

Effect of Self Esteem on Perceived Job Insecurity: The Moderating Role of Self Efficacy and Gender

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Abstract

The high rate of job loss in most crude oil dependent countries, which may be attributed to the recent drop in the price of this commodity in international markets, has intensified the perception of threat associated with potential job loss among the employees who are still employed. Hence perceived job insecurity, its associated outcome, coupled with how it can be mitigated has become a global phenomenon, which requires the attention of managers and practitioners alike. In this work, we built upon Hobfall conservation of resource theory (CRT) to present a research model that links employee's self-efficacy and gender to the strength or weakness of the relationship between self-esteem and self-perceived job insecurity. Research data were collected from one hundred and fifty three (153) randomly selected Nigerian Bank employees out of a total of two hundred and seventeen (217) drawn from a total population of five hundred and nine (509). Based on the results from relevant statistical analysis, we discovered that while increase in self-esteem would lead to a significant decrease in job insecurity perception, such significant decrease is however not associated with self-efficacy and gender. Meaning that these variables are not moderators in the self-esteem, perceived job insecurity relationship. In line with these outcomes, we conclude by recommending that managers should focus on developing intervention strategies aimed at improving employee self-esteem with a view of reducing perceived job insecurity. In addition, important areas in need of future research were also identified.

Keywords: Self-esteem; Perceived job insecurity; Self-efficacy; Gender; Moderator

Introduction

Background to the study

For the Nigeria banking industry, the banking consolidation exercises in the year 2006 and 2009 have completely changed the operational basis of the industry and has also reduced the previous total of 89 independent banking institutions to just twenty one through reorganizations, mergers and acquisitions. According to Okurame [1] this has resulted in the retirement, retrenchment/summary dismissal of about 26.6% representing about 55,000 of the total employees in the industry with those still in service facing a daily threat of sack, casualization or demotion by their employers. In their reaction to this unpleasant trend Ajani and Adisa [2] lamented that it has put these employees in uncertain working conditions with a resultant fear of losing their jobs anytime. Consistent with this view, Aramide et al. [3] stressed that when labor forces are subjected to such workplace reorganization, it creates fear and uncertainty among those that are still employed. In addition to this inevitable reorganization is the present drop in crude oil price which accounts for about 90% of the nation's foreign earnings, the subsequent loss in value of the national currency, coupled with a significant drop in consumer power and ability to save, that has resulted in mass retrenchment and pay cut across banks.

For instance Diamond bank and Heritage Bank slash the salary of their workers by 30% in May 2016 while First bank and Wema Bank slash theirs by 20% in September of the same year. Furthermore, Diamond Bank and Eco-Bank Laid off a total of three thousand (3000) of their employees in early 2016 while Unity Bank reduced their own staff strength by three hundred (300) in September of the same year. This is likely to intensify the threat of job loss among those that are still employed [1-4] thereby making the perception of job insecurity an important area of concern both within the industry circle and the academia. With the view that job insecurity can be harmful to employee and organizational wellbeing, it has become important to place emphasis on what coping resources might aid in its prediction

[5]. In this regard, numerous factors have been proposed by the literature: the environmental or 'nurture-like' determinants of job insecurity which can be in form of perceived economic situation and precarious employment conditions of the company [6] and the nature-like characteristics such as people's attitudes, beliefs and values that determine how they generally view the world and respond to external stimuli around them [7]. Other factors that have been identified are personality traits [8]; job status [9], employability [10]; and social support [11]. In this research, the focus shall be on self-esteem as a personality characteristic with a view to determine its effect on perceived job insecurity among employees in the Nigerian banking industry. In addition, the potentiality of self-efficacy and gender as a moderator in this proposed relationship would be investigated.

The first line of research focus is predicated on three major arguments by previous researchers: (1) Semmer [12] who pointed that it has been previously recognized by stress researchers that differences in cognitive processes play a key role in the understanding of stressors in organizational settings (2) Lasdat [13] who highlighted the construct of self-esteem as a core self-evaluation that is related to the way we perceive and create meaning about the world in general, and therefore also influence our perceptions of insecurity within the work context (3) the theory of behavioral plasticity, states that individuals lower in self-esteem are prone to exhibit more responses to external stimuli such as social cue. Meaning that in organizational context, employees that are

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higher in self-esteem may be less responsive to negative information than their counterparts who are lower in this construct [14].

From an empirical point of view, studies that have considered the relationship between these two variables: Self-esteem and perceived job insecurity remains very few while the results from the studies have been mixed. For example, Kinnunen et al. [15], Orpen [16], De-Paola and Charkhabi [17] have discovered that higher self-esteem is a major contributor to a significant reduction in perceived job insecurity while other studies like Lasdat [13] sees it differently by revealing that the combination of self-esteem, self-efficacy, neuroticism and locus of control would only lead to a minor change of -0.10 in the reduction of perceived job insecurity. By focusing on these streams of findings, a major issue that came to the attention of this researcher is: it appears that the nature of the relationship between the two constructs is inconclusive and can still derive some measures of benefits from further empirical testing by focusing on investigating potential or undiscovered moderators [18].

In this present study, it is proposed that since the perception of job insecurity varies across individuals [19]. And as self-esteem has been identified as a characteristic whose effect varies across situations and individuals [20]. Then it is likely that those factors which aids in definition of human being as unique characteristics may assist in explaining the highlighted variation in the self-esteem and perceived job insecurity relationship. Moreso considering the fact that self-efficacy have also been identified as a cognitive resource, differing across individuals [7] in addition to (1) having the potential to mitigate the perception of job insecurity [21] and (2) the existence of strong connection between this construct and self-esteem [22,23]. Then it may be reasonable to suggest that the proposed negative relationship between self-esteem and perceived job insecurity would be stronger among individuals with higher perception of self-efficacy.

Moreover, based on the recommendation by De-Paola and Charkhabi [17] which pointed to the need for future studies to consider the role of demographic information in any attempt aimed at identifying self-esteem as a predictor of self-perceived job insecurity, the declaration by Okurame [1] and Cheng [5] which both link the concept of gender to the perception of job insecurity, coupled with the empirically supported data uncovered by Aregu [24], Nupur and Mahapatro [25] showing evidence that male are significantly more superior than female in perceived self-esteem, it is also proposed that the strength or weakness of the relationship would be determined by gender differences.

This research will be of immense benefits to both theory and practice among practitioners and the academia. In regards to practice, since researches have suggested that a change in perception of insecurity to feelings of being secured on the job will have an impact not only on employees' well-being but also on their work attitudes, behaviors and in the long run, on the vitality of the organization [26]. Understanding its antecedents and moderators can aid in developing intervention strategies for victims suffering from self-perceived job insecurity. For example, it has been stated that cognitive behavioral intervention on work stress are the most effective.

In regard to theory, it will be beneficiary in that it will aid in either strengthening or refuting the various theoretical assumptions that have been previously advanced by the individual differences, self-esteem and perceived job insecurity literature. For instance, the numerous controversies that characterize the inconsistencies across studies concerning the relationship among these variables should be laid to

rest by providing evidences of a link between the two main variables on one side, and the proposed moderators on the other side.

Review of Relevant Literature

Perceived job insecurity

The dynamism associated with events in the work-place these days has brought the issue of insecure working conditions to the forefront [9]. According to Smith [21] these activities, most especially among internationally competitive organizations is characterized by the need for information dissemination at a fast speed, the need for consistent in operations and an overbearing pressure to enhance organizational performance. As a result of this competitive landscape and the need to save costs, these organizations have resulted into downsizing and restructuring [27]. Meaning that in addition to trying to optimize on their workplace performance, employees also have to lurk in the shadow of uncertainty regarding the security of job positions. By highlighting the work of Stoner et al. [28] it may be argued that when the perception of job insecurity is high, the demand of work and associated lack of organizational commitment will be having negative effect on both individuals and the organization. Based on their observation, the negative physiological responses are insomnia; over-eating and poor nutrition; depression; physical health complaints and hypertension; which could translate into absenteeism, high turnover and low job performance. Moreover, it has been found to relate negatively with aspects of non-work-related well-being such as life satisfaction and happiness [29]. And its effect could carry over into the family domain (cf; spillover theory [30]). By comparing a potential job loss perception with actual job loss, it was pointed that the fear of experiencing the former can be more harmful than the later in that those who are already out of job might have become normalized to such situation and hence, less stressed as compared to others who are still faced with the uncertainties that is associated with potential job loss [31].

In a view to conceptualize job insecurity, Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt [32] pointed that it is the "perceived powerlessness to maintain desired continuity in a threatened job situation". In this regard, it was noticed that job insecurity is subjective in that even at comparable objective organizational situation; individuals tend to perceive different levels of job insecurity. Accordingly, De-Witte et al. [33] lamented that this subjective feelings represents the difference between the level of security individuals prefer and the level they experience. Thus, the broader the discrepancy between these two extremes, the higher the insecurity perception that is experienced.

As a buildup on this, Goretzki [34] maintains that job insecurity encompasses both the events involving loss of the whole job in addition to events involving the loss of any specific aspect of the job: loss of income, and promotion opportunities. This is in consistent with the earlier observation by Sverke et al. [35] in which two facets of this construct were identified: multidimensional and uni-dimensional. While the later, also referred to as quantitative job insecurity focuses on the perceived lack of control of future job loss itself, the former on the other hand, examine job insecurity as a combination of future job loss and the loss of aspects of the job [36]. It provides a building block for viewing "how an employee perceives the potential loss of quality in the employment relationship, such as deterioration of working conditions, demotion, lack of career opportunities, decreasing salary development, and concerns about person-organization fit in the future" [37]. This loss of quality in the employment relationship is referred to as qualitative job insecurity [38].

Nevertheless, despite its implications for theory and practice in organizational settings, majority of perceived job insecurity researches have focused on its consequences with a relatively large neglect of its antecedents [9]. From an extant review of the job insecurity literature, the drivers for these antecedents can be broadly divided into three: (1) environmental (2) company level and (3) individual variable level. The environmental drivers may exist in form of unemployment rate [39], technology which may be in form of downsizing and retrenchment [40], and government policies which may be in form of labor law and employment policies [39].

At the company level, organizational changes, company performance, union membership, public versus private sector, temporary versus permanent positions, and blue collar versus white collar designation are associated with the perception of job insecurity [7,39,41-44]. Furthermore, individual level variables such as negative affectivity, locus of control, demographic factors, core self-evaluation, self-esteem, emotional exhaustion have been linked to perceived job insecurity [9,13,43,45]. In this particular investigation, the focus shall be on (1) self-esteem, which constitutes an important personality attribute with a view to determine its direct consequence on perceived job insecurity and (2) the moderating influence of self-efficacy and gender in this relationship.

Self-esteem and perceived job insecurity

Self-esteem refers to an individual's overall self-evaluation of his/her competencies [46]. It reflects the degree to which the individual "sees self as competent, need-satisfying. In line with these conceptualizations Afari et al. [47] conceptualize self-esteem as one of the major factors in self-image and considered it to be an important determinant in human behavior. Self-esteem is how a person feels about him or herself, good or bad, and as manifested in a variety of ways, for example, in pride, shame, or self-confidence. In their opinion, the possession of high self-esteem has numerous psychological and behavioral benefits which can include independence, responsibility taking, and toleration of frustration, resistant to peer pressure, willingness to attempt new tasks and challenges, ability to handle positive and negative emotions, and willingness to offer assistance to others. For Khan et al. [48] the high self-esteem individual is characterized by a sense of personal adequacy and a sense of having achieved need satisfaction in the past. Based on the opinion of Arshadi and Hayavi [49] a high self-esteem people likes who and what they are and will tend to agree with statements like "I am a person of worth, on an equal plane with others" and "I am satisfied with myself".

Accordingly, Lasdat [13] lamented that since it has been sufficiently proven that the interpretation of job insecurity differs across individuals, it may be succinctly stated that those personal characteristics which can aid to distinguish across individuals would provide a better understanding of the underlying mechanism of job insecurity. "The four trait-indicators self-efficacy, self-esteem, locus of control and neuroticism are major determinants in the way we perceive and create meaning about the world in general which therefore also influence our perceptions of insecurity within the work context" [50]. In conformity with these views, De-Keyser et al. [51] pointed that self-esteem may affect the perception of work situations, the choice of coping strategies or the intensity with which a given individual takes action while Mraz [52] stated that those who attaches more sense of worth to their-selves are more likely to see stress as a challenge or opportunity for growth. Following this line of reasoning, this study deduces that employees high in self-esteem should exhibit less perception of job insecurity. Additionally since self-esteem has been

identified by Lazarus and Folkman [53] as an emotional based coping strategy which can aid in handling negative emotions associated with the stressful situation, we contend that individuals with higher sense of esteem should demonstrate a more active coping towards any stressed induced situation than their counterparts who have lower sense of esteem and may thus, find it more desirable to engage in avoidance coping.

Empirically, the longitudinal study by Kinnunen et al. [15] and Orpen [16] uncovered a strong direct and inverse relationship between self-esteem and job insecurity: while high job insecurity will lead to low self-esteem, low self-esteem on the other hand was uncovered as a precursor to high job insecurity, findings from recent study are in consistent with these streams of findings thereby implying that altering self-esteem may be beneficial whenever there is focus on altering behavioral symptoms that are associated with perceived job insecurity. Nonetheless, it would be in-appropriate to conclude based on these results in that other study such as Lasdat [13] have provided an empirically backed evidence to support the notion that this core self-evaluation would only exercise a weak influence on perceived job insecurity. By and large, as a result of these inconsistencies in findings, it is argued in this study that while there may exist a significant and negative relationship between self-esteem and perceived job insecurity, this relationship is likely to be contingent on some yet undiscovered moderators that requires investigation.

Hypothesis (1): There is a significant relationship between self-esteem and perception of job insecurity.

Self-esteem and perceived job insecurity (self-efficacy as a moderator)

According to Bandura [54] self-efficacy are "those beliefs in self-capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action aimed at producing some specific outcome". Self-efficacy is the judgment of how well an individual thinks they can put a task to completion based on their assessment of previous success with such task [55]. In consistent with this view, Bertrams et al. [56] identified the construct as the degree to which people believe they are capable of doing what is needed for success. Thus, from this conceptualization, it may be safe to conclude that within the organizational settings, it is an employee's overall assessment of self-capability in terms of executing job related tasks. Based on the theoretical argument that this perception of capability exercises a linear and direct relationship with both self-esteem on one side, and perceived job insecurity on the other side [21,34]. Then it may be possible that the strength or weakness of any relationship between self-esteem and perceived job insecurity would be subjected to variation based on its presence or absence.

To lend a fruitful insight into the potential moderating influence that this construct may exercise in this proposed relationship, this research would like to make inference to the behavioral plasticity theory. The main tenet of the behavioral plasticity theory is grounded on the assumption that people's attitude and behavior can be determined by the nature of their attention and response to the external factors within their environment. Specifically, this theory is of the view that since people differs in their attention and responses to external cue, then it tend to suggests that there are certain individual level attributes which interact with these external cues to determine the nature of these responses. To clarify further in this regard, Brockner identified self-esteem as one of these human attributes and declared that people with low self-esteem are likely to react more to external cues than their counterpart who are more in this attribute. Thus in the context of

an organizations, since change related issues such as reorganization, restructuring, retrenchment, downsizing, and introduction of new technology are cues within the work environment which may likely manifest in the perception of job insecurity among employees, it could be expected then that while those with higher level of self-esteem should be less reactive to these drivers, and also exhibit less of the outcomes associated with them (perceived job insecurity), on the other hand however, those who are less in this attribute should demonstrate more sensitivity and reactions to these negative information thereby leading to an increase in the perception of job insecurity [57]. Following this line of reasoning, it is expected in this study that an increase in perceived self-esteem is associated with a corresponding decrease in perceived job insecurity.

Nevertheless, within the organizational setting, since the perception of job insecurity has been highlighted as an individual employee versus management relationship [58]. Then one may tend to suggest that the nature of reaction to this perception is also contingent on the opinion of the management rather than viewing it as an individual based self-perception alone. For example, when people are confronted with the incidence of using self-esteem to confront the perception of job insecurity, they may turn to management evaluation of their capability in order to decide on how to react to this perception. Also, based on the fact that a clear link has been established for efficacy as a reliable predictor of self-esteem [48]. And one notable outcome of consistent job performance is increased self-efficacy. Then it may be suggested that in the event that a considerable level of positive task performance is achieved among employees over time, this should translate into increased job efficacy, a positive feedback rating from the management, an increased beliefs that the organization cannot do without them and a corresponding decrease in the degree to which they react to external cues such as self-perceived job insecurity [59]. Thus in line with this view, the work of Smith [21] was empirically able to prove that in the face of increasing job uncertainty perception, employees with high efficacious job task beliefs would employ these beliefs as a coping strategy by seeing the perceived uncertainty as a challenge and work harder to secure their position within the organization rather than seeing it as a threat. Hence, we aligned with these views and propose in this study that self-efficacy would serve as a source of consolidation for self-esteem in reducing the perception of job insecurity.

Hypothesis (2) self-efficacy is a moderator in the relationship between self-esteem and perceived job insecurity.

Self-esteem and perceived job insecurity (gender as a moderator)

While it has been suggested by Okurame [1] that the concept of gender should be investigated to bring more direction to the variety of findings that previous research has produced regarding its role in the context of job insecurity, it has also been reported that there are evidences to support the existence of variations in perceived job insecurity according to critical demographic characteristics: age, gender, income level, occupational status and educational qualification [5,60]. Furthermore, based on the suggestion put forward by Yang and Zheng [45] that women faces more difficulties than men in finding new jobs or re-employment after periods of unemployment, it can be theoretically argued that women would experience more job insecurity than men even at the same level of self-esteem. Conversely, Petrongolo [61] agrees with this notion by maintaining that the disadvantages associated with women position in the labor market has made them to be more involved in precarious and non-standard

types of work, including part-time work, which is often associated with lower pay, insecurity, and poor career possibilities. Hence, this may make them to be more reactive to situations that foster the perception of job insecurity when compared to their male counterpart, on the same level of self-esteem. Another factor that has been suggested as potential determinant in the perceived job insecurity versus self-esteem relationship is the concept of work family responsibilities. For instance it has been suggested that women carry a higher overall workload, as they take on a larger portion of family duties along with their full-time job responsibilities [1]. Hence, it is possible that this higher workload may result in insufficient time for organizational contribution and may pose threat to career opportunities, advancement and organizational relevance thereby culminating in a perception of more job insecurity, and the tendency that self-esteem will be less useful as a predictor of this perception among them.

Contrastingly, the male bread winner theory by Lewis [62] emphasizes that since the family represents an economic unit in which different members take on different roles to optimize family and work life, men and women takes on different roles and therefore have different sources for their self-esteem and identity: gender role theory, Gaunt and Benjamin [63]. According to this theory, men are expected to derive their self-esteem and identity from their activities as bread-winner of the family while their female counterparts are expected to be involved in the traditional home keeping activities. In consistent with this view, we build on this theory and suggest that at the same level of self-esteem, men should experience more job insecurity than their female counterparts. For instance, it is likely that increasing self-esteem for the former would not translate into a belief or potential ability of being able to meet their financial/economic obligations in the event of an actual job loss, nor would it translate into a reduction in the worry that may be associated with job uncertainty perception as against their female counterparts who are not inclined regarding these obligations.

Summarily, this extant review of literature revealed two major schools of thoughts: (1) those that are of the opinion that the relationship between self-esteem should be stronger among the females and (2) those in support of the males in this regard. Nonetheless, one major cross road that can aid in reconciling these schools is that the relationship between self-esteem and perceived job insecurity may not be constant across gender groups. In other words, one might derive a higher level of understanding of this proposed relationship by focusing on gender differences.

Hypothesis (3) gender is a moderator in the relationship between self-esteem and perceived job insecurity.

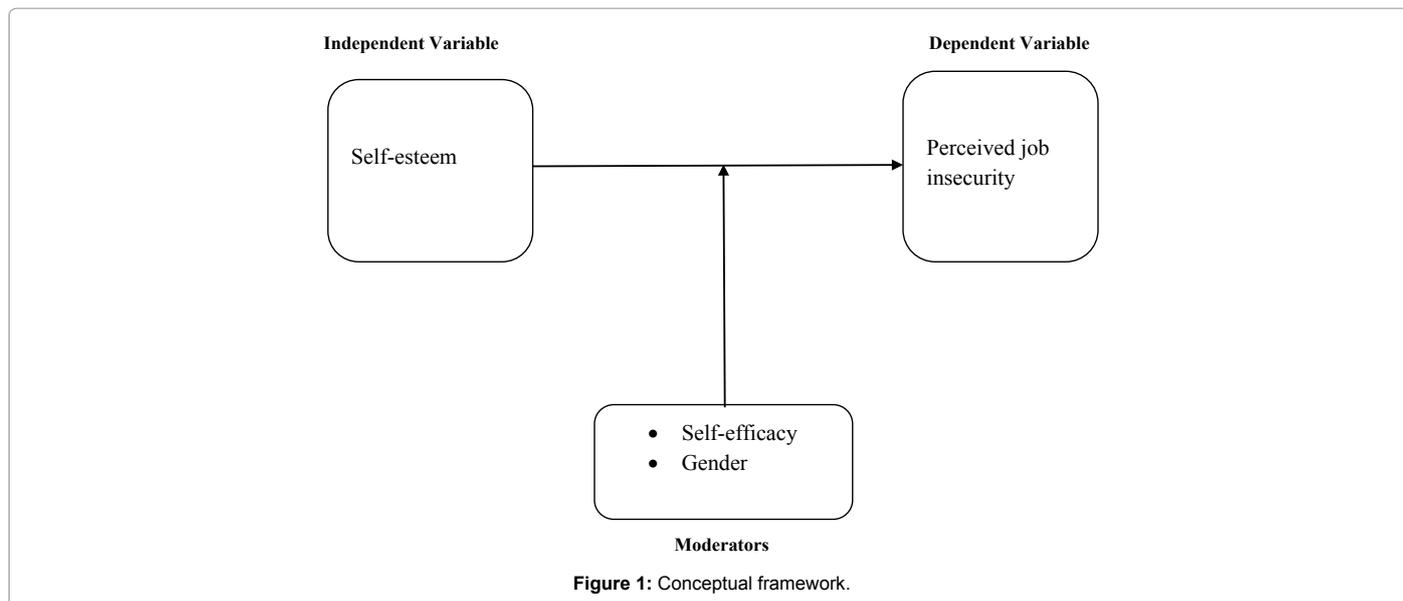
Conceptual framework

In this study, we expand on the job insecurity literature by presenting a framework which highlights self-efficacy and gender as potential moderators in the relationship between self-esteem and perceived job insecurity (Figure 1).

Methods

Participants/settings/sampling approach/sample size

This cross sectional study was conducted within the areas in the present days Kano metropolis, located in the North western part of Nigeria with an area of 20700 sq km. It is a densely populated area (in relative to most major cities in Nigeria) with a total population of about 2828861 (NPC 2006). Which makes the rate of competition for available job position high, thus leading to an increase in the perception



of potential job loss among those presently employed. furthermore, the population that will be investigated is the employees of four Nigerian commercial Banks (Zenith Bank, Skye Bank, Guaranty Trust Bank, and United Bank for Africa) presently operating within Kano metropolis, and randomly selected from a list of a total of twenty banks that are within the Nigerian Banking industry. As at July 2017, the total population of the employees in this regard is five hundred and nine (509) and it's adopted as the population of the study.

Sampling approach

The multistage sampling technique was considered as most appropriate in this study based on the recommendation by Asika [64] whenever the objective is to assure precision and thoroughness. At the first stage, the four randomly selected commercial banks were stratified into four strata. At the second stage, it was ensured that the sample size drawn from each stratum is proportionate to the strength of the total population of the stratum, when expressed as a percentage of research total population. Third, the selection of primary sampling unit was achieved by utilizing the simple random sampling technique to pick these units from a comprehensive list of staff obtained from the management of each Bank. Finally total sample size of two hundred and seventeen: Zenith Bank=46, Skye Bank=38, Guaranty Trust Bank=30, United Bank for Africa (UBA)=103 was arrived at by following the recommendation of Krejcie and Morgan [65].

The measures

The measurements of main variables in present study were presented on the basis of their respective psychometric properties.

Perceived job insecurity: This consist of 9 items based on Hellgreen et al. [38] items on qualitative and quantitative job insecurity, in addition to Kurhnet and Vance [66] items on job permanence and employment security. During the questionnaire process, employees were asked if they believe that their present job they can keep as long as they want; If they believe that they can get another comparable job in a similar organization on loosing present job; if they are concerned that they may get less stimulating tasks in the future; if they feel the danger of joblessness while working in the current organization. In their study among selected 1,200 Finnish employees, a Cronbach's Alpha internal

consistency value of 0.705 was obtained for the items. However, it was revalidated by conducting a pilot study to ensure that all items are re-modified to be in line with the setting and context under focus.

Self-esteem: For the measurement of self-esteem, ten (10) items were adapted from the original twenty five items from Coopersmith [67]. Nevertheless, based on the fact that these items focus more on the measurement of the generalized self-esteem, and as self-esteem exists at different levels of specificity: global, and task or situation-specific self-esteem. These items were re-modified to be in line with the work and organizational settings which is the focus of this study. The questions were asked to employees: things usually don't bother them in their current organization; if they can make up their current organization without too much trouble and if they pretty touch to be themselves in their organization.

Self-efficacy: The items on employees self-efficacy was made up of 9 items adopted from Sherer et al. [68] 17-item self-efficacy Scale (SES) which was primarily developed for clinical and personality research and later adopted in organizational settings. From the results obtained through samples of University Students and managers, it was reported internal consistencies of 0.88 to 0.91 in a test retest reliability study. However, as specific self-efficacy measures better correspond to the behavior under investigation and tend to have stronger predictive value than general self-efficacy measures [69]. These items were modified to suit the requirements of the setting in focus based on suggestions and opinion of experts that have core knowledge of the subject matter, and the socio-cultural setting in focus. Sample items include "When I make work related plans in this organization, I am certain I can make them work", "I avoid trying to learn new things when they look too difficult for me", "In this organization, if I can't do a job the first time I keep trying until I can".

Moreso, all items were presented in a form through which responses would be given by showing degree of agreement or disagreement on a five point Likert scale.

Administration of questionnaire/methods of data analysis

The items in this study were administered on the employees of selected banks in the banking premises during their working hours.

Each employee that constitutes the research primary sampling units was given clear instructions on the need to be precise and accurate while giving response to the questions asked. In addition, they were encouraged to make request for clarification on any of the items presented which might seem not clear to their understanding. Concerning the analysis of research data, the Pearson moment correlation was utilized in determining the nature of the relationship if any between self-esteem and perceived job insecurity in order to satisfy the key assumption underlying any regression analysis [70]. Further, to identify the outcome variable: perceived job insecurity as a function of self-esteem, self-efficacy and gender, the three steps hierarchical moderated regression analysis was utilized as recommended by Cohen et al. [71]. Thus, it is assumed that the effect of self-esteem (X) on perceived job insecurity (Y) would be changed by the proposed moderators (Z) in a linear way. According to Baron and Kenny [70] this linearity represents a gradual, steady change in the effect of X on Y as the moderators changes. Thus, when the effect of the product of self-esteem and self-efficacy on one side and that of self-esteem and gender on the other side (interaction term) is significant while job insecurity and these personal attributes are controlled for, the moderation hypotheses are supported.

Presentation of Results and Discussion of Findings

From a total of two hundred and seventeen questionnaire distributed, we discarded three copies due to improper completion and used the remaining one hundred and fifty three (153) copies for analysis which gives us a usable response rate of 70.5%. To give an outlook of the demographic characteristics that is associated with the study respondents, an analysis on the frequency distribution of the characteristics was carried out. In Table 1, a summary of distribution of the characteristics across respondents are presented.

The descriptive statistics are statistics such as the mean, median and standard deviation for obtaining summary description of scale variables and for easily identifying unusual cases across these variables. Furthermore, Cooper and Schindler [72] argued that normality statistics are those statistics that is used to assess if a distribution of scores is normal and not asymmetric. Researchers use these statistics to determine the most appropriate analysis (parametric/non-parametric) to employ while dealing with research data [73]. In their opinion,

Description		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	99	64.7
	Female	54	35.3
Age	20-25	13	8.5
	26-31	61	39.9
	32-37	58	37.9
	38-43	17	11.1
	44 above	4	2.6
Marital status	Married	100	65.4
	Single	53	34.6
	Divorce	0	0
Educational	Senior school certificate	1	7
	Ordinary national diploma	15	9.8
	First degree	79	51.6
	Post graduate degree	153	37.9
Occupational status	Junior staff	51	33.3
	Middle level staff	84	54.9
	Senior staff	15	9.8
	Managerial Staff	3	2

Table 1: Respondents socio demographic characteristics.

parametric statistics are more suitable for normally distributed scores while asymmetric data are usually treated with non-parametric statistics. Hence to give a descriptive assessment of these variables in addition to ascertain that they are normally distributed, appropriate statistical tests were carried out.

As shown in Table 2, the Skewness and Kurtosis values were lower than the acceptable threshold of ± 2 for normal distribution of scores. Hence the assumption of normality is reasonably satisfied. Pearson's correlation analysis was employed to determine the strength of association among the variables being in line as a condition for conducting a regression analysis. The correlation statistic for these variables is displayed in Table 3. As shown by the table, none of the paired variables has correlation values that is up to ($r > 0.9$) which is an indication that there is no serious multicollinearity issues in the model.

Regression analysis of variables

Imperatively, assumptions such as homoscedasticity should be satisfied as a condition for setting up any regression model. We adhere to this rule of thumb by subjecting these variables to the test. Homoscedasticity implies that the variance of the distribution of the dependent variable should be constant for all values of the independent variable. As argued a data set is free from heteroscedasticity when there is no pattern to the data distribution and residuals are scattered randomly around the horizontal line through zero of the residual plots. To satisfy this assumption, the residual scores of the independent variable were examined through the normal probability residual plot. As can be observed from the normal probability plot in Figure 2, the residual scores of the dependent variable (perceived job insecurity) are concentrated at the center along zero (0) point along the diagonal line thereby indicating that the model is free from any serious heteroscedasticity and the assumption of homoscedasticity is satisfied to a large extent.

Hypotheses testing: Concerning the nature of hypotheses that were formulated in this study, it was considered imperative to carry out a hierarchical moderated regression analysis which attempts to determine perceived job insecurity as a function of self-esteem, self-efficacy and gender. The output from the analysis is displayed in Table 4.

Variables	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Self-esteem	4.07779	4.98712	.365	.698
Perceived job insecurity	2.66302	4.19864	-.092	.695
Self-efficacy	4.1125	3.70988	.291	1.98

Table 2: Descriptive statistics and normality test results for self-esteem and perceived job insecurity.

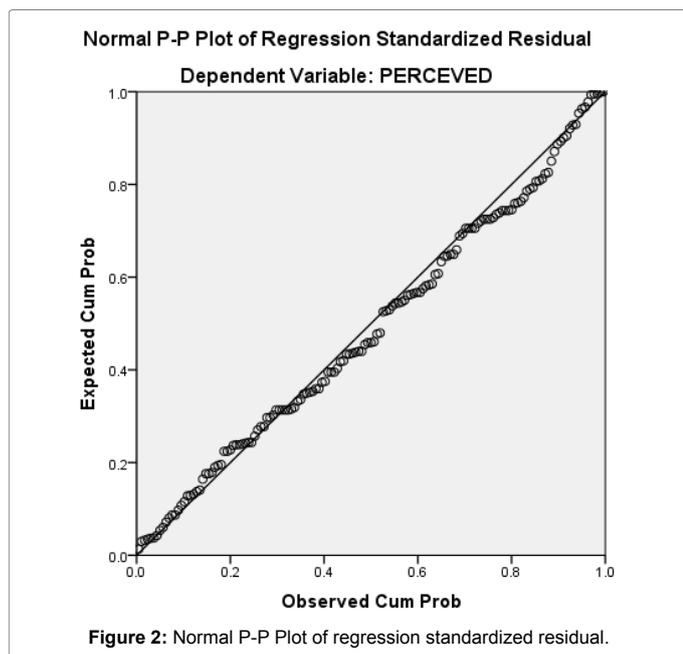
		1	2	3	4
1	Self-efficacy	1			
	N	153			
2	Self-esteem	.438**	1		
	N	153	153		
3	PJI	-.126	-.295**	1	
	N	153	153	153	
4	Gender	-.068	-.063	0.056	1
	N	.404	441	0.492	
		153	153	153	153

*p<0.05; **p<0.01.

Table 3: Bivariate correlation of variables.

Variables	Beta	S-Error	R ²	Change in R ²	F-stat	F-change	Sig
Model 1							
Self esteem	-.295	.085	.087				.000
Model 2							
Self-efficacy	.006	.113	.088	.001	4.821	.118	.003
Gender	.038	1.052					
Model 3							
Self-esteem × self-efficacy	.0120		.0910	.0039	7.6442	.6176	.4332
Self-esteem × gender	.2931		.1053	.0168	5.1376	2.5456	.1127

Table 4: Hierarchical regression showing perceived job insecurity as a function of self-esteem, self-efficacy and gender.



The three step hierarchical regression analysis can be seen in table. The main effect of self-esteem on perceived job insecurity was tested by entering the variable in the first step. Hence, considering the fact that the basic assumption for testing moderation effect was met due to a significant relationship $b=-0.295$ $p=0.00$, $p<0.05$ that was uncovered between the predictor and criterion variable. Hence, it was considered imperative to proceed to the second step of the analysis. In the second step, both self-efficacy and gender were entered to observe their interaction effect in the model. Thus, since it was observed that the interaction between these variables accounted for significantly more variance than just self-esteem and perceived job insecurity, R^2 change=0.001, $p=0.003$ and less than 0.05, (Table 4) it was conceded that there is potentially significant moderating effect of the variables on perceived job insecurity.

Based on this assumption, the interaction/product term of self-esteem and the moderating variables was added in the third step to determine the moderating effect of the later in line with the recommendation by Baron and Kenny [70]. Concerning this, both the predictor and moderating variables were centred [74]. In order to do this, the mean value of the variable was subtracted from the individual scores of the variables. Thus, it is assumed that the effect of self-esteem (X) on perceived job insecurity (Y) would be changed by the proposed moderators (Z) in a linear way. According to Baron and Kenny [70] this linearity represents a gradual, steady change in the effect of X on Y as the moderator changes. For instance when the effect of the

product of self-esteem and self-efficacy on one side, and that of self-esteem and gender on the other side (interaction terms) is significant while job insecurity and these variables are controlled, the moderation hypotheses are supported.

As displayed in Table 4 the change in the proportion explained variance of perceived job insecurity after adding the production term of self-esteem and self-efficacy is not significant in that only 0.39% more was explained, in comparison to model (2), while the interaction term did not have any significant effect $B=0.0120$, $p=0.4332$, $p>0.05$ which is suffice to say that self-efficacy is not a moderator in the relationship between self-esteem and perceived job insecurity. Also, the proportion explained variance of the outcome variable after adding the production term of self-esteem and gender is 1.68% while the standardized beta weight associated with this model is 0.2931, $p=0.1127$, $p>0.05$ meaning that gender is also not a significant moderator in the relationship between self-esteem and perceived job insecurity.

Discussion of findings: In this study, the construct of self-esteem was uncovered as a reliable predictor of perceived job insecurity in that an increase in employee’s self-esteem will tend to lead to a significant decrease in the perception of job insecurity thereby leading to the acceptance of hypothesis (1) which predicted a significant relationship between these two constructs. These finding provides a robust empirical background for the conservation of resource theory by Hobfoll [31] where personality trait such as self-esteem has been identified as a resource which can assist in reducing the perception of job insecurity in addition to its negative outcomes. It is also in line with the transactional stress model of Lazarus and Folkman [53] where it is argued that cognitive based resources among which self-esteem constitutes a major part, can be employed as a coping strategy to manage the demands that may arise from situations such as the threat of job loss. It also laid credence to the argument by Lasdat [13] that individuals will tend to perceive and interpret job insecurity in different ways as a result of the fact that personal characteristic have an impact on the process. Similarly it supports the submission by Judge et al. [75] that the construct of self-esteem forms part of the major determinants in the way we perceive and create meaning about the world in general, and therefore also influence our perceptions of insecurity within the work context. Thus, because stress appraisal plays a central role in the understanding of employee reactions to stressful situation, its origins are important to identify [10]. In this regard, this study has demonstrated that that self-esteem can be useful as a personal resource to cope successfully with stressful situations and may affect the perception of work situation. For instance, it has been stated by De Keyser et al. [10] that being in possession of a high self-esteem should translate into positive job attitudes and behavior that can aid in maintaining that high level in addition to helping in fostering work effectiveness so as to be consistent with the feeling of being competent, while those with a low self-esteem will tend to develop negative attitudes towards their job and be less

productive in order to match their feelings of not being competent. Thus when threatened by perceived job uncertainty, individuals with high self-esteem are likely to see such situation as a challenge and may engage in active coping strategies such as improving work performance to prove self-worth within the organization or increasing organizational citizenship behavior, while those with low self-esteem would see it as a threat and engage in avoidance coping strategies such as absenteeism, intention to quit, lowering organizational commitment and intrinsic motivation [14].

In order to explore the nature of these results further, we highlighted two individually based characteristics which may be classified as having close relations with both self-esteem and perceived job insecurity: self-efficacy and gender and present them as potential moderators which might likely act as a source of influence on the direction and/or strength of the relationship between the predictor (self-esteem) variable and the criterion variable (perceived job insecurity). From the analysis that was conducted, the following results were uncovered.

First, it was discovered that the product term of self-esteem and self-efficacy is statistically non-significant. Thus, as the effect of self-esteem on perceived job insecurity does not exhibit any significant change as a result of the interaction of the former and self-efficacy, we fail to accept hypothesis (2) which predicted that self-efficacy would exercise a moderating effect in the relationship between self-esteem and perceived job insecurity. The implication of this is that regardless of high or low level of perceived efficacious beliefs, the relationship between these two variables would tend to remain constant. This is however contrary to the earlier assumption that in the face of high self-esteem, people would tend to focus on self-perceived ratings from the management, use it as a basis of developing job efficacious beliefs, and turn to this efficacious belief in deciding on how to react to the perception of job insecurity.

Similarly, it was discovered that the product term of gender and self-esteem is of no significance. Thus, as the effect of self-esteem on perceived job insecurity does not exhibit any significant change with the introduction of the gender variable, we fail to accept hypothesis (3) which predicted that gender would exercise a moderating effect in the relationship between self-esteem and perceived job insecurity. The implication of this is that being male or female would not make any significant contribution in incidences where self-esteem is employed as a predictor of perceived job insecurity. This finding thus fails to provide a support for the schools of thought which stresses that having a better understanding of the relationship between self-esteem and perceived job insecurity may be achieved by focusing on gender difference.

Conclusion

Summarily, the present study illustrates how the concept of organizational based self-esteem plays a significant role in reducing the perception of job insecurity among workers in the workplace. It clearly shows that self-efficacy and gender are not determinants in the nature of the relationship between these two psychological attributes. Thus, regardless of the nature of job efficacious beliefs or gender affiliation, the relationship between self-esteem and perceived job insecurity would tend to remain constant.

Direction for Future Research

Despite the fact that it has been theoretically argued that personal characteristics and contextual coping resources have the potential for buffering the perception of job insecurity, part of our findings in this study contradicts this assumption. For instance, while it was discovered

that the perception of job insecurity among employees in this study would tend to reduce in the face of increasing self-esteem, it was also uncovered that other personal characteristic such as gender and cognitive resources such as self-efficacy does not excise any significant effect in this regard. Hence due to the fact that (1) self-efficacy has been identified as a contextual variable whose effect varies across situations and occupation. And (2) gender affiliation may fail to make any significant difference in attitude, behavior and reactions due to social constructions arising from cultural orientation. We invite prospective researchers to make attempts in filling this void by concentrating on replicating this research model either in another occupational settings or cultural environment.

Second, as the general ability of our finding is limited by the cross sectional survey design that was employed, it is advised for caution to be utilized in interpreting our findings. In this regard, a longitudinally designed study which has the capacity to determine the actual effect of both the predictor and moderating variables over time should be employed.

Third, as we relied on self-reported measures which have the tendency for under reporting or over reporting in generating the primary data for the research, future researchers are encouraged to employ the use of more concrete/objective measures as a corrective measure for this lapse.

Lastly, since it was assumed at the beginning of this study that the inconsistency in findings regarding the relationship between self-esteem and perceived job insecurity would be better understood by focusing on the proposed moderators, and as our findings have failed to lend a full support for this argument, it is recommended that future researchers should concentrate their research efforts on other dispositional and contextual factors: emotional intelligence, marital status, locus of control among others which may also have the potential for moderating influence.

Implications for Theory and Practice

These findings have implication for theory and practice. Theoretically, organizational based self-esteem is a personality trait that can be employed as a coping strategy when faced with the perception of job loss threat. Thus, since employees with low self-esteem are termed as behaviourally more plastic than those with high self-esteem. They are likely to respond more to environmental threat such as perceived job insecurity while this response may manifest in a pronounced negative outcomes associated with it. Consistent with this view, self-esteem can be considered as a personal resource that aid in coping successfully with stressful situations while De-Keyser et al pointed that the construct may affect the perception of work situations, the choice of coping strategies or the intensity with which a given individual takes action. Nonetheless, while this perception of high self-worth may reduce these feelings of workplace insecurity, both self-efficacy and gender differences would not significantly predict the direction, strength/weakness of this relationship. This is suffice to say that while the concept of self-esteem may serve as a determinant in the type of reaction that emanates from individuals dealing with stressful situation (seeing it as a challenge or threat). Other personal resources such as self-efficacy and gender are not determinant in the intensity to which this reaction is carried out. Thus, in the face of perceived job insecurity, individuals with high self-esteem are not likely to turn to their efficacious beliefs, nor focus on their gender identity in deciding on how to react to the perception of job insecurity.

In regard to practice, as organization continues to face turbulent times in addition to the change mantra that characterizes these times, a higher level of self-valuation may help the employees in these organizations to cope with the resultant high levels of job insecurity which has been brought about by cost cutting, downsizing and various forms of merger. Hence while carrying out any intervention program focused on boosting self-esteem with the aimed of using this to mitigate the perception of workplace insecurity, managers and practitioners are encouraged to channel more of their resources on improving higher order needs such as acknowledgement of efforts and achievements from employees, positive feedback, decision making involvement, promotion and delegation of duties. Also, it should be noted that the effectiveness of these self-esteem enhancement strategies, is not contingent on self-perceived job efficacy or gender differences.

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