupational stress and maintain workplace productivity. This study investigates the relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational resilience among construction site workers involved in TETFund-supported construction projects in Kaduna State, Nigeria. A quantitative survey research design was adopted using the Genos Emotional Intelligence Inventory and occupational resilience measurement scales. A total of 340 construction workers were selected through stratified random sampling from a population of 521 workers. Pearson correlation and linear regression analyses were employed to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational resilience. The findings revealed a strong positive relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational resilience ($r = 0.892$, $p < 0.01$). Regression analysis further indicated that emotional intelligence significantly predicts occupational resilience, explaining approximately 79.5% of its variance. The study concludes that emotional intelligence is a major determinant of resilience among construction site workers and plays a critical role in enhancing psychological well-being and workplace performance. The study recommends integrating emotional intelligence training into construction workforce development programs and occupational safety policies.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Occupational Resilience, Construction Workers, Workforce Productivity, Nigeria*

Corresponding Author: Bilkisu Ahmed Abdu

Background to the Study

The construction industry remains one of the largest contributors to economic development and infrastructure expansion globally. Construction projects depend significantly on skilled and semi-skilled labour to achieve project objectives efficiently. Construction site workers perform diverse technical and manual tasks, including masonry, electrical installation, plumbing, welding, equipment operation, and general labour activities. Despite their importance, construction site workers operate in highly demanding and hazardous environments characterized by tight project schedules, exposure to environmental risks, and physically strenuous activities. These working conditions frequently expose workers to occupational stress, which may negatively influence psychological well-being, productivity, and workplace safety outcomes (Nwaogu & Chan, 2021).

Recent occupational psychology research has emphasized the role of emotional intelligence in enhancing workers' ability to cope with workplace stress and maintain effective job performance. Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognize, understand, regulate, and appropriately utilize emotions in interpersonal interactions and decision-making processes (Goleman, 2021). Workers with high emotional intelligence are more capable of managing stress, maintaining positive workplace relationships, and adapting to changing work conditions (Miao et al., 2021).

Closely related to emotional intelligence is occupational resilience, which describes the ability of workers to adapt to workplace challenges, recover from adversity, and maintain emotional stability under stressful work conditions (Nguyen & Tran, 2020). Construction workers frequently encounter unpredictable job environments that require strong adaptive and coping mechanisms. Although emotional intelligence has been extensively examined among managerial and professional construction personnel, limited attention has been directed toward site-level construction workers who experience operational challenges directly. Therefore, this study focuses specifically on examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational resilience among construction site workers in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is a multidimensional psychological construct encompassing emotional perception, emotional understanding, emotional regulation, and emotional utilization. Individuals with high emotional intelligence demonstrate improved interpersonal communication, decision-making skills, and stress management capabilities (Gross, 2015). The Genos Emotional Intelligence model conceptualizes emotional intelligence through seven behavioural competencies: consciousness, curiosity, clarification, compassion, courage, commitment, and consistency. These competencies measure how individuals typically demonstrate emotionally intelligent behaviours within workplace environments (Palmer & Stough, 2001). Emotional intelligence has been widely linked to improved job performance, employee engagement, and psychological well-being.

Occupational Resilience

Occupational resilience refers to workers' ability to maintain psychological stability and adapt effectively to workplace stressors and adversities. Resilient workers demonstrate emotional stability, proactive problem-solving abilities, and strong coping mechanisms that enhance job performance and reduce workplace stress (Nguyen & Tran, 2020). Research suggests that occupational resilience is influenced by various psychological competencies, including emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and emotional regulation. Emotional intelligence enhances workers' ability to identify emotional triggers and regulate negative emotional responses, thereby strengthening resilience (Extremera et al., 2018).

Emotional Intelligence and Occupational Resilience in Construction Environments

Construction workers operate within complex and dynamic work environments characterized by high accident risks, strict deadlines, and physically demanding tasks. Emotional intelligence contributes to resilience by improving workers' ability to manage workplace conflicts, communicate effectively, and maintain psychological balance under pressure (Ononye et al., 2022). Studies have shown that emotionally intelligent workers demonstrate improved coping mechanisms, enhanced teamwork, and greater adaptability to workplace challenges. Emotional intelligence also contributes to occupational safety by reducing impulsive behaviour and enhancing situational awareness (Miao et al., 2021).

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative survey research design to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational resilience among construction site workers.

Population and Sampling

The study population consisted of 521 construction site workers involved in TETFund-supported construction projects in Kaduna State. A sample size of 340 respondents was selected using stratified random sampling to ensure adequate representation across different construction trades.

Data Collection Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising the Genos Emotional Intelligence Inventory and occupational resilience measurement scale. The instruments measured emotionally intelligent workplace behaviours and resilience indicators using a five-point Likert scale.

Data Analysis Technique

Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational resilience, while regression analysis was used to evaluate predictive influence.

Results

Table 1: Questionnaire Distribution

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Distributed	399	100
Retrieved	381	95.5
Valid	340	85.2

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	318	93.5
Female	22	6.5

Mean Age: 32 Years

Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Occupational Resilience

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

Variables	Emotional Intelligence	Occupational Resilience
Emotional Intelligence	1	
Occupational Resilience	0.892	1

The correlation analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational resilience ($r = 0.892$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that workers with higher emotional intelligence demonstrate significantly higher resilience levels.

Table 4: Regression Model Summary

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std Error
0.892	0.795	0.794	0.147

The regression analysis indicated that emotional intelligence accounts for approximately 79.5% of variation in occupational resilience.

Table 5: ANOVA Results

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig
Regression	28.567	1	28.567	1317.432	0.000
Residual	7.323	338	0.022		

The ANOVA results confirmed that the regression model was statistically significant.

Table 6: Regression Coefficients

Variable	B	Beta	t	Sig
Constant	0.428		13.806	0.000
Emotional Intelligence	0.865	0.892	36.292	0.000

The regression coefficient shows that emotional intelligence is a strong predictor of occupational resilience.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that emotional intelligence has a significant positive relationship with occupational resilience among construction site workers. Workers with higher emotional intelligence are better able to regulate emotional responses, manage occupational stress, and adapt to challenging workplace conditions. These findings support previous studies that emphasize the importance of emotional intelligence in strengthening psychological adaptability and workplace resilience (Extremera et al., 2018). Emotional intelligence enhances workers' ability to maintain motivation, resolve workplace conflicts, and sustain productivity in stressful work environments (Ononye et al., 2022). The strong predictive influence of emotional intelligence highlights its importance as a psychological resource for construction workers exposed to occupational hazards and environmental uncertainties.

Implications

The findings suggest that construction organizations should incorporate emotional intelligence development programs into workforce training. Emotional intelligence training can improve communication, teamwork, and stress management among workers. Additionally, integrating emotional intelligence into occupational health and safety policies can enhance workplace safety and reduce accident risks associated with emotional distress.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational resilience among construction site workers in Kaduna State. The results established that

emotional intelligence significantly influences occupational resilience and serves as a major predictor of workers' psychological adaptability and workplace performance.

Recommendations

Construction organizations should implement structured emotional intelligence training programs to enhance workers' resilience and psychological well-being. Future studies should explore emotional intelligence across different construction sectors and geographical regions.

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