

**THE MODERATING ROLE OF SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE ON THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB STRESS AND JOB PERFORMANCE OF
EMPLOYEES IN A BANKING SECTOR**

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ABSTRACT

In the modern work environment described with towering expectations and soaring competition, employees are expected to perform at their best capabilities. These extremely high expectations especially in a banking sector can lead to the emergence of stress among employees. At the end of the day, stressful employees might end up with low performance. However, with the moderating effect of spiritual intelligence, this unfavourable situation can be converted into positive outcome as employees are able to accept a stressful event and turn it into a positive one. This study is intended to examine the moderating effect of spiritual intelligence on the link between stress and job performance. An analysis of 106 data using multiple regression analysis revealed that behavioural stress is significant to influence job performance. Two dimensions of Spiritual Intelligence; namely, Personal Meaning Production and Transcendental Awareness, are also found to significantly moderate the relationships between behavioural stress and job performance. These findings indicate the importance of spiritual intelligence in enhancing the relationship between behavioural stress and job performance. The implications of the study are further discussed.

Keywords: spiritual intelligence, job performance, emotional stress, behavioural stress, physical stress

INTRODUCTION

In the present competitive work environment, employees are expected to perform at their best capabilities. In a banking sector, due to high pressure from the industry, customers and the government, banks expect their employees to meet all these requirements by working harder and longer, accomplishing more work assignments than before, and meeting all the deadlines.

Banks have introduced the turnaround time approach where the given assignments must be accomplished within the stipulated time allocated. At the end of the day, their performance will be assessed based on these requirements. Some employees can cope very well with these practices while others might experience job stress that subsequently affects their performance.

The present study is meant to investigate the moderating role of spiritual intelligence (that consists of critical existential thinking, personal meaning production, transcendental awareness and conscious state expansion) on the relationship between job stress (that comprises emotional, behavioural and physical stress) and job performance among employees in a banking sector.

The discussion of the study is divided into four sections. Section 1 discusses on the existing literature review on the aspects of the study, Section 2 explains about the methodology used to conduct the study, Section 3 involves the discussion on the findings and Section 4 is the conclusion that highlights the gist of the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section discusses on the main variables involved in the study that are divided into several topics. The topics are job performance, job stress, spiritual intelligence, and the moderating role of spiritual intelligence on the relationship between job stress and job performance.

Job Performance

Job performance reflects the demands of the organization on the job incumbents, involving the most valued behaviour on the employees on the job. It is the function of knowledge, skills, abilities and motivation directed at role prescribed behaviour, such as formal job responsibilities (Campbell, 1999). Most authors have agreed that job performance can be divided into two main categories; task performance and contextual performance. Task performance includes all behaviours and activities of employees that are required to officially perform in the working process, which include the quantity and the quality of job performed, the way through which the job is performed and the extent the job meets the expectation of stakeholders. Contextual performance refers to aspects beyond task performance such as relationships with others, the qualities of job incumbents and others activities performed by them. When employees are expected to perform their jobs by stretching their current abilities, job stress might appear.

Job Stress

Job stress is defined as an aversive or unpleasant emotional and psychological state resulting from adverse work experiences (Hart & Cooper, 2001) as well as personal negative state resulting from work environment (Armstrong & Griffin, 2004). The review on the existing work on stress suggests that stress can be divided into three categories; emotional stress, behavioural stress and physical stress.

Emotional stress may exist as a result of dealing with people in the organization including peers, subordinates and bosses with differing attitudes, behaviours and expectations. Sometimes, emotional stress accumulates due to humiliation and jealousy stemming from the attention given by the boss to one of the peers and neglecting the others

(Masood, 2013). Emotional stress may lead to apathy, boredom, loss of the ability to concentrate, irritability and negativity. Studies have proven that emotional stress has high relationship with productivity and performance (Karimi & Alipor, 2011).

Behavioural stress is generated due to behaviour of self and others. Any employee who is having high workload tends to experience behavioural stress. Another example of behavioural stress is when the employee does not receive the cooperation, respect and attention from peers in performing the assigned task. He has to execute the task alone without assistance from others, which increases the tendency to suffer from behavioural stress. Behavioural stress might lead to sudden changes in behaviour such as smoking, significant weight loss, breathing problems and others.

Physical stress, on the other hand, is caused by ergonomics problem in the workplace. The office physical conditions such as the office space, the equipment, furniture, ventilation and lighting will create some pressure on the employees. Physical stress can cause illnesses such as ulcers, high blood pressure, rapid heartbeat, low energy, headaches, stomach upset, muscle tension, insomnia and others. If the employee cannot cope with the situation, it will result in poor performance and retention (Dane, & Brummel, 2014).

As a summary, job stress that comprises emotional, behavioural and physical stress is an important construct that might negatively affect job performance of employees. However, several findings from previous studies indicate that the effect of job stress can be moderated using spiritual intelligence.

Spiritual Intelligence

Previous researchers and authors such as Gardner (2006), Goleman (2006), Salovey and Mayer (1990), Bar On and Parker (2000), and Albrecht (2006), had proposed the concepts of multiple intelligences, emotional intelligence and practical intelligence to deal with various issues and problems in life and at the workplace. However, these intelligences are inadequate to completely tackle the problems because not all problems can be controlled or manipulated as some of them are beyond our mental and physical abilities to manage and solve. We have to accept the problems and proceed with our lives. Spiritual intelligence is defined as the search for, and the experience of elements of the sacred, meaning, higher-consciousness, transcendence, and spiritual intelligence which entails the abilities to draw on such spiritual themes to predict functioning and adaptation and to produce valuable products or outcomes (Emmons, 1999). Another definition given by Zohar and Marshall (2000) is the intelligence with which we address and solve problems of meaning and value, the intelligence with which we can place our actions and our lives in a wider, richer, meaning-giving context, the intelligence with which we can assess that one course of action or one life-path is more meaningful than another.

Vaughan (2002) on the other hand, defines SI as a capacity for a deep understanding of existential questions and insight into multiple levels of consciousness. It implies awareness of our relationship to the transcendent, to each other, to the earth and all beings. The latest definition is the one provided by King and DeCicco (2009) who defined spiritual intelligence as a set of mental capacities which contribute to the awareness, integration, and adaptive application of the non-material and transcendent aspects of one's existence. Spiritual intelligence comprises four dimensions which are critical existential thinking (i.e., the ability to critically contemplate existential issues such as life, death, reality, and existence), personal meaning production (i.e., the ability to construct meaning and purpose in all physical and mental experiences), transcendental awareness (i.e., the capacity to perceive transcendent dimensions of the self, of others, and of the physical world), and conscious state expansion (i.e., the capacity to enter expanded or spiritual states of consciousness at one's own discretion. The conceptualization proposed by King and DeCicco (2009) is used in this study.

The Moderating Effect of Spiritual Intelligence on the Relationship between Job Stress and Job Performance

There are important studies demonstrated that job stress in general leads to low performance (Ali, Raheem, Nawaz & Imamuddin, 2014). All three stressors in the study; namely, role conflict, workload and inadequate reward negatively contribute to performance. Di Virgilio, Bova, and Holt (2015) claims that physical and psychosocial factors might contribute to job stress in the organization. Yozgat, Yurtkoru and Bilginoğlu (2013) discovered that stress leads to performance but the effect is moderated by the level of emotional intelligence of the employees. Another study by Mehta (2016) found that teaching stress leads to low performance among faculty members. These studies have proven that stress in general contributes to low performance of employees. Limited studies have looked into the influence of different types of stress on employee performance. By looking at this matter, it is expected that different types of stress might differently affect the performance of employees.

Regarding the relationship between spiritual intelligence and job stress, studies have discovered that both constructs have inverse relationship. Those with high levels of spiritual intelligence are reported to have low levels of stress. Baezzat and Sharifzadeh (2013) found that spiritual intelligence explained more variance in job stress than emotional intelligence among university employees. Similar findings were recorded by Ahmadian, Hakimzadeh and Kordestani (2013) in their studies among oil and gas employees that spiritual intelligence reduces the levels of stress of the employees. A study conducted in Malaysia found that spirituality can be used to overcome stress problems among lecturers (Rani, Ghani, & Ahmad, 2013). All these findings indicate that spiritual intelligence has negative relationship with job stress. Employees with high levels of spiritual intelligence would be better in managing their stress levels than those with low levels of this construct.

The relationship between spiritual intelligence and job performance is also well justified. Previous studies have established the positive connection between spiritual intelligence and job performance. Employees can perform better if they are equipped with high levels of spiritual intelligence. Rani, Abidin and Hamid (2013) in their studies on nurses' job performance found that spiritual intelligence offers great help in ensuring nurses perform in their job. A study on the influence of spiritual intelligence on organizational citizenship behaviour among employees in manufacturing and service companies found that spiritual intelligence plays a significant role in generating this outcome (Anwar & Osman-Gani, 2015). Studies have also established the connection between spiritual intelligence and other job outcomes such as organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Awais, Malik, & Qaisar, 2015; Kaur, 2013).

These studies have justified the role of spiritual intelligence in moderating the relationship between job stress and job performance of employees.

METHODOLOGY

This section discusses three topics on methodology. The topics are research design, research instrument, and data analysis.

Research design

A recent study utilized correlational research design as it is intended to examine the relationship among the variables of interest. The population of the study involved 180 employees of 10 banks located in Cyberjaya, Malaysia. A total of 123 respondents were selected for the study based on the suggested number of samples from Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table. The samples for the study were selected using quota sampling whereby the number of respondents for each bank was determined based on the number of employees in

each participating bank. Out of 123 distributed sets of questionnaire, 110 were returned, giving the response rate of 89%. Four sets of questionnaire were discarded due to high missing values. A total of 106 responses were used in subsequent analysis.

Research Instrument

Job Stress was measured using a questionnaire developed by International Stress Management Association (ISMA) that contained thirty four items measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 for never to 5 for almost always. Some items were modified and some were added to measure the three components of job stress that include emotional stress, physical stress and behavioural stress. Job performance was measured using a questionnaire developed by Borman and Motowidlo (1993) that consists of 9 items. The items were assessed using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. The Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory (SISRI 24) (King & DeCicco, 2009) was used to measure spiritual intelligence. It comprises four subscales: critical existential thinking that contains 7 items ($\alpha = .85$); personal meaning production that comprises 5 items ($\alpha = .84$); transcendental awareness that contains 7 items ($\alpha = .89$); and conscious state expansion that consists of 5 items ($\alpha = .92$). Item responses ranged on a 5-point Likert scale from 0 ("not at all true of me") to 4 ("completely true of me"), with higher responses representing higher levels of spiritual intelligence.

Data analysis

Data for the study were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. Descriptive, correlation and regression analyses were used to analyze the data to answer the research questions pertaining to the influence of spiritual intelligence on the relationship between job stress and performance among bank employees.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 106 respondents participated in the study. Descriptive analysis was performed to understand their characteristics. Looking at gender distribution, 43 of them (40.6%) were male and 63 of them (59.4%) were female. The majority of the respondents (50 individuals or 47.2%) were aged between 25 to 35 years old, followed by those aged below 25 years old (37 individuals or 34.9%). Others (19 individuals or 17.9%) were aged higher than 36 years old. The majority of the respondents had bachelor degree (56 individuals or 52.8%), 30 individuals or 28.3% had diploma qualification and 11 or 10.4% of them had SPM/STPM academic qualifications. These distributions of age and academic qualification truly reflect the characteristics of bank employees. Pertaining to marital status of the respondents, 53 of them or 50% were single while 50 of them or 47.2% were married.

Most respondents worked as bank officers (56 individuals or 52.8%), worked as clerk (29 individuals or 27.4%) and others (21 individuals or 19.8%). The majority of the respondents had been working for the banks for less than 5 years (70 individuals or 66%) and the rest had been working there between 5 to 10 years (17 individuals or 16%) and 11 to 15 years (12 individuals or 11.3%). Most of the respondents had been working at the banks as permanent staff (78 individuals or 74.3%) and the remaining 27 respondents or 25.7% had been working there as temporary staff. In terms of monthly salary, 36 respondents or 34% received a salary between RM2001 to RM3000, 25 respondents or 23.6% received a monthly income between RM3001 to RM4000, 22 respondents or 20.8% received a monthly pay check less than RM2000, 12 respondents or 10.4% received a salary more than RM5001 and 11 respondents or 10.4% received a monthly income between RM4001 to RM5000. Table 1 summarizes the profile of the respondents.

Table 1: Respondents Profile

Variable	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	43	40.6
	Female	63	59.4
Age	< 25 years old	37	34.9
	25 – 35 years old	50	47.2
	36 – 45 years old	12	11.3
	> 46 years old	7	6.6
Education Level	SPM/STPM	11	10.4
	Diploma	30	28.3
	Bachelor	56	52.8
	Others	9	8.5
Marital Status	Single	53	50
	Married	50	47.2
	Others	3	2.8
Job Position	Officer	56	52.8
	Clerk	29	27.4
	Others	21	19.8
Working Experience	<5years	70	66
	5 – 10 years	17	16
	11 – 15 years	12	11.3
	>15 years	7	6.6
Job Status	Permanent	78	74.3
	Temporary	27	25.7
Salary	<RM2000	22	20.8
	RM2001 – RM3000	36	34
	RM3001 – RM4000	25	23.6
	RM4001 – RM5000	11	10.4
	>RM5001	12	11.3

Principle component factor analysis with varimax rotation was performed to identify the dimensionality of job stress. Originally, there were 34 items of job stress measure. However, after factor analysis was conducted, the items were reduced to 14 items with six items measuring emotional stress, four items measuring behavioural stress and four items assessing physical stress. The results of factor analysis indicate that KMO of .778 is significant showing adequate of correlation matrix of items measuring the intended variable. MSA values ranged from .679 to .855 denote the adequacy of sampling for each item. The total variance explained of 63.36% shows the goodness of measure to assess job stress construct.

The first component extracted contains six items measuring emotional stress. The factor loadings are in the range of .650 and .781. These items reflect the assessment of emotional stress of respondents, thus, the original name was retained. The second component contains four items corresponding to behavioural stress. The factor loadings are in the range of .745 and .838 which are higher than the threshold value of .5. The name behavioural stress was retained and used throughout the paper. The third component consists of four items measuring physical stress with the factor loadings ranging from .708 to .831. These items relate to questions measuring physical stress, therefore, the original name was used. Table 2 highlights the results of factor analysis on job stress items.

Table 2: Results of Factors Analysis of Job Stress Items

	Component		
	1	2	3
ES11	.781		
ES10	.781		
ES7	.725		
ES8	.709		
ES3	.695		
ES5	.659		
BS2		.838	
BS1		.802	
BS3		.781	
BS4		.745	
PS10			.831
PS9			.720
PS6			.719
PS7			.708
% variance explained	23.706	21.635	18.023
MSA			.679-.855
KMO			.778
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		Approx.	
		Chi-Square	642.822
		Df	91
		Sig.	.000

A principle component factor analysis with varimax rotation was also performed for items measuring job performance. Referring to Table 3, the results of the analysis confirm the unidimensionality of the construct. Nine items hold together to produce one component as originally conceptualized with factor loadings in the range of .710 and .842. The KMO value of .927 indicates the suitability of correlation matrix of items. The MSA values ranged from .867 to .954 show the adequacy of sampling for each item. And, the variance explained in the model is 65.711% that indicates the goodness of the instrument to measure job performance. The factor was named job performance as originally proposed. Table 3 highlights the results of factor analysis on job performance items.

Table 3: Results of Factor Analysis of Job Performance Items

	Component
	1
EP7	.842
EP8	.839
EP6	.835
EP2	.824
EP3	.823

EP9	.810
EP5	.804
EP4	.801
EP1	.710
% variance explained	65.711
MSA	.867-.954
KMO	..927
	Approx.
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Chi-Square
	Df
	Sig.
	.663.852
	36
	.000

A principle component factor analysis with varimax rotation was also performed for items measuring spiritual intelligence. Originally, there were 24 items measuring four dimensions of spiritual intelligence; critical existential thinking (7 items); personal meaning production (5 items); transcendental awareness (7 items); and conscious state expansion (5 items). Referring to Table 4, the results of factor analysis show the reduction in the number of items to be 14 (personal meaning production – 5 items; critical existential thinking – 5 items; and transcendental awareness – 4 items). One factor was removed due to high cross loadings. The KMO value of .888 indicates the suitability of correlation matrix that allows factor analysis to be conducted. The MSA values that ranged from .739 to .938 show the sampling adequacy for items and the total variance explained of 69.305 indicates the goodness of the items to measure the dimensions of spiritual intelligence.

The first component explained 28.606% of the variance and contained five items with loadings ranging from .774 to .881. Items under this component reflect personal meaning production therefore the name was retained. The second component explained 21.336% of the variance in the model and contained five items. The factor loadings for items under this component ranged from .576 to .835, which are considered as good. The items relate to critical existential thinking, therefore the name was used. The third component contained four items explaining 19.363% of the variance in the model. The factor loadings ranged from .606 to .815, which are considered as acceptable and the original name transcendental awareness was maintained and used throughout the paper. Table 4 highlights the results of factor analysis on spiritual intelligence items.

Table 4: Results of Factor Analysis of Spiritual Intelligence Items

	Component		
	1	2	3
PMP6	.881		
PMP4	.831		
PMP3	.805		
PMP2	.791		
PMP5	.774		
CET6		.835	
CET5		.828	
CET2		.714	

CET4		.653	
CET1		.576	
TA5			.815
TA6			.774
TA7			.760
TA4			.606
% variance explained	28.606	21.336	19.363
MSA			.739-.938
KMO			.888
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		Approx. Chi-Square	868.104
		Df	91
		Sig.	.000

The results of correlation analysis as shown in Table 5 reveal that only behavioural stress is significantly correlated with employees' job performance ($r=.461$, $p<0.01$), indicating criterion validity. Emotional stress and physical stress are not significantly related to job performance ($r=-.026$, $p>0.05$; $r=.139$, $p>0.05$). The findings seem to suggest that behavioural stress is required for employees to perform on their job. Concerning spiritual intelligence, the results show that all three dimensions are significantly correlated with the three dimensions of stress (Personal Meaning Production and emotional, behavioural and physical stresses: $r=-.256$, $p<0.01$; $r=.345$, $p<0.01$; $r=.165$, $p<0.01$), (Transcendental Awareness and emotional, behavioural stress: $r=-.163$, $p<0.01$; $r=.280$, $p<0.01$; $r=.293$, $p<0.01$), and (Critical Existential Thinking and behavioural and physical stresses: $r=-.204$, $p<0.01$), except the correlation between Critical Existential Thinking and emotional stress and between Critical Existential Thinking and physical stress (Critical Existential Thinking and emotional, and physical stresses: $r=-.011$, $p>0.05$; $r=.129$, $p>0.05$). The dimensions of spiritual intelligence are also found to significantly correlate with employees' job performance, indicating possible moderating effect. Table 5 summarises the results of correlation analysis.

Table 5: Results of Correlation Analysis

No	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Emotional Stress	2.72	.83	(.828)						
2	Behavioural Stress	3.31	.93	.261**	(.848)					
3	Physical Stress	3.32	.84	.090	.314**	(.773)				
4	Personal Meaning Production	3.77	.79	-.256**	.345**	.165*	(.923)			
5	Critical Existential Thinking	3.46	.77	-.011	.204*	.129	.512**	(.831)		
6	Transcendental Awareness	3.71	.65	-.163*	.280**	.293**	.600**	.485**	(.824)	
7	Job Performance	3.76	.63	-.026	.461**	.139	.629**	.376**	.478**	(.934)

Notes: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed); *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed); N=106. Cronbach's alpha values in the parentheses along the diagonal

Table 6: Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis

	Personal Meaning Production			Critical Existential Thinking			Transcendental Awareness		
	M1	M2	M3	M1	M2	M3	M1	M2	M3
Emotional Stress	-.170	.041	.566	-.211*	-.190*	.456	-.226*	-.118	.206
Behavioural Stress	.521**	.281**	1.184**	.499**	.428**	.523	.518**	.401**	1.388*
Physical Stress	.001	-.036	.515	-.037	-.063	-.135	-.030	-.128	.542
Moderator		.570**	2.120**		.345**	.873*		.431**	1.829**
Emotional			-.605			.085			-.392
Stress*Moderator									
Behavioural			-1.323*			-.152			-1.351*
Stress*Moderator									
Physical			-.834			-.816			-1.003
Stress*Moderator									
R	.504	.706	.762	.484	.588	.603	.505	.638	.691
R ²	.254	.498	.580	.234	.346	.363	.255	.407	.478
Adjusted R ²	.232	.478	.550	.211	.320	.317	.255	.152	.071
F Change	11.465	48.618	6.300	10.289	17.163	.862	11.421	25.350	4.359
Sig. F Change	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	.464	.000	.000	.006
Durbin Watson			1.659			1.591			1.686

Multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the influence of different types of stress on employees' job performance as the moderating effect of spiritual intelligence on the main relationships. MI indicates a direct influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable. M2 shows the changes in beta values when the moderator is included and M3 presents the findings of the moderating effects of a moderator on the relationship concerned through the changes in beta values when interaction terms are included in the regression model.

The beta values in M1 should be the same; however, due to the existence of the outliers, some cases were removed, making the beta values to be different. Looking at the direct influence of stress dimensions and job performance, the R² of .254 indicates 25.4% of the variance in the regression model is explained by the independent variables and the model is significant ($F(3, 104) = 11.465, p = 0.000$). The Durbin Watson value of 1.659 denotes the absence of autocorrelation in the regression model. Examining the influence of individual independent variable on the dependent variable, it was found that behavioural stress is the only significant predictor of job performance ($\beta = .521, p < .01$). Emotional and physical stresses are not significant to influence job performance. However, they have negative influence on job performance.

Pertaining to the influence of the moderator on the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, the beta values in M2 and M3 are referred to. The significant beta values in M2 indicate partial moderating effect of the moderator concerned. The significant beta values in M3 when the interaction terms are included indicate significant moderating effect of the studied moderator.

Regarding Personal Meaning Production, only the interaction between behavioural stress and PMP is significant to influence job performance ($\beta = -1.323, p < .05$). However, the beta value in M2 is also significant ($\beta = .570, p < .01$) indicating that the Personal Meaning Production partially moderates the relationship between behavioural stress and employees' job performance. In relation to Transcendental Awareness, again only the interaction between

behavioural stress and Transcendental Awareness is significant to influence job performance ($\beta = -1.351$, $p < .05$). However, the beta value in M2 is also significant ($\beta = .431$, $p < .01$) indicating that the Transcendental Awareness partially moderates the relationship between behavioural stress and employees' job performance. Other interaction terms are not significant to influence employees' job performance. Figure 1 depicts the moderating effect of personal meaning production on the relationship between behavioural stress and job performance.

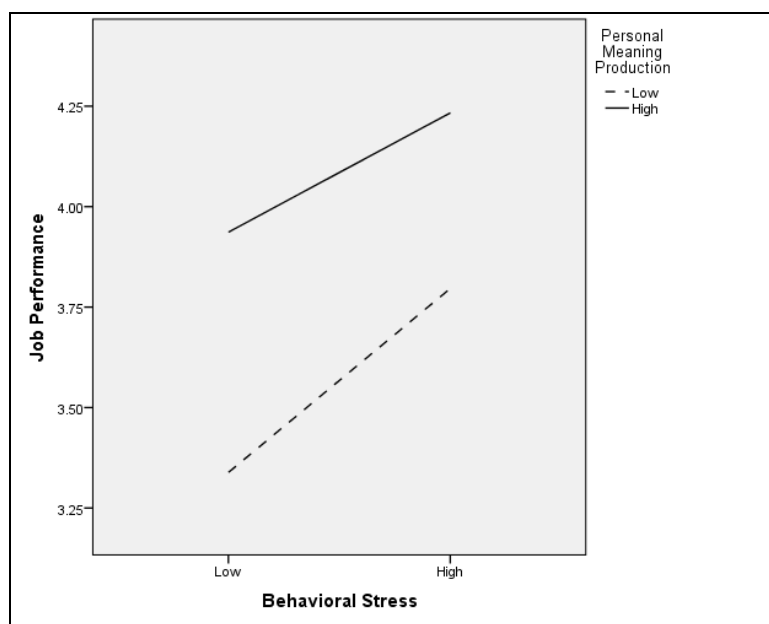


Figure 1: The Moderating Effect of Personal Meaning Production on the Relationship between Behavioural Stress and Job Performance

To illustrate the influence of moderator on the relationship between behavioural stress and job performance, a three dimensional graph was constructed by transforming the continuous data of the moderator and the independent variable into categorical data (high and low) using the median score for each variable.

For the first significant interaction effect, Personal Meaning Production was found to significantly moderate the relationship between behavioural stress and job performance. Basically, behavioural stress has direct linear relationship with job performance. Low behavioural stress will result in low employees' job performance. Similarly, those with high behavioural stress will end up with high performance. Similar trend is found for those with high and low Personal Meaning Production. The only difference is that those with high Personal Meaning Production have better performance score even though at the low level of behavioural stress.

The findings indicate that individuals with high Personal Meaning Production are able to see meaning and purpose in all aspects of life, more appreciative of anything that happens, and normally have higher level of gratitude than those with lower level of this aspect of spiritual intelligence. The findings are consistent with exertion made by the earliest authors and proponents of spiritual intelligence such as Emmons (1999), Zohar, et al. (2000), and King and DeCicco (2009). When experiencing high level of behavioural stress as a result of pressure from work, individuals are able to achieve high performance target. There are two important findings from the study. First, behavioural stress is required to motivate employees

to work harder. Second, the effect of behavioural stress is intensified if the employees have high Personal Meaning Production.

Concerning the moderating effect of Transcendental Awareness, the variable significantly moderates the relationship between behavioural stress and employees' job performance in a similar fashion with the moderating influence of Personal Meaning Production. The influence of Transcendental Awareness can be established, as the variable enhances employees' job performance even at the low level of behavioural stress. The findings demonstrate that Transcendental Awareness is required to help employees to perform in their work even though they are working under pressure that is in line with the claim made by previous authors such as Emmon (1999) and King and DeCicco (2009). It is reflected in those who are aware of the qualities in self and others, the connection with others and are able to use this awareness to motivate themselves to achieve higher performance goals. Figure 2 shows the moderating effect of transcendental awareness on the relationship between behavioural stress and job performance.

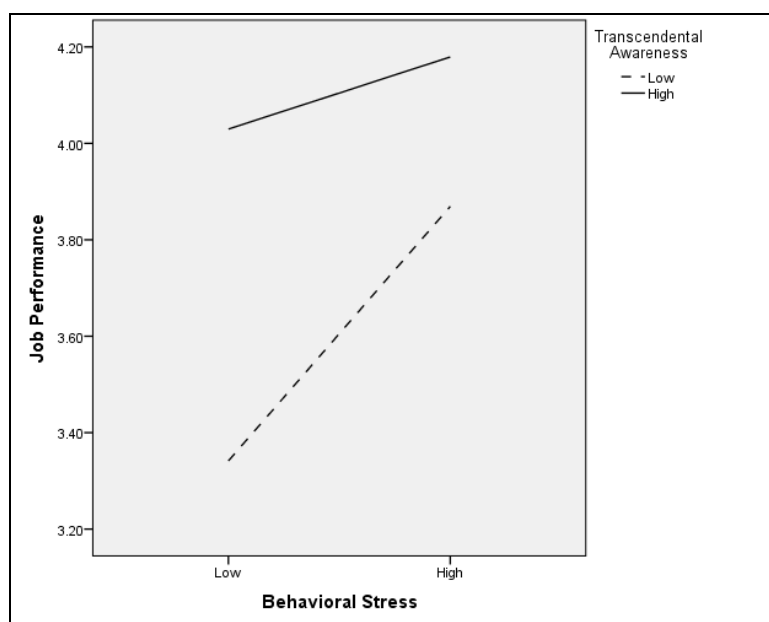


Figure 2: The Moderating Effect of Transcendental Awareness on the Relationship between Behavioural Stress and Job Performance

Managerial Implication

The managerial implications of the study are as follows: First, behavioural stress is needed to motivate employees to perform in their job. Managers should assign challenging tasks to employees. These tasks require them to concentrate, initiate new networks or collaboration, learn new skills, and plan their time. Second, employees should be equipped with high Personal Meaning Production so that their performance can be optimized. Personal Meaning Production can be enhanced through training, briefing and consulting. Employees need to be well-informed on the tasks they need to perform, the outcomes and their consequences to their well-being and others, and to the organization as a whole. Frequent briefings and reminders facilitate the development of Personal Meaning Production. Third, employees' job performance can be enhanced when employees have high level of Transcendental Awareness. This ideal situation can be achieved by urging them to see things from various perspectives, to interpret the events from different angles and to predict outcomes from varying viewpoints. These abilities require the employees to have convergent and divergent thinking that can be

materialized (although it takes some time to materialize) through structured and unstructured training and development programs.

Research Implication

Spiritual intelligence construct as proposed by King (2008) has four dimensions however in this study the fourth dimension failed to emerge when factor analyzed. It shows that the spiritual intelligence construct has to be revisited to suit varying contexts. Various factors such as culture, religion, and individual personalities have to be considered when constructing the new model or modifying the existing spiritual intelligence model. Second, spiritual intelligence should also be seen from the Islamic perspective. In Islam, the similar concept to spiritual intelligence is known as Taqwa. Future researchers are urged to develop the Islamic Spiritual Intelligence model and measure so that Muslims all over the world can reap great benefits from its use. Third, the present study involved bank employees therefore the findings are limited in their application as they cannot be generalized to other industries. Thus, future effort is suggested to replicate the study involving employees from various industries to allow comparative analysis to be made.

CONCLUSION

Working in the banking sector nowadays can be seen as stressful due to high market demands, competition among banks especially between local and foreign banks, high workload, leadership styles, peer pressure and others. These aspects of work might create job stress among employees and subsequently might affect their performance. The present study was intended to examine the influence of three different types of job stress; emotional, behavioural and physical stress, on job performance by looking at the moderating effect of spiritual intelligence. The findings indicate the positive influence of behavioural stress on job performance. Bank employees need behavioural stress to perform in their job. The effect of behavioural stress is intensified with the existence of spiritual intelligence. Those with high Personal Meaning Production and Transcendental Awareness are performing better than those with lower levels of these dimensions of Spiritual Intelligence. Based on the findings, bank managers are required to strategize in order to optimize the performance of their subordinates.

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