

PREDICTING OCCUPATIONAL STRESS FROM EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE OF CIVIL SERVANTS IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT: *The study focused on predicting occupational stress of civil servants from their emotional and social intelligence in Rivers State. The study adopted correlational design. A total of 600 civil servants were drawn through proportionate stratified sampling technique. Three instruments, Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS), Social Intelligence Scale (SIS) and Occupational Stress Inventory (OSI) which were validated and had reliability coefficients of 0.827 for EIS, 0.849 for SIS and 0.953 for OSI respectively. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Relevant data gathered were analyzed with multiple regression analysis as statistical tool. The result of the study showed that the combination of emotional intelligence dimensions and social intelligence components are significant predictors of the occupational stress of both female and male civil servants and the predictive strengths accounted for 81.9% and 91.6% respectively for the variance in the occupational stress. Based on the findings, it is recommended that since it has been established that both emotional intelligence and its dimensions as well as social intelligence and its components could predict the occupational stress of civil servants, efforts should be made by individual researchers and Government sponsored researchers to further research on whether high or low emotional and social intelligences could increase or decrease occupational stress among civil servants.*

KEYWORDS: Occupational stress, Emotional intelligence, Social intelligence, Civil servants, Rivers State

INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence (EI) has prominence in organizational effectiveness. It is defined by psychological theorists as the ability to learn or understand or to deal with new or trying situations. That is, the cognitive abilities of an individual to learn from experience, to reason well, and to cope effectively with the demands of daily living. Other theorists stated that emotional intelligence involves the capabilities to perceive, appraise, and express emotion; to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer and Salovey, 1997).

It is documented in early researches that roots of emotional intelligence can be traced back to intelligence such as Wechsler (1958) who explained intelligence as the aggregate or global capacity of the individual to deal effectively with his environment. Wechsler had acknowledged that in addition to cognitive factors, there are also non-cognitive factors that determine intelligent behaviour. In 1983, Gardner first published his theory, derived from extensive brain research, on multiple Intelligence including intrapersonal (self-awareness/self-management) and interpersonal (relationship awareness/management). Gardner argues that people have several "separate" intellectual capacities, each of which deserves to be called

intelligence. According to Gardner's work, there are seven intelligences. Namely; Linguistic intelligence, Musical intelligence, Logical-mathematical intelligence, Bodily kinesthetic intelligence, Naturalist intelligence, Interpersonal intelligence and Intrapersonal intelligence. Gardner's renewal of social intelligence under the facade of interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence proved a powerful push to those interested in emotional intelligence as a skill and a competency that was being ignored in the context of training and development of skilled personnel both as pupils in the school system and as producers in the context of administrative and economic systems.

There are three main models of emotional intelligence. The first model by Peter Salovey and John Mayer perceives emotional intelligence as a form of pure intelligence, that is, emotional intelligence is a cognitive ability. A second model by Reuven Bar-On (2002) visualized emotional intelligence as a mixed intelligence, consisting of cognitive ability and personality aspects. This model emphasizes how cognitive and personality factors influence general well-being. The third model, introduced by Daniel Goleman (1995), also observes emotional intelligence as a mixed intelligence involving cognitive ability and personality aspects. However, unlike the model proposed by Reuven Bar-On, Goleman's model focuses on how cognitive and personality factors determine workplace success.

Goleman's work has been influential to develop the concept of emotional intelligence in the context of work organizations and administrative units. In this application of emotional intelligence, Goleman subtly shifts his discourse from multiple intelligences to multiple competencies. He groups work competencies into three categories that include purely technical skills (such as accounting and business planning); cognitive (such as analytical reasoning); and competencies demonstrating emotional intelligence (such as the ability to work with others and effectiveness in leading change). Goleman argues that emotional intelligence has importance when work is uncertain, increasingly interdependent and knowledge based. Goleman further argues that in the new economy, emotional skills are required to establish conditions for sharing knowledge and developing trust which is vital for the development of functional teams.

The concept of "social intelligence" was first identified by Thorndike (1920), when he distinguished between social intelligence and mechanical intelligences. The definition of social intelligence is still being debated in the literature. One of the most famous definitions of social intelligence is the original definition of Thorndike.

Thorndike (1920) defined social intelligence as (i) the ability to understand and manage people and (ii) the ability to act wisely in human relations. Subsequent research has been generally based on Thorndike's above definition. For example, Wedeck (1947) defined social intelligence as correctly judging the feelings, moods, and motivations of people. According to Walker and Foley (1973), social intelligence is the ability to deal with people, understand the feelings, thoughts and intentions of others, judge correctly the feelings, moods and motivations of individuals. Marlowe (1986) stated that social intelligence or social competence is the ability to understand the feelings, thoughts and behaviours of persons, including one's own, in interpersonal situations and to act appropriately upon that understanding. Habib (1994) defined social intelligence as, an individual's ability to behave in social situations, distinguish the psychological conditions of others from their facial expressions, judge human behaviour, remember names and faces, understand jokes, participate with others in their free time and have knowledge of proverbs and wisdoms.

Al-Badri (2001) defined it as the ability to understand the feelings, intentions and ideas of others or comprehend social situations faced by the individual through his relationships with others. Also, Al-Mutairi defined social intelligence as a type of intelligence that is used by individual in their interaction with others and in social relationships, and he indicates that high social intelligence is synonymous with the concept of tact (Al-Mutairi, 2000). Based on the definitions given above, the researchers proposed that social intelligence may be defined as the ability to build successful relationships, display empathy toward others and their feelings, and act wisely in different situations.

However, despite that a generally accepted definition of social intelligence has not been agreed upon, in some of the studies carried out on the subject, the concepts of social competence and social skills were sometimes used instead of social intelligence. In line with the difficulties confronted in defining social intelligence, in spite of the fact that social intelligence had been analyzed in early studies on the bases of two aspects, namely cognitive (understanding people) and behavioral (managing people) aspects, later studies put forth the fact that it has a multiple aspect structure. However, different arguments have been suggested about the aspects within the scope of social intelligence. In his social intelligence model, Marlowe (1986) proposed a four-dimensional construct: (i) Social interest (to be interested in others) (ii) Social self-sufficiency, (iii) Empathy skills (the ability to understand others cognitively and emotionally), and (iv) Social performance skills (observable social behaviours).

Kozmizki and John (1993) stated that social intelligence is made up of seven constituents: (i) to sense the internal conditions and moods of others (ii) a general ability of establishing relationships with persons (iii) knowledge about social theories and life (iv) social intuition and sensitivity in case of complex social circumstances (v) use of techniques in order to manipulate others (vi) empathy and (vii) social adaptation. Silberman (2000) examined social intelligence and the traits of individuals having social intelligence on the base of eight aspects: (i) Understanding people (ii) expressing one's own feelings and ideas (iii) expressing one's own needs (boldness) (iv) giving/receiving feedback to/from the person contacted (v) influencing, motivating and persuading others (vi) offering innovative solutions to complex situations (vii) working cooperatively instead of individualistically, being a good team member, and (viii) adopting the appropriate attitude in the event relationships come to a deadlock. Also, according to Buzan (2002), social intelligence comprises of eight factors: (i) reading persons' minds: understanding and knowing people by making use of their body signals and verbal and nonverbal communication data (ii) active listening skill (iii) sociability (iv) influencing others (v) being active in social medium (popularity) (vi) negotiation and social problem solving (vii) persuasion, and (viii) knowing how to behave in different social mediums.

Nevertheless, for this study the components of social intelligence the researchers are interested in categorized social intelligence in three namely; social information processing, social skills and social awareness presented by Silvera, Martinussen and Dahl (2001) because of the simplified nature of the classification of the components of Social Intelligence (SI).

Occupation is any kind of business, trade or work which people engage in at one time or another. In every occupation as in civil service, there are specific kinds of stressors found both within the job or work routine and the environment where the job or work is being carried out, that make workers or employees to develop stress (Amadi, 2011). Thus, the stress a group of workers or employees experience in course of carrying out their work is known as occupational stress.

Occupational stress is experienced as a result of some basic work factors, such as condition of a job, work overload, role conflict, role ambiguity, work pressure, work environment and work hazards (Abokwara, as cited in Amadi (2011)).

The condition of a job varies from one job to another. It covers the rules and principles that guide the persons involved in the work. The condition of a particular job could be that the work is on a full-time or part-time basis, personal or public in nature, remunerable or pecuniary, causal or permanent, pensionable or non-pensionable, etc. when worker perceive their work as one that cannot guarantee them a safe future, or one that will not last long or one that cannot lead them towards achieving their life ambitions, they develop severe stress while doing it. Common expectations of workers or employees include that a work should take care of their present and future lives and that their work should make them have a sense of worth in the society. Thus, if the conditions of any work or job fail to ensure the realization of these expectations, the workers would constantly have stress. The specified set of conditions of any given work, will determine the extent to which the workers or employees are stressed doing that work or job.

Based on the brief above, the model below is the cardinal investigation of this study.

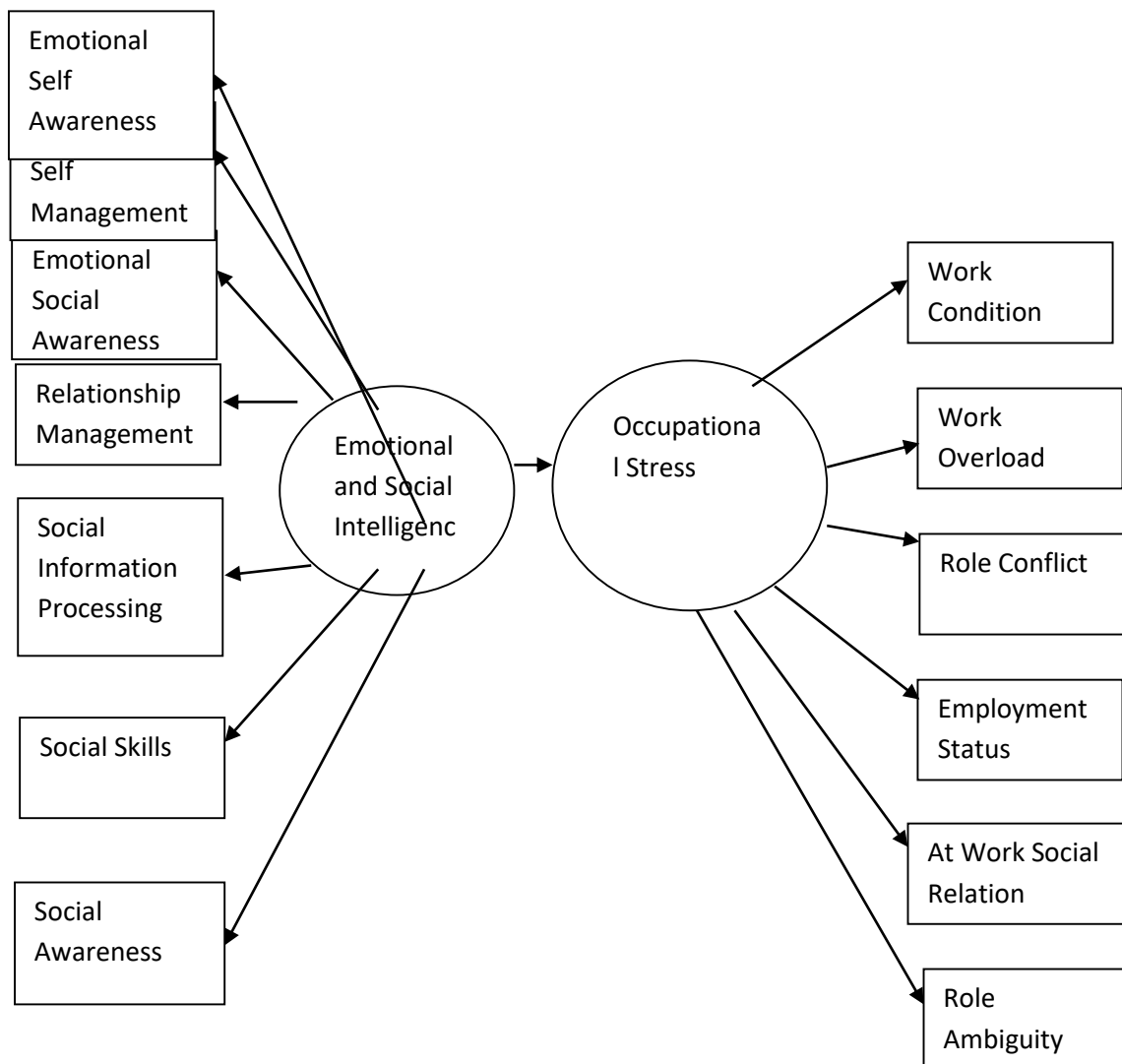


Figure 1: Research Model

A good number of research studies have been carried out on the relationship between emotional and social intelligence and occupational stress. Some of such studies include; Krishnakumar and Lalitha (2014) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational stress of BPO engage in ePublishing and digital solutions located in Puducherry, South India. The study revealed there was positive relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational stress.

Yamani, Shahabi and Haghani (2014) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and job stress (JS) in the faculty members of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences (IUMS) in Iran and found out that, inverse correlation existed between the total score of EI and the level of JS ($r = -0.235$, $p = 0.005$). Moreover, among the factors of EI, self-awareness and self-management scores had significant inverse relationship with the level of JS. Linear regression analysis showed that the EI factors explained approximately 7% of the variance of JS levels of the teachers. Similarly, Khaniyan, Foroughan, Hosseini, and Biglarian (2013) conducted a study to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational stress among rehabilitation staffs in Tehran's training hospitals. The results showed an inverse significant relationship existed between occupational stress and emotional intelligence ($P < 0.001$, $r = -0.33$). There are, also, significant relationships between subscales of emotional intelligence including self-awareness ($P = 0.031$, $r = -0.18$), social skills ($P < 0.001$, $r = -0.302$), empathy ($P = 0.006$, $r = -0.238$) and occupational stress. The results of multiple regressions indicated that the two subscales of 'understanding other's emotions' and 'social skills' can be used for predicting occupational stress. Thus promotion of emotional intelligence through implementing training courses may lower rehabilitation staffs occupational stress or prevent it the article concluded.

However, Belias, Koustelios, Koutiva and Zournatzi (2013) investigated the occupational stress experienced by bank employees in Greece and its connection with emotional intelligence and demographic factors. More specifically, the feeling of occupational stress and the level of emotional intelligence among Greek bank employees are investigated both separately and in correlation. In addition, it was investigated how demographic characteristics are likely to affect the feeling of occupational stress and the level of emotional intelligence of employees in bank institutions in Greece. In addition, the study investigated whether the individual dimensions of emotional intelligence are likely to predict the level of occupational stress experienced by Greek bank employees. The results of the study showed that occupational stress among Greek bank employees was likely to be affected by some demographic factors and partially predicted by some dimensions of emotional intelligence. Other previous studies similar to the present one include that of Abbasenejad, Farahani and Nakhaei (2013); Goswami and Talukdar (2013); Kalyoncu, Guney, Arslan, Guney, Ayranci (2012); Darvish and Nasrollahi (2011); and Jude (2011).

Occupational stress seems to be a plague, eating deep into the fabrics of our state. Experience shows that government civil service has recorded a high rate of sudden collapse of its' employees, due to the fact that they are saddled with enormous work load, without adequate salaries and allowances, an increase in responsibility is not usually accompanied with a corresponding increase in remuneration. Workers are paid peanut and the peanuts not paid as at when due. Workers face over bearing supervisors and poor working environment which are all precursors to occupational stress.

The immediate fallout of the above scenario among civil servants may include but not limited to, being aggressive to colleagues or client; developing unfavourable or negative attitude to

work; suffer from mood swing thereby being unhappy sometimes at work; low productivity which could lead to below average performance. Others are, failure to meet departmental or unit targets; inefficiency; absenteeism, which will in turn lead to piling up of files that should have been attended to; and low energy level, which could lead to lack of enthusiasm and unhealthy personal disposition culminating in ill health. These challenges may be psychological, social and emotional in nature. Therefore, may bring to bear the emotional and social intelligence of the worker in his work life.

Again, to the best of the researchers knowledge there is a paucity of research work in Nigeria on emotional and social intelligence as predictors of occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State, thereby, creating additional impetus for this study to be conducted. Therefore, the problem of this study is; to what extent is occupational stress of civil servants in Rivers State predicted by their emotional intelligence and social intelligence?

To answer this question, two hypotheses were postulated:

1. The combination of emotional intelligence dimensions and social intelligence components are not significant predictors of occupational stress of female civil servants.
2. The combination of emotional intelligence dimensions and social intelligence components are not significant predictors of occupational stress of male civil servants.

METHODOLOGY

The design adopted in the conduct of this study was the correlational research design. The population for the study comprised of 5,959 civil servants in 26 ministries, from which 600 respondents was drawn through proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Three instruments were used for data collection in the study. The first was Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) modified and adapted for use in this research. It was developed by Genos in 2010. The second was Social Intelligence Scale (SIS) modified and adapted for use in this research. It was developed and standardized by Silvera, Martinussen and Dahl (2001). The third instrument was titled, Occupational Stress Inventory (OSI), modified and adapted for use in this study. The OSI was developed by Seaward (2005).

The reliability of the three instruments was determined via the application of Cronbach alpha technique as a measure of its internal consistency by administering it to 30 civil servants randomly selected, who were not part of the study. The coefficients obtained for each section of EIS were as follows; emotional self-awareness(ESA), 0.715; emotional self management(ESM), 0.523; emotional social awareness(ESOA), 0.569; relationship management(RM), 0.680; the entire instrument, 0.827. For SIS, we had 0.587 for social information processing (SIP), 0.658 for social skills (SS), 0.709 for social awareness (SA), and 0.849 for the entire instrument. The third instrument, OSI had an internal consistency of 0.953 coefficient value. Through the assistance of research assistants data were gathered for 28 working days and subjected to multiple regression analysis as statistical tool.

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: The combination of emotional intelligence dimensions and social intelligence components are not significant predictors of the occupational stress of female civil servants.

To test the significance of this null hypothesis, multiple regression analysis was performed on the data obtained with occupational stress scores of female civil servants and the dimensions of emotional intelligence as well as the components social intelligence. The results of the joint contributions of the dimensions of emotional intelligence and the components of social intelligence on occupational stress of female civil servants together with the predictive power of these variables are as shown on Table 1.

Table 1 showed that the four dimensions of emotional intelligence and the three components of social intelligence could collectively predict occupational stress of female civil servants. The multiple regression analysis shows an R-value of .905 and an R²-value of .819. Also, Table 1 showed the test of significance of this predictive relationship. The test output shows an F-ratio of 247.291, which is significant at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 1: Matrix of intercorrelations, Summary of joint predictive strength and Analysis of Variance showing the significance of the joint prediction of emotional intelligence dimensions and components of social intelligence on occupational stress of female civil servants

	OS	ESA	ESM	ESOA	RM	SIP	SS	SA
OS	1.000	.020	.257	-.102	-.232	.742	.825	.801
ESA		1.000	.358	.372	.513	-.346	.069	.050
ESM			1.000	.191	.137	.074	.268	.175
ESOA				1.000	.224	-.205	-.159	-.166
RM					1.000	-.202	-.262	-.158
SIP						1.000	.634	.766
SS							1.000	.646
SA								1.000
Model	Multiple R		R ²		Adj R ²		Std EE	
Values	.905		.819		.816		6.312	
SV	SS		df	MS	F		Sig	
Regression	68969.738		7	9852.820	247.291*			
	.000							
Residual	15259.868		383	39.843				
Total	84229.606		390					

*Significant at $p < 0.05$ level of Significance

The implication of this test is that the four dimensions of emotional intelligence as well as the three components of social intelligence, when considered collectively, are significant

predictors of occupational stress of female civil servants. To this end, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result is that the combination of emotional intelligence dimensions and social intelligence components are significant predictors of the occupational stress of female civil servants.

A further analysis of Table 1 reveals that the four dimensions of emotional intelligence and the three components of social intelligence could account for up to 81.9% of the occupational stress of female civil servants. That is also to say that the four dimensions of emotional intelligence (emotional self awareness, emotional self management, emotional social awareness and relationship management) and the three components of social intelligence (social information processing, social skills and social awareness) jointly explains 81.9% of the variance in occupational stress of female civil servants.

Hypothesis 2: The combination of emotional intelligence dimensions and social intelligence components are not significant predictors of the occupational stress of male civil servants.

To test the significance of the null hypothesis, multiple regression analysis was performed on the data obtained with occupational stress scores of male civil servants and the dimensions of emotional intelligence as well as the components social intelligence. The results of the joint contributions of the dimensions of emotional intelligence and the components of social intelligence on occupational stress of male civil servants together with the predictive power of these variables are as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that the four dimensions of emotional intelligence and the three components of social intelligence could collectively predict occupational stress of male civil servants. The multiple regression analysis shows an R-value of .957 and an R²-value of .916. In addition, the test output shows an F-ratio of 302.079, which is significant at 0.05 level of significance.

The implication of this test is that the four dimensions of emotional intelligence as well as the three components of social intelligence, when considered collectively, are significant predictors of occupational stress of male civil servants. To this end, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result is that the combination of emotional intelligence dimensions and social intelligence components are significant predictors of the occupational stress of male civil servants.

Table 2: Matrix of intercorrelations, Summary of joint predictive strength and Analysis of Variance showing the significance of the joint prediction of emotional intelligence dimensions and components of social intelligence on occupational stress of male civil servants

OS	ESA	ESM	ESOA	RM	SIP	SS	SA	
OS	1.000	-.060	-.625	.140	.019	.494	.799	.702
ESA		1.000	.193	.845	.103	-.112	.239	.094
ESM			1.000	.033	.381	-.090	-.316	-.148
ESOA				1.000	.116	-.128	.261	.135
RM					1.000	.688	.357	.508
SIP						1.000	.757	.817
SS							1.000	.951
SA								1.000
Model	Multiple R		R ²	Adj R ²		Std EE		

SV	SS	df	MS	F	Sig
Regression	41971.372	7	5995.910	302.079*	
Residual	3830.817	193	19.849		
Total	45802.189	200			

*Significant at $p < 0.05$ level of Significance

A further analysis of Table 2 reveals that the four dimensions of emotional intelligence and the three components of social intelligence could account for up to 91.6% of the occupational stress of male civil servants. That is also to say that the four dimensions of emotional intelligence (emotional self awareness, emotional self management, emotional social awareness and relationship management) and the three components of social intelligence (social information processing, social skills and social awareness) jointly explains 91.6% of the variance in occupational stress of male civil servants.

DISCUSSION

Combined effect of the dimensions of emotional intelligence and the components of social intelligence on occupational stress

With particular reference to female civil servants, it was found out that the combination of emotional intelligence dimensions and social intelligence components were significant predictors of the occupational stress of female civil servants. A further analysis of the results revealed that the four dimensions of emotional intelligence and the three components of social intelligence accounted for up to 81.9% of the variance in the occupational stress of female civil servants. That is also to say that the four dimensions of emotional intelligence (emotional self awareness, emotional self management, emotional social awareness and relationship management) and the three components of social intelligence (social information processing, social skills and social awareness) jointly explained 81.9% of the variance in occupational stress of female civil servants.

In the same vein, the combination of emotional intelligence dimensions and social intelligence components are significant predictors of the occupational stress of male civil servants. Furthermore, the results also revealed that the four dimensions of emotional intelligence and the three components of social intelligence accounted for up to 91.6% of the variance in the occupational stress of male civil servants. That is also to say that the four dimensions of emotional intelligence (emotional self awareness, emotional self management, emotional social awareness and relationship management) and the three components of social intelligence (social information processing, social skills and social awareness) jointly explained 91.6% of the variance in occupational stress of male civil servants.

These results are remarkably interesting because the collective effect of the dimensions of emotional intelligence and the components of social intelligence on the occupational stress of civil servants was surprisingly significant when compared with the separate constructs. In

addition, the explainable variance in the occupational stress of civil servants increased from 81.9% for female civil servants to 91.6% for male civil servants. This implies that the occupational stress of civil servants could be explained outstandingly from the combined predictive strength of their emotional and social intelligences.

However, the researcher could not find results of other research work that are in support or collaborative of the present one, or even in discordant with the finding of the present one in the body of literature reviewed. This was due largely to dearth or scarcity of literature in this area of study. Conversely, the outcome of this study with respect to the combined prediction of the occupational stress of civil servants by their emotional and social intelligences is novel and thus will serve as basic literature for further research in this area.

Consequently, it is recommended by the researchers that since it has been established that both emotional intelligence and its dimensions as well as social intelligence and its components could predict the occupational stress of civil servants, efforts should be made by individual researchers and Government sponsored researchers to further research on whether high or low emotional and social intelligences could increase or decrease occupational stress among civil servants.

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