Influence of Emotional Dissonance and Demographic Variables on Work Contentment of Electro-Mechanical Technology Workers in Construction Industries

by
Jimoh Bakare, Ph. D & Ayodele Emmanuel
DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL TECHNICAL EDUCATION
FACULTY OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA

Abstract
The study investigated the influence of emotional dissonance and demographic variables on work contentment of electro-mechanical technology workers in construction industries. Three research questions were developed and answered while one hypothesis formulated was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a correlational research design and was carried out in North Central States of Nigeria. The population for the study was 150 electro-mechanical technology workers. There was no sampling because of manageable size of the population. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire titled Emotional Dissonance and Work Contentment Questionnaire (EDAWCQ). Three experts face- validated the instrument. The internal consistency of the questionnaire items was determined using Cronbach alpha reliability method and the reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained for items in Emotional Dissonance section of the questionnaire, and 0.81 for items on work contentment of electro-mechanical technology workers, while the overall reliability coefficient of the items in the questionnaire was 0.89. Five research assistants were involved in data collection using the Questionnaire. Out of 150 copies of questionnaire distributed, 147 copies were retrieved back which represent 92 percent return rate. Mean and Pearson product moment correlation method were employed to analysis data for answering research questions while regression analysis was conducted for testing hypotheses formulated. The findings of the study revealed that: (i) the extent of work contentment of mechanical technology workers in construction industries is moderately high, (ii) the correlation between emotional dissonance and work contentment of electro-mechanical Technology workers is very weak, (iii) A positive weak relationship exists between emotional dissonance and length of Service, (iv) A negative very weak correlation exists between emotional dissonance, age, gender and marital status of electro-mechanical Technology Workers. The findings on hypotheses revealed that significant relationship does not exist between emotional dissonance and work contentment of electro-mechanical technology workers. Recommendations include that work contentment of electro-mechanical workers in construction industries should be improved through workshops and seminars.

Keywords: emotional dissonance, electro-mechanical, workers, technology, work contentment

Introduction

Workers generally help in achieving the objectives of any establishment or organisation such as construction industries. Industry generally can mean a place where raw materials are used for the production of other useful goods or products. Construction industries in modern society act as one of the key drivers in economic growth of a country. According to Chelsea (2018), industries are those organisations that engage in the transformation of goods, materials or substances into new products. The transformational process can be physical, chemical or mechanical in nature. Workers make use of various relevant machines and equipment in the process of manufacturing, or rendering a service.

Construction industries are the sectors of the economy that designs, builds, improves and repairs buildings, structures and infrastructures such as roads and bridges (Emmanuel, 2023). Several categories of workers in construction industries exist in different demography in this capital-intensive sector. Most times different index variables are formed on the basis of socio-demographic variables; an example is socio-economic status which combines information on education and income (Gboyega, & Popoola, 2010). Socio-demographic details are also used to describe realised samples and to determine sampling error (Kanife, 2021). The demographic composition of this sector includes; length of service also known as year of experience, gender, age, marital status and skill set, among others. The diversities of these compositions and the importance of their services to the growth of the companies they work for and of course that of the entire construction industries at large makes it incumbent to take a foray into their emotional state.

Emotion drives the pursuit and endeavour of an individual no matter where they are and what they do. Emotional state of a construction worker is also as important and his or her intellectual capabilities or motor skills. Emotions propel the action, interest, intent, contentment, commitment and productivity of workers in a construction industry, no matter their age, gender, marital status, length of service or reputation (Emmanuel, 2023). The conflict between emotions or Emotional Dissonance is therefore an important variable in the schedule of work or activities of any worker especially electro-mechanical technology workers at construction site.

The schedule of work in construction industries is such that there is intense interaction between workers, materials and equipment. Industrial jobs with such intense interactions have the potential to influence workers' contentment, as a result of sustained emotional involvement in the workplace. In a construction industry, different workers have different emotions which are difficult to be aligned with the company's desired emotions; until it is otherwise communicated by some other means (Emmanuel, 2023). Every construction industry has goals, objectives and values clearly expressed to workers, however the emotion expected of workers by the industry is always reticent and thus is never going to be accounted for explicitly. This difference in emotions is what could be called emotional dissonance.

Emotional dissonance is the separation of felt emotion from expressed emotion to meet external expectation (Johnson & Spector, 2017). Paige and Rutner (2008) posited that emotional dissonance is what occurs whenever expressed emotions are in conformity with organizational norms, but are clashing with true feelings. Subhash and Gaba (2017) expressed emotional dissonance as a form of person-role conflicts, in which a person's response conflicts with role expectations of the desired level of emotion, while Iyer and Yadav (2019) portrayed emotional dissonance in the light of emotional labour. The felt emotion here is the real personal emotion being experienced by a electro-mechanical technology worker at construction site, the expressed emotion is emotion the worker is displaying in order to conform to emotional standard expected of him/her at the construction site. Emotional dissonance occurs when there is a disparity between the emotions that are currently felt and the emotions supposed to be expressed according to the organization's extant laws or rules and regulations. Karatepe and Aleshinloye (2009) viewed emotional dissonance as a work-related stressor which is very common among employees working in service industries like construction companies. The authors further inferred that worker constantly engage in display of emotions which often does not match with the emotions they actually feel.

This trait is not only commonly peculiar to construction workers in general but essentially common among electro-mechanical technology workers in road construction industries.

Electro- mechanical technology workers in construction industries interact with machines and materials to accomplish tasks, as a result they are prone to exhibit certain emotions which may not necessarily be their true felt emotions but are constrained to act in accordance with the emotion that will enhance effective interaction between material and machine they work with. Iyer and Yadav (2019) highlighted the harmful effect of emotional labour of which emotional dissonance is a part, while they explicitly defined emotional dissonance as a component of emotional labour which is the difference between felt and expressed emotions. Thus, emotional dissonance is a state, where temporary feelings of electro-mechanical technology worker in a construction industry are conflicting with his/her true feelings in the discharge of his/her duties at the construction site. Emotional dissonance can be linked to a variety of work effects and critical constructs like work contentment, commitment and productivity. According to Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) there is a connection between emotional dissonance and work contentment as well as the likelihood of productivity. Even though the positive correlation between emotional dissonance and work contentment has widespread support and acceptance, there are still contradictions (Pugh, Groth and Hennig-Thurau, 2011). From the submission of Bono and Vey (2005), work contentment is the most studied outcome in the emotional labour literature and it has been related to emotional dissonance in a direct way. Previous theoretical researches on emotional dissonance indicate a negative relationship between emotional dissonance and work contentment (Yang & Chang 2008; Talebpour, Mikaeli & Mousakhedmatgoza, 2013).

Work contentment is an important variable in an ideal working environment that implicitly enhances commitment and productivity (Emmanuel, 2023). Contentment of a construction worker could be attributed to being satisfied with workplace conditions which invariably results in high productivity. Traditionally, work contentment has been described as an evaluative judgment that focuses on all feelings that a person has about his or her work, (Lu, While & Barriball, 2005). Locke and Latham (2012) defined work contentment as something that is enjoyable and pleasant which usually gives positive output. Begley and Czajk (2019) viewed work contentment as very important because it is associated with employees' performance and motivation. Despite this, the relationship between work contentment and emotional dissonance remains cryptic. Emotional dissonance may result in feigned emotional reactions, internal tension and lack of work contentment (Brotherigde & Grandey 2002). A construction worker loving his or her work schedule and finding accomplishment and fulfillment in it is essentially what is regarded as work contentment. Work contentment is the mixture of a mechanical technology worker's feelings and emotions on how his /her duty at work impacts his or her life. If work contentment improves, commitment of the workers in road construction industries may get better and certainly the productivity will be relatively higher too. Work contentment which can otherwise be stated as job satisfaction is a variable that is central to the overall progress of work in construction industries especially road construction.

Emotion drives the pursuit and endeavour of an individual, no matter where they are and what job they do. In Construction Industries where interaction between human, machine and materials is integral to the daily functions of workers, emotional dissonance have to be managed accordingly in order to facilitate this interaction. Julian (2008) posited

that Emotional Dissonance might result in role stress, role conflict, job dissatisfaction and low productivity especially among key workers in an organization. Mechanical Technology Workers are key workers in Construction Industries and are prone to experience emotional dissonance. Emotional Dissonance occurs when employees do not identify with the job role and fake their emotions in order to fulfill job expectation (Philips et al, 2006). Sequel to this submission, a significant causative factor of work contentment leading to high extent of productivity among Construction Workers is the ability of the workers to identify with their job role. When electro-mechanical technology workers cannot clearly identify with their job role at construction site, it will be difficult for them to experience high extent of work contentment which is an important contributory factor to high extent of productivity in the construction industries. Hence the need to explore the concept of emotional dissonance as it relates to work contentment and demographic variables of electro-mechanical technology workers in road construction industries.

There is currently no empirical data specifically showing the relationship between Emotional Dissonance of Construction Workers and Demographic Variables such as Age, Gender, Marital Status and Length of Service of Construction Workers. Also, little or nothing at all is known on the influence of the afore-stated demographic variables on emotional dissonance and work contentment of construction workers. Although, some studies found that workers' marital status (Ng & Feldman, 2010), Length of Service (Amenger 2021), Age and Qualifications (Stoeber, Mutineli & Corr, 2016) determine their emotional dissonance and productivity; there is however no empirical data specifically showing the relationship between emotional dissonance and demographic variables of workers in construction industries, influence of demographic variables on emotional dissonance and work contentment of construction Workers. Hence there is need to investigate the influence of Emotional Dissonance and demographic variables on work contentment of electro-mechanical technology workers in construction industries.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of emotional dissonance and demographic variables on work contentment of electro-mechanical Technology workers in construction industries. Specifically, the study determined the:

1. extent of work contentment of electro-mechanical technology workers in construction Industries
2. relationship between emotional dissonance and work contentment of electro-mechanical technology workers in construction industries.
3. relationship between emotional dissonance and demographic composition (Age, Gender, Marital Status and Length of Service) of electro-mechanical technology workers in Construction Industries

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the extent of work contentment of electro-mechanical technology workers in Construction Industries?
2. What is the relationship between emotional dissonance and work contentment of electro-mechanical technology workers in Construction Industries?
3. What is the relationship between emotional dissonance and stated Demographic Variables (Age, Gender, Length of Service and Marital Status) of electro-Mechanical Technology Workers in Construction Industries?

Hypotheses

The following null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Significant relationship does not exist between emotional dissonance and work contentment of electro-mechanical technology workers in construction industries

Methodology

The study employed a correlational research design. Correlational research design was appropriate for this study because it determined the relationship between emotional dissonance and work contentment as well as the demographic variables e.g. Age, Gender, Marital Status and length of service of Mechanical technology workers in construction industries.

The area of the study was North Central States, which includes; Kogi, Kwara, Plateau, Benue, Niger, Nasarawa and FCT Abuja. The population for the study was 300 electro-mechanical technology workers working on on-going Federal Road construction projects across North central states in the country. The number was based on the monthly progress reports and Interim Statements submitted to Federal Ministry of Works by construction companies undertaking federal road projects in the zone. There was no sampling because of the manageable size of the research population.

The instruments for data collection were two adapted scales. Emotional dissonance scale was adapted from Zapf et al (1999); work contentment scale from Sue Hayday (2017). The entire questionnaire was made up of two sections. Section A was to elicit demographic information such as age, gender, marital status and length of service from respondents. Section B comprised of two parts: Part 1 which was the scale for measuring emotional dissonance of electro-mechanical technology workers in construction industries. Part 2 was the scale for measuring work contentment of electro-mechanical technology workers. Items in these sections were structured into five response options of: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD) with corresponding values of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

The instrument for data collection was subjected to face validation by three experts, in the Department of Industrial Technical Education, Faculty of Vocational and technical education, University of Nigeria Nsukka. The Experts' judgement, suggestions and corrections where necessary on the instrument were reviewed and incorporated to improve the final copy of the instrument for this research.

In order to determine the internal consistency of the instrument, the instrument was administered to some mechanical technology workers in road construction projects across Enugu State which is not part of the study area. Cronbach Alpha reliability method was deployed and thus reliability coefficient was obtained for each part of the instrument as follows: Emotional Dissonance – 0.82; Work Contentment – 0.84. The computation was carried out using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The overall reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.83, meaning that the instrument was reliable.

The researcher visited the headquarters Federal Ministry of Works Mabushi, Abuja for comprehensive list of on-going Federal Road construction projects in the study area, and then toured the projects personally and by proxy where necessary with the aid of research assistant's resident in respective states in the study area. From the monthly progress reports and Interim Statements submitted to Federal Ministry of Works (Client) by Construction Companies (Contractors), there are 300 Mechanical Technology Workers on on-going federal road projects in the study area. Therefore 300 copies of the instrument were administered on the mechanical technology

workers in the study area after which 276 were retrieved representing 92% return rate.

Point-biserial correlation was employed to analyze data for answering the research questions while multiple regression was used for testing of hypotheses formulated. The response to each item based on Likert five scale response options will be coded in SPSS and analyzed using Point-biserial correlation which converts the five response options to produce values between -1 and +1 to determine the strength of relationship. The Point-Biserial correlation coefficient is a correlation measure of the strength of association between a continuous level variable and binary variable. The responses to the items were interpreted by describing the strength of the correlation using the guide suggested by Evan (1996) for the absolute value of r as follows: - Very weak relationship = 0.00 – 0.19, weak relationship = 0.20 – 0.39, moderate relationship = 0.40 – 0.59, strong relationship = 0.60 – 0.79, very strong relationship = 0.80 – 1.00.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the extent of work contentment of electro-mechanical technology workers in Construction Industries?

Data for answering research question 1 are presented in Table 1

Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviation of the extent of Work Contentment of Mechanical Technology Workers in Construction Industries

S/N	Item Statements	X	SD	Remarks
1	I enjoy my mechanical technology work most days	3.55	0.71	Strongly Agree
2	I do interesting and challenging work with my machine	2.98	0.54	Agree
3	I am satisfied with my mechanical technology job	3.35	0.98	Agree
4	I am noticed when I do a good job with my machine at construction site	3.60	0.79	Strongly Agree
5	I get full credit for the mechanical technology work I do	3.72	0.61	Strongly Agree
6	I feel the level of responsibility I am given at construction site is acceptable	2.20	0.66	Disagree
7	I have a clear understanding of mechanical technology job responsibilities and what is expected of me	1.64	0.80	Disagree
8	The major satisfaction in my life comes from mechanical technology job I do	3.39	0.86	Agree
9	I often think about leaving my job as mechanical technology worker	3.29	0.89	Agree
10	I know the standards of mechanical technology work expected of me	2.29	0.71	Disagree
11	I feel my opinion counts at the construction site	2.77	0.88	Agree
12	I know where and how to get help if I have a problem with my machine at construction site	3.08	0.66	Agree
13	I feel my mechanical technology work colleagues treat me with respect	3.52	0.75	Strongly Agree
14	I feel my views count in the construction company	3.00	0.70	Agree
15	My job fully uses my mechanical technology skills	2.69	0.87	Agree
16	I have skills that are not utilized in my mechanical technology job	3.39	0.73	Agree
17	I feel I am doing a worthwhile job in construction industries	3.69	0.62	Strongly Agree
18	I get a feeling of accomplishment from my mechanical technology job	2.26	1.03	Disagree
19	I feel valued by senior management in my construction company	1.91	0.77	Disagree
20	My workshop manager and road superintendent let me know how I am doing in site operations	1.97	0.66	Disagree
	Grand Mean	2.92		

Data in presented in Table 1 revealed that the 15 items had a mean ranged from 2.69 to 3.72, this showed that their own mean value was above 2.50 which indicates that the respondents agreed on the corresponding items, however five items had a mean range from 1.69 to 2.29 which is below 2.50, this showed that the respondents did not agree on the corresponding items. The grand mean (2.92) also indicates that the extent of Work Contentment of electro-mechanical technology workers in construction industries is moderately high.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between emotional dissonance and work contentment of electro-mechanical technology workers in construction industries?

Data for answering research question 2 are presented in Table 2

Table 2: Bivariate Correlation between Emotional Dissonance and Work Contentment

Variables	1	2
1. Emotional dissonance	1	
2. Work contentment	.003	1

Table 2 shows the relationship between emotional dissonance and work contentment of electro-mechanical workers. It was observed that there was a positive correlation between emotional dissonance and work contentment of electro-mechanical technology workers in Construction Industries, however the value (.003) shows that the correlation between emotional dissonance and work contentment of electro-mechanical technology workers is very weak (.003). The positive correlation depicts the direction of the relationship, this implies that the variables move in the same direction to each other.

Research Question 3

What is the relationship between emotional dissonance and stated demographic composition (Age, Gender, Length of Service and Marital Status) of electro-mechanical technology workers in construction industries?

Data for answering research question 3 are presented in Table 3

Table 3: Bivariate Correlation between Emotional Dissonance and Demographic Variables (Gender, Age, Marital Status, Length of Service)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Emotional dissonance	1				
2. Gender	-.046	1			
3.Age	-.016	-.052	1		
4.Marital status	-.054	.297	-.144	1	
5.Length of service	.187	.063	.009	-.146	1

Table 3 depicts the correlation between emotional dissonance and stated demographic composition of electro-mechanical technology workers in construction industries. It was observed that there is a positive and weak relationship between emotional dissonance and length of service (.187), the table also shows there was a negative and very weak correlation between emotional dissonance, age, gender and marital status (-.046, -.016, -.054) of electro-mechanical technology workers in construction industries. The positive correlation also depicts the direction of the relationship, this implies that the variables move in the same direction to each other, while the negative relationship implies that the variables move in opposite direction to each other.

Hypotheses 1

Significant relationship does not exist between emotional dissonance and work contentment of electro-mechanical technology workers in construction industries

Data for testing hypothesis 1 are contained in Table 4

Table 4: Model Summary of Regression Analysis between Emotional Dissonance and Work Contentment of Electro-mechanical Technology Workers

Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients				
B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	R	R^2
69.685	6.377		10.928	.000	.003	.001
.005	.201	.003	.025	.980		

Table 4 highlights the model summary of Regression analysis between emotional dissonance and work contentment of electro-mechanical technology workers. It shows the value of correlation coefficient that is R and coefficient of determination that is R^2. The value of R represents the simple Pearson's correlation. The value of coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates how much of the variation in the predictor variable (emotional dissonance) can explain the outcome variable (work contentment). The value of $R^2$is .001 which means that 0.1% variation in the work contentment of electro-mechanical technology workers is explained by emotional dissonance. The Table also provides details of models' parameters (Beta values) and significance of these values. The unstandardized Beta coefficient gives measures of the contribution of each variable to the model. It is clear from the table that the value of unstandardized Beta is .005 which represents the gradient of regression line. Therefore, if the value of predictor variable (emotional dissonance) is increased by one unit, there is .005 unit increase in the outcome variable (work contentment). This impact is statistically not significant because sig. value p > .980 which is greater than .05 (95% confidence interval). Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. It may be concluded that significant relationship does not exist between emotional dissonance and work contentment of electro-mechanical technology workers in construction industries

Discussion of findings

The findings of the study reveal that the extent of work contentment of electro-mechanical technology workers in construction industries was moderately high. This finding agreed with the opinion of Begley and Czajk (2019) that if work contentment of workers improves, their Productivity will be relatively higher too. It was revealed that emotional dissonance has relationship with work contentment of electro-mechanical technology workers in construction industries. It was also found that significant relationship does not exist between emotional dissonance and work contentment of electro-mechanical technology workers in construction industries. The findings of the study were in agreement with the findings of Akova, Citin and Cifci (2015) that relationship exists between emotional dissonance and work commitment of workers in service sectors such as re-opening hotel businesses. These findings also agreed with the opinion of Klein, Solinger, Swart and Yalabik (2018) that the level of emotional dissonance of workers can correlate with their work contentment and can also dictate their extent of Productivity at workplace. According to Brotheridge and Grandey (2002), there is a connection between emotional dissonance and work contentment as well as the likelihood of productivity. Also,

Pugh, Groth and Hennig-Thurau (2011) suggested that, even though the positive correlation between emotional dissonance and job contentment has widespread support and acceptance, there are still contradictions to the literature.

Conclusion

Many workers including electro-mechanical technology workers in today's world of work are struggling to have a work-life balance. These struggles worsen if they are going through personal challenges. Electro-mechanical technology workers are expected to carry out assigned duties for a long time and still be productive. In order to be productive on their job, many construction workers have to put up brave faces at work in order to hide these personal challenges they are facing. Others who are not too good at hiding their true feelings are ultimately faced with work strain, mood swing, conflict of interest etc which invariably causes lack of work contentment and reduction in productivity. Thus, emotional dissonance and demographic variables appear to have some form of influence on work contentment, in construction industries and service sector, however, the extent of this influence is unknown or ambiguous at best and there is need for investigation. Hitherto, this study was conducted and findings revealed that relationship exists among emotional dissonance, work contentment, and demographic variables of electro-mechanical technology workers.

Recommendations

Based on the findings made and the conclusion drawn, the following recommendations were made:

1. The findings of the study should be implemented by government and other enabling bodies
2. The extent of work contentment of mechanical technology workers in construction companies should be improved through workshops and seminars.
3. Construction companies should prioritize the emotional health of their electro-mechanical technology workers through standard periodic emotional check and evaluation.
4. Employment status of electro-mechanical technology workers in construction industries should be regularized.

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