

**PREDICTORS OF JOB SATISFACTION AMONG  
PRIVATE SECTOR INDUSTRY WORKERS IN PORT  
HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE: A FUNCTION OF SELF-  
ESTEEM AND JOB STRESS**

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**ABSTRACT:** This study investigated the contributions of self-esteem and job stress to job satisfaction among private sector employees in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Participants comprise of 374 workers selected from Mandilas, Alcon Ltd, Anadrill Schlumberger and First Aluminium through convenience sampling. The participants consist of 217 male and 157 female employees whose ages ranged from 25 to 51 and a mean age of 40.8. Three instruments were administered to these participants: Index of Self-esteem (ISE)), Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaires (MSQ) and HSE (Health and Safety Executive) Management Standards Indicator Tool, Descriptive survey design was adopted and Multiple Regression Analysis was used to analyze data collected. Results showed that low self-esteem and job stress positively predicted job satisfaction ( $p < .05$ ). Implications of this study are that when the expectation of a worker is less, job satisfaction can be attained, and minimal stress can be motivating which can increase job satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Self-Esteem, Job Stress, Job Satisfaction, Private Sector Employees, Port Harcourt.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Over the years, the concept of job satisfaction has occupied a prominent place in organizational behaviour research. This is so because it tends to question the whole spectrum of motivation to work and the attitudes of the employees when the employment has been secured. McShanre and VonGlinow (2000) defined job satisfaction as an appraisal of the perceived job characteristics and emotional experience at work. It is a positive and pleasant emotional state and is a result of individual's assessment on his/her job or job experience (Nehrir, Ebadi, Tofighi, Karimi Zarchi, & Honarvar, 2010). Implicit in these definitions is that job satisfaction is an attitude component and as such, the individuals values, dispositions, and expectations come into play.

It is usually difficult to identify what satisfies a worker in a particular job. A job can be responsible for curing depression in one person and causing depression in another. This could be as a result of the differences in the perception of work and the work environments. Job satisfaction creates an atmosphere where an employee feels satisfied with his/her current organization/employer(s), and detects the continuity of the relationship between the

employee and the employer. Ideally, what keeps the relationship between the employee and the employer going, is the satisfaction that comes in reciprocal manner within the working environment unfortunately, not every organization is interested in making their employees feel satisfied nowadays most especially in Africa irrespective of the workers' effort in working and promoting the existence of the organization.

However, the consequences that come from inadequate job satisfaction are enormous and detrimental to the employee and to the organization entirely. By not feeling happy or comfortable with routine of activities/facets in the organization, employees will not be willing to put in their best and deal with any negative factors/forces against the organization. Organization will always run losses when they experience high rate of turnover after the organization must have spent some huge amount of money/resources in training their staff. On the other hand, when employees are miserable doing their job, all of the other employees they come in contact with are going to be affected by their attitudes; these negative attitudes can spread throughout the workplace like wild-fire and they are likely to report stress on the job. If they don't still get satisfaction from the job, the overall morale of the employees will take a sharp decline.

Personality disposition like self-esteem can influence individuals' pleasurable emotional feelings by regulating the affective domain to ask for more pleasure or disprove some situation that seems to be pleasurable to others/colleagues. It is a person's overall sense of self-worth or personal value. The relationship between job satisfaction and self-esteem has been a thing of interest to researchers. Mocheche, Bosire and Raburu (2017) investigated the influence of self-esteem on job satisfaction of secondary school teachers in Kisii Central Sub-County, Kenya. A sample of 306 teachers were selected by stratified sampling to obtain a sample that was representative from all the categories of secondary schools (National, Extra County, County and Sub-County) followed by stratification according to gender to ensure representativeness. The study also purposely selected twelve secondary school principals for qualitative data. Data were collected using a modified Sorensen self-esteem scale, job descriptive index questionnaire and interview schedule. Result revealed a weak but positive ( $r = .157$ ;  $p = .011 < .05$ ) correlation between teacher self-esteem and level of job satisfaction, with higher self-esteem associated with high levels of job satisfaction. Similarly, Alavi and Askaripur (2003) used a random sample of 310 personnel in the Kerman Province, Iran. They found a significant meaningful relationship between self esteem and job satisfaction; personnel with high self-esteem had more job satisfaction in their jobs than their low self-esteem counterparts.

Casper and Fishbein (2002) carried out a study on job satisfaction and job success as moderators of the self-esteem in people with mental illnesses. It was hypothesized that status satisfaction and success variable would have significant and meaningful relationship with self-esteem, while the employment status and status duration variables alone would not. Participants in the research were individuals with mental illnesses attending mental health agencies in New Jersey. It was found that, measures of "felt satisfaction" and "felt success" with employment status were significant and moderate level predictors of self-esteem for both employed and unemployed. Satisfaction and success were measured as moderates of

self-esteem so that the participant level of self-esteem was not directly related to functional status but to the participants' satisfaction and success with the functional status. The findings also showed that the differences in functional status alone did not appear related to self-esteem but, difference in satisfaction and success with the functional status was related (Casper & Fishbein, 2002). It is therefore expected that people with high self esteem will experience job satisfaction than their counterparts of low self esteem.

Another variable that may have impact on job satisfaction is job stress. According to Spector (2002), occupational stress is described as any discomfort that is perceived by individuals who their capabilities and resources cannot be coped to demands, events and stressful situations in their workplace. In general, job stress can be defined as the physical emotional responses that happen when the employees' capabilities and resources cannot be coped with the demands and requirements of their job (Alves, 2005; Bianch, 2004; Lindholm, 2006; Nakasis & Ouzouni, 2008). From the above definition, one can say that job stress is the occurrence of discrepancy between the demands of working environments/workplace and an employee's ability to carry out and complete that job task/demands at his/her disposals.

Job stress has many causes; these causes include long hours, heavy workload, and job insecurity, the threat of job loss or redundancy and conflict with other workers or bosses. Symptoms of job stress may include depression, anxiety, a drop in work performance, feelings of being overwhelmed, fatigue, headaches, and an increase in sick days or absenteeism. Thus, the stressful situation at the workplace due to occupational stress lead to negative consequences like anxiety, headaches, stomach distress, and cardiovascular diseases (Spector, 2002). Notably, the consequence of job stress is severe on job satisfaction of an employee. When job stress is not well resolved, the employee suffers the following consequences:

1. Physical distress (sleep disturbances, headaches, gastro- intestinal upset and raised blood pressure/cardio-Vascular diseases).
2. Emotional distress (anxiety and irritability, depression and labile emotions).
3. Intellectual distress (loss of concentration, lack of motivation difficulty with thought processes, loss of memory and poor decision-making).
4. Behavioural problems (intake of substance e.g., alcohol misuse, decreased libido, inappropriate display of behaviour, isolation and unpunctuality).

According to Owen (2006), stressful situation in the workplace make occupational stress which leads to negative harmful effect on both employee and employer. Furthermore, Abualrub and Alzaru (2008) stipulated that occupational stress will unwelcome result such as absenteeism, loss of productivity and health care resources. From the above statement, it can be agreed that consequences such as high labour turn over, poor time keeping, poor performance and productivity, low morale, poor motivation, increased employees' complaints and increased ill-health accidents and incidents reports are as a result of unresolved job stress.

Nevertheless, job stress brings severe influences on individuals' job satisfaction which are enormous on individuals' physical health and emotion, thereby making work environment more complex and sophisticated and stressful. Once an employee is noticing increase in occupational stress, the employee may decide to quit his/her job due to dissatisfaction from the job so as to avoid health problems. However, if an employee's work stress increases and affects him/her negatively, it aggravate the employee's lack of interest on the job thereby reducing the satisfaction he/she gets from the job. Brewer and McMahan-Landers (2003) explored the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among industrial and technical educators. The sampling frame for the population was the 2000-2001 Industrial Teacher Education Directory. A random sample of 347 was drawn from the 1,752 industrial and technical teacher educators (excluding department heads, coordinators, and other administrations) identified in the directory. The result revealed significant relationship among facets of job satisfaction and stress-related factors. Of the 90 relationship between facets of job satisfaction and stress-related factors measured in this study, 55 were significant at the 0.1 level; 9 were significant at the 0.5 level awhile 26 were not significant. Of the 26 non-significant relationships, 23 involved factors related to job pressure. In comparison, only one of the non-significant relationship involved lack of organizational support (Brewer & McMahan-Landers, 2003).

In another study, Sen and Kakoli (2008) examined the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction amongst teachers and managers. The correlation analysis found an inverse relationship between job satisfaction and job stress of teachers. Evaluating the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among female hospital nurses in Babol; Hosseinabadi, Etemadinezhad, Khanjani, Ahmadi, Gholinia, Galeshi and Samaei (2018) found that the dimensions of job stress explained 42% of changes in the variance of job satisfaction. There was a significant relationship between the dimensions of job stress such as demand ( $\beta = 0.173$ , CI = 0.095 - 0.365,  $P \leq 0.001$ ), control ( $\beta = 0.135$ , CI = 0.062 - 0.404,  $P = 0.008$ ), relationships ( $\beta = -0.208$ , CI = -0.637 - -0.209;  $P \leq 0.001$ ) and changes ( $\beta = 0.247$ , CI = 0.360 - 1.026,  $P \leq 0.001$ ) with job satisfaction. Other researchers (Burgess, 2005; Flanagan & Flanagan, 2002; Kawada & Ooya, 2005; Chandraiah, Agrawal, Marimuthu, & Manoharan, (2003) also found inverse relationship between job stress and job satisfaction.

From the above discussion, it can be deduced that self-esteem and job stress are inherent factors in both human and working environment; both can be said to determine the job satisfaction of both the employer and the employee. Since self-esteem is a genetic trait, an individual can only be satisfied with his/her job if the job suits with his/her personality disposition. However, note that self-respect is a disposition of self-esteem that comprises of the knowledge of one's own worth, valuing one's self; pride. An individual cannot accept his/her job satisfying if the job task is above his/her knowledge of self-worth; not having the confidence of executing job tasks. The pride of an individual can also detect at which level a job can satisfy his /her effort. Nevertheless, if an individual feels less valued by his colleagues or employer, he/she may not find it easy going with the organization thereby making it uncomfortable for he/she in the working environment; reducing his/her interest – no job satisfaction can be derived from such circumstances. On the other hand, job stress can always disgust an employee's sense of satisfaction; long hours, heavy workload, job

insecurity, threat of job loss or redundancy and conflict with other workers or bosses can strain the well-being of an individual. “Note that the primary objective of an individual to work is to make his/her life comfortable for him/her in the society.”

### **Statement of the Problem**

Employees will continue to crave for satisfaction whether the organization is moving forward or not. In order to provide a conducive ground for the employers and employees, every department in an organization must be a fair play ground for workers. In order to help individuals/employees feel satisfied with their current working environment/job, employers must seek to always understand the nature of their employees self-esteem, and moderating the tasks that are been dished out to workers. The extent to which a person perceives a job as being satisfying is contingent upon many factors including the workers personality (such as self esteem), the job itself and work environment. Expectations from work could differ based on a worker’s self esteem. High self esteem connotes self importance and worth and as such, such people may find it difficult to get satisfaction from a job that may not match their self concept. Thus it may be possible for a low self esteem worker to feel happy in a job because his needs and values can easily be met. Although studies reviewed have revealed an inverse relationship between self esteem (high self esteem), it becomes imperative to find out if the finding will be the same for industry workers.

Similarly, the job itself in terms of the job roles can be a source of stress to some while to others can be source of challenge which may bring about motivation to work. Thus the experience of stress could positively or negatively impact job satisfaction among workers. This study therefore seeks to identify if job stress will adversely predict job satisfaction of industry workers in Rivers State, Nigeria.

### **Hypotheses**

1. High self-esteem will positively predict job satisfaction of industry workers.
2. Job stress will negatively predict job satisfaction of industry workers.

### **METHOD**

#### **Participants**

Participants used for this study were 374 Industry workers drawn from five private organizations in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. They comprised of 150 males and 127 female employees. The organizations are Mandilas, Alcon Limited, Anadrill, Schlumberger and First Aluminium. They were selected among the private industries within Trans Amadi Industrial Layout through simple random sampling method while the participants were drawn through convenience sampling. The participants’ ages, ranges from 25 to 51 and a mean age of 47.8.



## Measures

Three Instruments were used for this study. The first is Hudson (1982) Index of Self-Esteem (ISE). The instrument is a 25 item likert scale (13 direct score items and 12 reverse score items). Hudson (1982) provided the Psychometric Properties for American samples, while Onighaiye (1996), provided the psychometric Properties for Nigeria samples. The scale has a norm of 30.89 and 32.04 for males and females respectively (Nigerian sample); scores higher than the norm indicates “low” self-esteem, while scores lower than the norm indicates ‘high’ self-esteem. The reliability co-efficient alpha of the scale is .93 and a two hour test-retest co-efficient of .92 (Onighaiye, 1996).

The second instrument is the Minnesota Satisfaction Question (MSQ) developed by Weiss, Dawis, England and Lofquist (1967). It is a 20 item Likert scale. Weiss et al. (1967), provided the Psychometric properties for the American samples, while Mogaji (1997) provided the psychometric Properties for Nigerian sample. The scale measures three dimensions of job satisfaction: Intrinsic Satisfaction, Extrinsic Satisfaction and General Satisfaction. The researchers were interested in general satisfaction which is obtained by adding the two earlier dimensions. It has a reliability of .94 and a norm of 69.13. Score higher than the norm implies adequate job satisfaction while score lower than the norm means poor job satisfaction.

The HSE (Health and Safety Executive) Management Standards Indicator Tool (Houdmont, Kerr, & Randall, 2012) is the third instrument used in assessing the workers stress level. It is developed by the UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE) team, comprising 35-items relating to work stress. The questions are based on the best available evidence linking work design to health outcomes. The response format is based on a 5-point Likert-type scaling (never, rarely, sometimes, often and always). The Cronbach’s alpha for this scale were reported to be 0.78 and 0.81 in the studies done by Mahdavi, Hojatdost, Parvardeh, and Gholami Fesharaki (2014) and Marzabadi and Gholami Fesharaki (2011) respectively. The researcher reported a Crombach’s Alpha reliability of .71, and a norm of 101.88, the higher the score is from the norm, the higher the stress and vice versa.

## Procedure

The researcher visited the managers of the five organizations on different occasions in order to obtain permission to carry out the research in their organizations after making known the essence of the research. When permission was gotten, the researcher distributed the questionnaires to participants met at their various offices and who were willing to participate in the study. A consent form which also contains statement of confidentiality was attached to each questionnaire. Participants who gave consent continued with the filling of the questionnaires, while those who did not give consent returned the questionnaires without responding to the items. The questionnaires were retrieved two days later for each of the five organizations visited. It took three weeks to complete the exercise.

### Design and Statistic

Descriptive Cross-sectional Survey design was adopted since a segment of a large population cutting across different demographic variables, assessed at the same time was employed. Data was analyzed using Standard Multiple Regression, this allows for the simultaneous investigation of the effect of two or more predictor variables on a single interval scale criterion variable. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was utilised for the analysis.

### RESULTS

Table 1: Summary Result of the Standard Multiple Regression Analysis of the Relationship between Self-Esteem, Job Stress and Job Satisfaction.

Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	F	df	β	t	Sig
	0.441	0.195	0.190	44.87	2,371			
Self-Esteem						0.216	7.55	0.000**
Job Stress						0.234	4.49	0.000**

Dependent Variable: Job satisfaction. \*\*: significant

From the above table, the overall fit as indicated by R<sup>2</sup> shows that 19.5% of the variation in job satisfaction is explained by the relationship between self-esteem and job stress scores,

R<sup>2</sup> = .195, F(2,371)= 44.87, P<. 05.

Furthermore, result from Table 1 revealed a significant relationship between self-esteem and job satisfaction, the first hypothesis is therefore upheld, [ B= .216, t (3,271) = 7.55, P < .05.] As self-esteem increases (an indication of low self-esteem), job satisfaction increases. Similarly, as job stress increases, job satisfaction increases, which upholds the second hypothesis, [B = .237, t (2,371) = 4.49, P < .05.]

### DISCUSSION

The first finding of this study indicated that the lower a worker's self-esteem, the more adequate his/her job satisfaction. The empirical studies reviewed in this direction (Alavi & Askaripur, 2003; and Mocheche, Bosire, & Raburu, (2017) contradict this finding. It is important to note that these studies were foreign based and as such the work environment and conditions of service might differ, The reason for the present finding however is not farfetched, due to the low self value, the worker do not have much expectation from his job and employer alike and as such little offer from their company can lead to satisfaction for such workers unlike their high self-esteem counterparts. The Second result revealed that as job stress increases, job satisfaction increases. This result is in line with the empirical findings by Brewer and McMahan-Landers (2003) which revealed significant relationships

among facets of job satisfaction and stress-related factors. Chandraiah, Agrawal, Marimuthu, & Manoharan (2003) also found a positive relationship between role stress and job satisfaction. The reason for this finding could result from the fact that the workers who are more satisfied might be the ones who are more involved in the work, who see their work as part of them, thereby causing them to experience stress. Thus, Mild stress including job stress can be stimulating, motivating and sometimes desirable.

It is recommended that employers who over emphasize on high self esteem as an employment criteria should re-consider their stand since this study has revealed that people with low self-esteem are more satisfied with their job. In as much as low self-esteem workers/employees are satisfied with their jobs, employers should improve the working conditions, pay packages, bonuses of their workers so that these low self-esteem workers can give their best to the organization. Having seen that high job stress increases job satisfaction from the findings of this study, should be careful in reducing the work load of workers as this might lead to job dissatisfaction. Jobs should be designed in such a way that adequate responsibility is assigned to each worker as work under load could lead to decreased job satisfaction. Also, employers should improve the working conditions for example, training their staff and rank and file workers on how to use new innovative facilities that will induce them (employee) to accept more responsibilities.

This study however is without limitations. The first deficit of the study is the fact that it was a survey and not experimental study and as such could not control extraneous variables that may have affected the study. There should be caution when making generalizations from the findings of this study.

In conclusion, employers should create work content and working environment that will enhance the job satisfaction of its workers. For any organization to thrive in the face of competitions, the workers must be happy. Positive stress is vital for job satisfaction, however, when stress is severe (negative stress) it can lead to frustration and poor wellbeing for the worker and low productivity for the organization, including other detrimental consequences such as high turnover and absenteeism.

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