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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Revisiting the Nexus Between Job Insecurity and Employee Task Performance: Examining the Influence of Self-Efficacy and Emotional Intelligence in a Mediation–Moderation Model

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to examine the relationship between perceived job insecurity and employee task performance. In addition, the moderating influence of emotional intelligence and mediating influence of self-efficacy was examined in this relationship. Through the multi-stage sampling technique, a total of 385 employees were proportionately selected from a cluster that represents three selected Nigerian deposit money banks. Furthermore, a close-ended and structured questionnaire was utilized in a descriptive cross-sectional research design to elicit responses from these employees. A hierarchical moderated regression analysis conducted revealed that perceived job insecurity exercises a significant and negative effect on task performance. In addition, this relationship was found to be moderated by emotional intelligence in such a way that the negative relationship between job insecurity and task performance was weaker among respondents who reported a higher level of emotional intelligence. Similarly, self-efficacy was also found to mediate this moderated relationship in such a way that it acts as the underlying mechanism through which emotional intelligence exercises its moderating influence. To conclude, recommendations were made on the need for organizations to recognize the importance of emotional intelligence whenever there is need to maintain a superior level of employee performance, especially in a working environment characterized by a high level of job uncertainty. In addition, it was recommended that while making use of emotional intelligence in attenuating the negative effect of perceived job insecurity on task performance, organizations may derive optimal benefit by focusing on the indirect relationship that highlights self-efficacy as a mediator as opposed to focusing on the direct relationship between these two variables.

Keywords: Perceived job insecurity, Task performance, Emotional intelligence, Banking industry, Employee

JEL classification: J64, L2, J28

Introduction

The banking sector has been described as the engine that drives the productive activity of an economy due to its ability to intermediate, provide payment services, and act as a fulcrum of monetary policy implementation (Olushola & Uzoma, 2018). According to these authors, the sector has long been identified as one that is instrumental to the development of any functional economy due to its important

and gigantic contributions. Hence, this has led to the conception that for the sector to keep up with its designated function in the national economic outlook, highly performing individuals are needed in order to enable the achievement of critical goals, to deliver the products and services they specialize in, and finally to achieve competitive advantage (Sonnentag & Zijlstra, 2006).

However, this seems to be far from reality as some studies (e.g., Olaleke, 2010; Onyeukwu & Ekere, 2018)

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have provided evidence of an unfavorable employee performance that exists in the form of poor service offering, which continues to be a common feature among employees in the industry: the increasing trend in customer waiting time in banking halls and at automated teller machines locations, poor servicing of these machines, poor management of complaints from customers, the abnormally long period that is required for clearing interbank cheques by the employees (Goyit, 2015), and the inability of a large number of the employees to meet the deposit target imposed on them by their respective banks (Alooma & Atadiose, 2014). In this regard, after highlighting customer satisfaction index as a measure of employee performance, the Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (2018) report on annual banking customer satisfaction survey provided evidence that only 25 percent of Nigerian bank customers are satisfied with the services provided by employees, while the World Economic Forum (Schwab, 2019) in its Global Competitiveness ranking placed Nigerian financial institutions in 131st position out of a total 141 surveyed.

Building on this line of reasoning, Chinyere et al. (2019) used their empirical study of selected banks in Nigeria to prove that low performance is an issue of concern among the employees in these banks. As a result of this type of performance, a total of 8663 workers were sacked in 2017 by the management of Nigerian money deposit banks, as these banks continue in their drive for improved operational performance (Adegboyega, 2019).

Presumably, while the restructuring, retrenchment, and downsizing exercises highlighted above are seen as a means of mounting pressure on surviving employees with a view to motivating their higher performance and thus facilitating the operational efficiency of the organization, it has been suggested by the literature that this trend rather increases uncertainty and leads to a heightened anticipation of job loss (perceived job insecurity) among individuals who survive mergers, acquisitions, and downsizing (Adekunle & Adegoroye, 2021; Okurame, 2014; Van Hootegem et al., 2018). Evidence from research by Smith (2013), Niesen et al. (2018), Debus et al. (2019), Shin and Hur (2019), and Adekiya (2023) suggests that such perception might have an effect on the performance outcomes of employees during restructuring as well as in the post-restructuring period. Despite this plethora of suggestions, unfortunately, the limited strand of research from empirical outcomes has been inconsistent and not straightforward (De Cuyper et al., 2020), with some studies (e.g., De Angelis et al., 2021; Fischmann et al., 2019; Okurame, 2014; Piccoli et al., 2017) uncovering a negative relationship between the constructs, while others, such

as Loi et al. (2011) or Shin and Hur (2019), have discovered a positive relationship, and yet some others (e.g., Aguiar-Quintana et al., 2021; König et al., 2010; Kurnia & Widigdo, 2021; Makori & Odero, 2017; Pilipec, 2020) have even failed to show evidence of any relationship.

Hence, with a view to explaining these findings that are far less straightforward, it has been suggested by some authors that the relationship may be U-shaped and non-linear (see Lam et al., 2015; Selenko et al., 2013; Shin & Hur, 2019). Another set of authors have suggested the potential influence of certain moderating variables which act as a boundary condition under which an effect is exercised on task performance (Fischmann et al., 2019; Selenko et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2015), the influence of competing mediators that may foster a situation in which job insecurity acts as a threat that impacts negatively on employee motivation, which then exercises a negative impact on job performance, or as a challenge resulting in job preservation strategies, increased motivation, and increased effort commitment resulting in better performance (see Rasdi et al., 2021; Shoss, 2017; Staufenbiel & König, 2010).

Thus, as a response to the assertion by De Cuyper et al. (2020) that an understanding of when and how the perception of job insecurity influences task performance is still far from complete as research of this nature is scarce, and the assertion by De Witte (2016), Charkhabi (2017), and Fischmann et al. (2019), who all highlighted the importance of understanding the human characteristics which may either mediate or moderate this relationship, due to the fact that such investigation would not only aid the theoretical development of the job insecurity literature but also have practical implications for organizations to manage impaired employee performance, especially in times of job insecurity crises (Wang et al., 2015), the aim of this study to examine the relationship between perceived job insecurity and task performance among employees in the Nigerian banking industry. In addition, to deepen the existing base of evidence about the conflicting results in previous research on the relationship between job insecurity and performance, the study also goes further by incorporating two critical propositions: (1) the existence of moderators which act as a determinant of the boundary under which perceived job insecurity exercises an effect on task performance; (2) the existence of a mediator which mediates the moderated relationship between perceived job insecurity and task performance.

According to the cognitive appraisal theory (see Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), a high level of stress exerts a negative impact on employee attitude and behavior. In particular, the theory posits that the level of stress

that individuals perceive depends on evaluations of the degree of a threat to their wellbeing (primary appraisal) and on the beliefs about the likelihood of being able to counteract the negative consequences of the threat (secondary appraisal). It is assumed by this theory that in the event that an employee perceives themselves as having the required resources to exercise control over a stressful situation, this would lead to low intensity in the experience of strain. On the other hand, in the event that such a situation is appraised and perceived to be uncontrollable, this would culminate in the aggravation of psychological strain, as well as a decrease in important work attitudes and behavior, an example of which is low task performance (Piccolli et al., 2011).

Nevertheless, as the conservation-of-resources theory by Hobfoll (1989) pointed out that individuals are endowed with some cognitive or psychological resources which can be put to use across different contexts, have been developed over the life course, and are, therefore, likely to be different across individuals (Cheng, 2013), but have the potential to exercise an effect on how they cope with job demands or work stressors (Darvishmotevalia & Ali, 2020), the concept of emotional intelligence is highlighted in this study as one of these resources since it has the ability to allow people to favorably evaluate and interpret the negative emotional reaction that may accompany insecure job positions and conditions, and thus cope with the strain associated with this reaction (Jordan et al., 2002; Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Apart from this cogent reason, this study also aims to provide an answer to the call by Katungu (2018) on the need to further explore the role of emotional intelligence in the context of employee attitude as research in this area has not yet been developed.

Furthermore, in addition to the fact that emotional intelligence may act to attenuate the negative reaction that perceived job insecurity may exercise on task performance, it is also proposed that this type of moderation can help employees reduce psychological stress that accompanies job insecurity and maintain positive affect, leading to increased self-efficacy (Wang et al., 2015), which means that the proposed interaction effect of perceived job insecurity and emotional intelligence on task performance may be such that it is mediated by self-efficacy. Of note in the contribution to this school of thought is the work of Wuepper and Lybbert (2017), where two levels of perceived self-efficacy were identified: high self-efficacy and low self-efficacy. As clearly demonstrated by these authors, if the former can lead to increased motivation and enhancement of task performance, then the latter should demoralize, lead to demotivation and, consequently, low task performance.

In sum, apart from making a contribution by introducing both self-efficacy and emotional intelligence as mediating and moderating variables, respectively, with the aim of providing further clarification on the inconsistent results that have plagued outcomes from existing studies, the present study also contributes in terms of its research sample and unit of analysis. This is in view of the fact that responses are elicited from employees drawn from different money deposit banks that are located across three major cities in Nigeria (Lagos, Kano, Abuja), as studies on task performance involving employees from different organizations are still very limited (Aguilar-Quintana et al., 2021; Kuruppuge & Gregar, 2017; Pilipiec, 2020).

Furthermore, it advances insight into the conservation-of-resources theory of Hobfoll (1989) by focusing on a coping resource (emotional intelligence) which has not been linked to this theory yet, particularly within the Nigerian banking industry to the best of my knowledge, by proposing that since a job-insecure working environment is likely to result in resource loss and reduced task performance for victims and as personal characteristics have the potential to mitigate the consequences of this loss in resources (Hui & Lee, 2001), then emotional intelligence is proposed as one of these characteristics.

1 Literature review and hypotheses development

1.1 Task performance

Task performance is a component of employee performance that comprises the behaviors aimed at fulfilling fundamental job responsibilities that are enshrined in their job description (Pradhan & Jena, 2017). It relates to those sets of actions which form part of the reward system in an organizational setting (Sonnentag et al., 2008). According to Motowidlo et al. (1999), it refers to those activities that are critical to the conversion of raw materials to arrive at the goods and services that aid in the proper functioning of the organization. Consistent with this view, the term has been described by Petsri (2014) as a collection of an employee's behaviors that relates linearly with their responsible tasks and organizational goals. Conway (1999) identified the importance of cognitive ability in executing task-related activities and also made the claim that it is being facilitated through three key terms: task knowledge (which may be viewed in the form of the technical knowledge that ensures job performance), task skills (concerning the application of technical knowledge to accomplish a task successfully without much supervision), and task habits which relate to the innate ability which determines the way

by which assigned jobs are responded to in facilitating or impeding performance.

1.2 Perceived job insecurity

According to [Kinnunen et al. \(2014\)](#), perceived job insecurity is defined as the perceived uncertainty of keeping the job itself; the uncertainty regarding the existence of important job conditions such as promotional opportunities, career opportunities, and economic benefits ([Lee et al., 2018](#)); as well as the worries that emanate from this perception ([De Witte, 1999](#)). In the view of [Martinez et al. \(2010\)](#), regardless of its mode of conceptualization, perceived job insecurity is a perceptual phenomenon and depends mostly on the perspective of the worker about the job situation as well as the probability of being negatively affected by it. Different level of job insecurity could be perceived by different employees under the same objective organizational situation as a result of their personal evaluations ([Huang et al., 2017](#)). Thus, while contextual organizational factors such as unemployment, restructuring, organizational change exercise an effect on perceived job insecurity, the effect of these factors is determined by the subjective interpretation exhibited by individuals ([Lee et al., 2018](#)).

1.3 Relationship between perceived job insecurity and task performance

Though a large number of studies have been published on the consequences of perceived job insecurity, many of these studies that generated fruitful outcomes have been centered on psychological health and workplace attitudes, while little breakthrough has been achieved regarding its effect on task performance due to the inconsistent results that have been generated across the board ([Lee et al., 2018](#); [Sverke et al., 2010](#)). Thus, what this suggests is that despite the little progress that is being made in this investigation, one pressing issue that continues to generate attention within the academic community is the need to continue examining competing and yet undiscovered mediators or the presence of some moderators that act as a boundary condition under which an effect is being exercised ([De Cuyper et al., 2020](#); [Lee et al., 2018](#)).

Among the schools of thought which have attempted to explain the above-highlighted inconsistency as a result of a moderating variable, a few studies can be notably mentioned. For instance, [Piccolli et al. \(2011\)](#) and [Wang et al. \(2015\)](#) examined the influence of organizational justice; [König et al. \(2010\)](#) focused on the combination of occupational self-efficacy, work locus of control, and communica-

tion, while others examined unionization, positive and negative affectivity, national culture, supervisor liking, supervisor attribution, and time duration (e.g., [Huang et al., 2013](#); [Jimenez & Didona, 2015](#); [Pilipiec, 2020](#); [Roll, 2015](#)). Across these studies, there is consistent evidence that both personal and organizational factors have the potential influence of buffering the negative effect of perceived job insecurity on task performance, but the moderating influence of emotional intelligence in this relationship is not yet known, despite the fact that perceived job insecurity has been highlighted as a precursor to emotive reaction and the formation of job-related attitudes ([Ortony et al., 1988](#); [Warr & Inceoglu, 2012](#)).

Concerning the studies that have explained the inconsistency as a function of an unknown mediator, [Selenko et al. \(2013\)](#) investigated vigor at work; [Nart and Batur \(2017\)](#) investigated job burnout, while other studies (e.g., [Kurnia & Widigdo, 2021](#); [Niesen et al., 2018](#); [Wang et al., 2015](#)) investigated organizational justice, psychological contract breach, and employee wellbeing, respectively. Among all these studies, one major summary that can be made is that certain work-related factors may be used to explain the how and why of the relationship between these two variables and that these factors fall into the category of those that may either act to reduce or increase the detrimental effects of perceived job insecurity (see the theory of the undoing effect by [Fredrickson et al., 2000](#)). Nevertheless, [Lee et al. \(2018\)](#) in particular stated that further investigation is still needed to uncover more mediators. Self-efficacy is also highlighted in this study as one of these mediators considering the fact that it has been found to link numerous organizational factors to job performance (see [Bubić & Ivanišević, 2014](#); [Cherian & Jacob, 2013](#); [Judge & Bono, 2001](#)).

1.4 Emotional intelligence

Based on the insight offered by [Cherniss et al. \(1998\)](#), emotional intelligence is the act of being competent in the domains of self-appraisal, self-management, self-awareness, and emotional management, which translate into success in the workplace. It refers to a set of acquired skills and competencies that can reliably predict positive outcomes in virtually all areas of life ([Akinboye, 2003](#)). Additionally, the definition by [Fox and Spector \(2001\)](#) averred that it concerns the ability that groups or individuals utilize in making use of emotional conditions with a view to fostering the achievement of certain sets of goals or other critical objectives. Furthermore, while [Dahl and Cilliers \(2012\)](#) insisted that investigating emotional intelligence would considerably aid in the

expansion of the understanding of organizational life, [Muramatsu and Hanoch \(2005\)](#) had previously stated that emotions played a significant role in guiding and regulating the choice of behavior either by virtue of their capacity to modulate numerous cognitive and physiological activities or due to their contribution to adaptive behaviors, which suggests that emotional intelligence may be useful in a situation that involves the need to regulate a reaction to perceived job insecurity with a view to attenuating the negative outcome of this stressor.

1.4.1 Moderating role of emotional intelligence

Since [Jordan et al. \(2002\)](#) have highlighted emotional intelligence as incorporating a broad range of abilities that explain the way individuals manage emotion, while the perception of job insecurity has been shown to be usually followed by emotional reactions which determine the nature of the coping style adopted to mitigate its effect ([Özkoç and Caliskan, 2016](#)), the ability to employ the appropriate coping strategies to alleviate these outcomes should be contingent on the nature of emotional intelligence that is available to the individual. Congruent with this view, the conservation-of-resources theory by [Hobfoll \(2001\)](#) provides an insight by stating that personal coping resources could aid in stress coping since they may affect how people evaluate and cope with the threat. In line with the classification by [Lazarus and Folkman \(1984\)](#), coping can either take task-based or emotion-based form. Task-based coping typically involves trying to change the situation or acting to master it (in the case of an insecure job position, trying to acquire better training to become more competent for the position), whereas emotion-based coping is related to handling negative emotions associated with the stressful situation ([Låstad, 2011](#)). Through a comparative analysis of the two, [Felton and Revenson \(1984\)](#) have proposed that emotion-based coping styles have been linked to stronger reactions to stress.

With respect to the empirical nature of this moderating influence, there seems to be a lack of any empirical evidence in this regard for now. However, there is evidence that may aid in lending credence to these suggestions. For instance, emotional intelligence has been found to be positively associated with task performance in several studies (e.g., [Goleman, 1998](#); [Kim et al., 2015](#); [Mangnus, 2012](#)), and meta-analysis (see [Joseph & Newman, 2010](#); [O'Boyle et al., 2011](#)) has also lent support to this. Also, from a recent study by [Searle and Auton \(2014\)](#), it has become clear that emotional intelligence can imbibe individuals with the feelings and energy that are needed to counteract the stress associated with an insecure job condition. In this particular study, it is

shown that the ability for the proper management of emotion results in positive affect, which consequently aids in the promotion of positive attitudes that is needed to overcome the job stressors that militate against the attainment of organizational goals.

1.5 Self-efficacy

[Bandura \(1994\)](#) described self-efficacy as a person's judgment of their ability to achieve or accomplish an action and as a determinant of behavioral performance. In the opinion of [Khan et al. \(2015\)](#), self-efficacy actually refers to people's judgment of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required for attaining designated types of performance. From the observation by [Erozkan et al. \(2016\)](#), self-efficacious individuals hold stronger beliefs in their ability to successfully perform tasks in all situations, set more challenging goals for themselves, invest more, persist longer, and are better in dealing with failing experiences than persons low in self-efficacy.

Thus, efficacy uses inventiveness and resourcefulness to impact performance, which makes it a generative capability ([Bandura, 2000](#)). Furthermore, expectations of personal efficacy determine whether an individual's coping behavior will be initiated, how much task-related effort will be expended, and how long that effort will be sustained despite disconfirming evidence ([Bandura, 1986](#)). Consequently, it seems likely from this suggestion that a highly efficacious individual would be one that utilizes both perseverance and determination to excel in difficult situations even in the face of disconfirming information. Consistent with this view, [Bandura \(2008\)](#) expanded on the social-learning theory and posited that efficacy beliefs influence behavior through goals and aspirations, outcome expectations, affective states, and the perception of impediments and opportunities in the social environment. In this way, efficacy beliefs may either influence people's mode of thinking, either optimistically or pessimistically in self-enhancing or self-debilitating ways ([Bandura, 2008](#)); the course of action chosen by people to pursue, the goal and commitment they set for themselves, how much effort they put in their work to produce, and their resilience to adversity ([Lorente Prieto, 2009](#)).

1.5.1 Mediating role of self-efficacy

In describing the crucial role that perceived job insecurity may play in the reduction of employee self-efficacy and, ultimately, task performance, this study highlights the conservation-of-resources theory ([Hobfoll, 1989](#)), which stressed that individuals are motivated to acquire and maintain resources that are

paramount to their survival. In the view of [Truxillo et al. \(2016\)](#), status at work, occupational skills, clothing, shelter, self-esteem, promotion, and financial security are some of the resources that employees strive to protect in work settings. The theory argued that a loss of or perceived threat to any of these resources in the absence of any viable alternative results in stress and a reduction in the ability to respond to stressors, thereby provoking a severe negative emotional response with a consequent reduction in the perceived ability to fulfill a job demand ([Hobfoll, 2001](#)). Consistently, [Charkhabi \(2017\)](#) noted that the perception of severe job insecurity is assumed to stimulate a hindrance appraisal which may drive employees to overestimate the adverse aspects of this threat, thereby leading to a reduction of personal resources such as self-efficacy.

Also, based on the fact that [Wuepper and Lybbert \(2017\)](#) have highlighted self-efficacious individuals as those that set more domain-based challenging goals for themselves, invest more, persist longer, and are better at dealing with failing experiences in this domain than persons low in self-efficacy, it can be deduced that when the domain-based efficacy of an individual is threatened as a result of perceived job insecurity, the resultant outcome may be a corresponding decrease of performance in tasks related to this domain. Moreover, [Jakobsen et al. \(2017\)](#) has noted that one of the consequences of a potential layoff in organizations is demoralization and helplessness. The implication here is that these feelings of demoralization and helplessness have a potential to result in decreased self-efficacy in the face of crucial job tasks as the two constructs have been uncovered as reliable correlates of self-efficacy ([de Figueiredo, 2013](#)).

Meanwhile, as it has been proposed by [Jordan et al. \(2002\)](#) that emotional intelligence may likely moderate people's affective reactions to stressful working conditions, it is expected in this study that in job-insecure situations, individuals with higher emotional intelligence should be able to maintain positive affect, leading to increased self-efficacy ([Bandura, 1986](#); [Linda et al., 2020](#)). Indeed, the social cognitive theory clearly highlighted the role of emotional arousal in predicting efficacy beliefs ([Bandura, 1986](#)), due to the ability of positive affect to restore psychological resources in the face of negative affect and experiences ([Gloria et al., 2013](#)). Accordingly, [Buonomo et al. \(2019\)](#) found that the more positive emotion individuals attribute to themselves, the higher the chance to build positive aspects of the self. In the same vein, other researchers have also found that both self-efficacy and positive affect are inversely and directly correlated in a cross-lagged longitudinal study (see [Linda et al., 2020](#)).

With respect to empirical studies on the direct relationship between perceived job insecurity and self-efficacy, [Lim and Loo \(2003\)](#) invoked the spillover theory by [Leiter and Durup \(1996\)](#) and examined the relationship among parental job insecurity, authoritarian parenting behavior, and work attitudes, proposing that the consequences associated with the insecure working conditions of parents not only manifest within organizational settings but also transcend to family-related domains. From the data collected from 178 management undergraduates and their parents in addition to the structural equation modelling conducted, one major outcome of this study was that parents who have increasing feelings of job insecurity demonstrate a higher rate of authoritarian parenting behavior, which consequently translates into youth perception of parental job insecurity, lower self-efficacy, and negative work attitude. Thus, an inference from this study is that there seems to be a connection between a perceived threat to economic stability, self-confidence in task-related domains, and the attitude exhibited in handling these tasks.

Other studies (e.g., [Carter et al., 2018](#); [De Clercq et al., 2018](#); [Feng et al., 2008](#); [Greenhalgh, 1983](#); [Horcajo et al., 2022](#); [Khalil et al., 2021](#); [Smith, 2013](#); [Sora et al., 2009](#); [Stajkovic et al., 2018](#)), too, have been used as pointers. Altogether, this suggests that emotional intelligence may indeed play an important role in terms of motivating higher self-efficacy with a view to enhancing higher performance outcomes. Thus, based on all the above, the following hypotheses are proposed (see [Fig. 1](#) for the conceptual framework of this study).

H1. *Perceived job insecurity is negatively related to task performance.*

H2. *The negative relationship between perceived job insecurity and task performance is moderated by emotional intelligence.*

H3. *The moderated relationship between perceived job insecurity and task performance is mediated by self-efficacy.*

2 Materials and methods

2.1 Procedure

By employing descriptive cross-sectional survey research, based on the principles of positivist epistemology and the deductive research approach, the quantitatively scaled data for this research was collected from the employees of three money deposit banks between December 2020 and May 2021, with the aim of using the results from the statistical

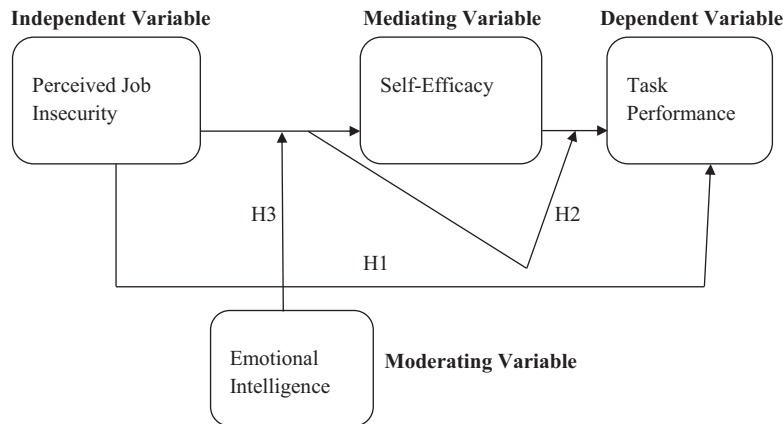


Fig. 1. Research model with hypotheses. Source: Author, based on literature review.

analysis conducted to make inference to a larger population. Before the data collection process, all items to be utilized in response elicitation were reviewed and evaluated by the ethical committees of two universities. In addition, permissions were sought from the management of the commercial banks under consideration to conduct the research, while the consent of employees who volunteered to take part in the research was also sought. A form explaining the purpose of the study and the rights of the participants to withdraw from the study anytime without penalty was attached to the questionnaires to ensure voluntary consent. Further, the questionnaires had no identifiers to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Finally, it was stated that there would be no financial or any other form of compensation for participation. All of this is in line with the latest version of Helsinki Declaration (World Medical Association, 2013).

2.2 Participants

From a total population of 3406 employees of the three randomly selected money deposit banks, a total of 385 survey questionnaires were distributed to employees who were conveniently selected, after making use of the proportional sampling technique, by ensuring that the number of employees drawn from each bank was calculated, based on the total number of employees in the bank, in relation to the research population when expressed as a percentage of the total sample size (see Asika, 1991). Displayed in Table 1 and Table 2 is information regarding the total number of employees from the three banks and the total number that were selected from them, after drawing inference from the work of Zikmund (2005) on sample size and sample size calculation.

From the total number of 385, a total usable copy of 342 (90%) were utilized in the final analysis due to issues ranging from unreturned questionnaire, im-

Table 1. The number of employees in selected banks across the three cities.

List of commercial banks	Abuja (N)	Kano (N)	Lagos (N)	Total
United Bank for Africa	350	241	800	1391
Zenith Bank	300	110	600	1010
Access Bank	300	105	600	1005
Total	950	456	2000	3406

properly filled questionnaire, to multivariate outliers. Among these 342 participants, 210 or 60.8% were males, while the remaining 134 or 39.2% were females. Based on age classification, while the average among them was 30.5 years ($SD = 9.10$), 56 or 16.4% of them were between the ages of 18 and 26 years; 236 or 69% fell between the ages of 26 and 35 years; 45 or 13.2% were between 36 to 45 years old, while 5 or 1.4% were between 46 and 55 years old. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that a total of 8 or 2.3% were in possession of the Senior Secondary School Certificate, 81 or 23.7% had either a National Education Certificate (NCE) or Ordinary National Diploma (OND), 204 or 59.6% had a first degree, while 49 or 14.4% had various forms of postgraduate qualifications. With respect to their marital status, 170 or 49.7% were found to be single, while a total of 172 or 50.3% were married. Table 3 provides a general overview of this analysis.

2.3 Measures

2.3.1 Task performance

A 13-item scale was adopted from the work of Na-Nan et al. (2018) and utilized to elicit responses. It is an all-encompassing job performance evaluation tool, designed to make up for the limitations of previous task performance scales that have failed to employ the use of validated comprehensive scales (Na-Nan et al., 2018). Using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with 260 sampled

Table 2. Total sample size and the number of employees to be drawn from each bank.

List of commercial banks	Total number of employees by banks	Sample size determination Formula: Bank population/Total population \times Total sample size	Sample size
United Bank for Africa	1391	$1391/3406 \times 385$	157
Zenith Bank	1010	$1010/3406 \times 385$	114
Access Bank	1005	$1005/3406 \times 385$	114
Total	3406		385

Table 3. Demographic characteristics of respondents.

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	208	60.8
Female	134	39.2
Age		
18–25 years	56	16.4
26–35 years	236	69
36–45 years	45	13.2
46–55	5	1.4
Educational attainment		
SSCE/Equivalent	8	2.3
NCE/OND	81	23.7
First degree	204	59.6
Postgraduate	49	14.4
Marital status		
Married	170	49.7
Single	172	50.3

workers, the factor analysis results for these items confirm the validity of the 13-question scale questionnaire as a reliable employee performance evaluation tool with a composite reliability (CR) value of .894 and average variance extracted (AVE) value of .739 (Piriyakul, 2016). Additionally, an internal consistency Cronbach's alpha value of .952 was observed for these items among a group of auto-part assembly workers. Sample items on this scale include "I take quality into consideration in the discharge of services to customers," "In this organization, I performed my job task attentively and correctly."

2.3.2 Perceived job insecurity

The job insecurity instrument in this study is a 12-item scale adapted from Francis and Barling (2005), Borg and Elizur (1992), and De Witte et al. (2010). While this scale assesses the quantitative in addition to the affective and cognitive aspects of perceived job insecurity, it also assesses the extent to which employees feel insecure about the characteristics and conditions of their jobs. In a previous study, Smith (2013) reported an internal consistency reliability value of .88 for eight of these items, while Charkhabi (2017) and Roll (2015) reported Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients of .85 and .76, respectively, in their

studies. Sample items on this scale include "I am concerned about the possibility of being laid off," "I feel insecure about the characteristics and conditions of my job in the future."

2.3.3 Emotional intelligence

The emotional intelligence scale by Schutte et al. (1998) is utilized in measuring emotional intelligence. The original scale consists of 33 items based on the conceptual model of emotional intelligence put forward by Salovey and Mayer (1990). It is a multidimensional scale designed to measure three major facets of emotional intelligence: appraisal and expression of emotion, regulation of emotion, and utilization of emotion. Regarding the predictive validity of the items, they were found to be significantly correlated with theoretically related constructs: depression, greater attention to feelings, greater clarity of feelings, alexithymia, and mood repair. Items in this scale relate to statements such as "I find it easy to understand the non-verbal messages of other people," "Some of the major events of my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important and not important," "I know when to speak about my personal problems to others," etc.

2.3.4 Self-efficacy

The self-efficacy scale is an 8-item measure adapted from Raelin's (n.d) Work Self-Efficacy Inventory. With this inventory, workers are able to assess and develop their work self-efficacy along a number of distinct dimensions (Zellars et al., 2008). It is classified into seven factors of work self-efficacy and an overall measure of self-efficacy. In the view of Zellars et al. (2008), the average score for each of the seven items and the overall composite score is 3.8 by norm, with a standard deviation of 0.6. EFA and CFA have consistently shown these items to be highly reliable with an internal consistency value in the range of .80 for both the sub-scores and overall score and proved them to be characterized by strong convergent and discriminant validity (Thompson & Bates, 2013).

All the items measuring the four major variables in this study were presented in a form through which

respondents were expected to respond by showing their degree of agreement or disagreement on a 5-point Likert scale, which ranged from (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) undecided, (4) agree, to (5) strongly agree. This range was used if the statements were in positive form and was reversed in the opposite case.

2.3.5 Control variable

Since gender, age, and marital status have the potential to exercise an influence in the relationship between perceived job insecurity and its outcome variables (Richter et al., 2013), they were included as control variables. Also, because the deposit money banks in focus have differing organizational cultures, operational formalities, and modes of conduct, all of which may exercise an influence on the reaction of employees to felt job insecurity (Sora et al., 2009), bank type was also included as a control variable.

2.4 Data analysis

We carried out our analysis in two phases. In the first stage, we focused on the preliminary analysis by calculating the mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's coefficient of correlations between variables. Next, an independent *T*-test between the early respondents and late respondents was conducted to ascertain that non-response bias was not an issue in the data set (Lin & Schaeffer, 1995). Furthermore, efforts were made to address the issue of missing values and outliers before carrying out a factor analysis to evaluate the validity of the constructs. Also, items' reliability was assessed by making use of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient and the composite reliability statistics. Since responses were elicited from the same source at a point in time, we conducted Harman's single-factor analysis (Kock et al., 2021; Podsakoff et al., 2003) to ascertain the absence of this type of bias. As per the five major assumptions of regression analysis, different types of tests such as skewness and kurtosis, normal *p-p* plot, tolerance, variance-inflated factor, Durbin-Watson, and residual plot were conducted to ensure that the five major assumptions of regression analysis, that is, normality, collinearity, linearity, homoscedasticity, and independence of error term (see Hair et al., 2010), were complied with.

In the second stage, a hierarchical moderated regression analysis was carried out by utilizing the Process macro script using bias-corrected bootstrapping with 5000 resamples (Cohen et al., 2003), and following the centering procedure based on the recommendation of Hayes (2013). Furthermore, a hierarchical mediated-moderated regression analysis in addition to conditional indirect effect analyses was

carried out with a bias-corrected confidence interval of 5000 bootstrap samples (Hayes, 2013; Preacher & Hayes, 2008) with a view to examining the mediated influence of self-efficacy in the moderated relationship.

3 Results

While no missing value was detected in the data set, a total of three multivariate outliers were detected, which were consequently deleted, leaving a total of 342 copies of the questionnaire to be employed in the final analysis. After the deletion of item 7 on the task performance scale, and items 1, 2, 3, 4 on the job insecurity scale, due to their low commonality, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measures of sampling adequacy obtained for the four constructs were all above .7, which is excellent based on Hucheson and Sofroniou's (1999) classification. Also, Bartlett's tests of sphericity for these constructs were statistically significant, thereby lending support to the factorability of each construct based on the *p*-value at .000. Furthermore, from the outcome of the factor analysis, we obtained a factor loading that ranged from .741 to .866 for task performance, .779 to .878 for job insecurity, .751 to .863 for self-efficacy, and .744 to .855 for emotional intelligence, all of which are above the threshold of .7 recommended by, for example, Alain et al., 2021, Pallant, 2011, and Slocum-Gori & Zumbo, 2011, meaning that the items that make up each variable constitute a distinct construct (Alain et al., 2021). Similarly, the convergent validity of the items was ascertained based on AVE values of .669, .637, .711, and .650, which were respectively obtained for task performance, perceived job insecurity, self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence.

With respect to discriminant validity, this was ascertained after finding out that the square root of AVE for the three variables was higher than the correlation of that variable with other variables in the model and that both the Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) and the Average Shared Variance (ASV) between the constructs were lower than AVE for the constructs (Alain et al., 2021). Composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values of .943 and .838, .953 and .944, .946 and .951, and .931 and .912 were respectively obtained for perceived job insecurity, task performance, self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence, all of which provide evidence of an acceptable level of reliability (see Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Furthermore, since the result from Harman's single-factor analysis provided evidence that the total variance extracted by one factor was less than 50 percent (Baumgartner et al., 2021; Williams et al., 1989), it was concluded that common method bias was not

Table 4. Mean, standard deviation, correlation, and square root of average variance extracted.

	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1 TP	3.80	0.865	(.818)			
Sig						
2 PJI	2.87	7.08	−.260**	(.820)		
Sig		.000				
3 Emotional I	4.01	0.911	.196**	.170**	(.810)	
Sig			.000	.002		
4 Self (E)	4.4	0.7	.309**	−.004	.642**	(.843)
Sig			.000	.941	.000	

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (1-tailed).

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (1-tailed).

a serious issue with the dataset. Table 4 shows the coefficient of correlation between variables, the mean, standard deviation, and the square root of AVE for the four variables. Accordingly, task performance is negatively and significantly related to perceived job insecurity ($r = -.260^{**}$, $p < .05$), task performance is positively and significantly related to emotional intelligence ($r = .196^{**}$, $p < .05$), while emotional intelligence is also positively associated to perceived job insecurity ($r = .170^{**}$, $p < .05$). Also, self-efficacy is positively associated with task performance ($r = .309^{**}$, $p < .05$); it is negatively associated with perceived job insecurity ($r = -.004$, $p > .05$) and positively associated with emotional intelligence ($r = .642^{**}$, $p < .05$).

3.1 Testing main effect and moderating effect

With a view to examining the direct relationship between perceived job insecurity and task performance, as well as the moderating influence of emotional intelligence in this relationship, a simple moderation analysis was carried out (Jiang & Probst, 2014; Jung et al., 2020). The analyses showing the results of the centered interaction are presented in Table 5.

In Table 5, the main effect of perceived job insecurity on task performance and the moderating effect of emotional intelligence in this relationship are displayed in a hierarchical moderated regression by making use of a centered interaction term with a view to obtaining a more accurate estimate (Hayes, 2013; Preacher et al., 2007). First, demographic variables, such as age, gender, marital status, bank membership, and educational level were treated as control variables and entered. As indicated by the table, these variables failed to account for any significant amount of variance in task performance. Holding the effect of these demographic variables constant, perceived job insecurity and emotional intelligence were included (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Results show that perceived job insecurity has a significant and negative main ef-

Table 5. Hierarchical moderated regression showing task performance as a function of job insecurity and emotional intelligence with centered interaction term.

Models	Beta	SE	T	Sig
Step 1				
Constant	38.3742	3.2418	11.8373	.0000
Gender	0.5969	1.0263	0.5816	.5612
Age	−0.0816	0.9491	−0.0859	.9316
Bank	0.5504	0.5989	0.9190	.3588
Marital	0.3028	1.1340	0.2670	.7896
Edu	0.3355	0.7809	0.4297	.6677
PJI	−0.4099	0.0721	−5.6857	.0000
Emotional (I)	0.4451	0.0868	5.1285	.0000
Step 2				
PJI				
X	−0.0226	0.0081	−2.8055	.0053
Emotional (I)				
R-square (.1528)	F (7.5056)	P (.0000)		
Test of highest-order unconditional interaction between job insecurity and emotional intelligence				
R ² Change	F	df1	df2	P
.0200	7.8706	1.0000	333.0000	.0053

fect on task performance, $\beta = -0.4099$, $p = .000$ ($p < .05$); emotional intelligence, on the other hand, exercises a positive and significant main effect on task performance, $\beta = 0.4451$, $p = .000$ ($p < .05$). This result supports hypothesis 1, which proposed a significant negative relationship between perceived job insecurity and task performance.

Concerning the moderating influence of emotional intelligence, scores on perceived job insecurity, emotional intelligence, and task performance were centered with a view to creating an interaction term as recommended by Hayes (2013). Next, the centered task performance score was regressed on job insecurity, emotional intelligence, and their interaction term. As expected, it is shown by the table that the interaction term between perceived job insecurity and emotional intelligence is statistically significant with a beta value of -0.0226 , $p = .005$ ($p < .05$). In other words, the negative relationship obtained for perceived job insecurity/task performance was weaker when employees reported higher levels of emotional intelligence than when they reported lower levels of emotional intelligence (Cohen et al., 2003). Also, the test of highest-order unconditional interaction displayed in the table shows an R-square change value of .0200 ($F = 7.8706$), $p = .0053$ ($p < .05$), which is significant at the .05 confidence interval, meaning that hypothesis 2 is also supported. The regression model is plotted at three values of the moderating variable, that is, one standard deviation above the mean, the mean, and one standard deviation below the mean (Aiken & West, 1991). See Fig. 2.

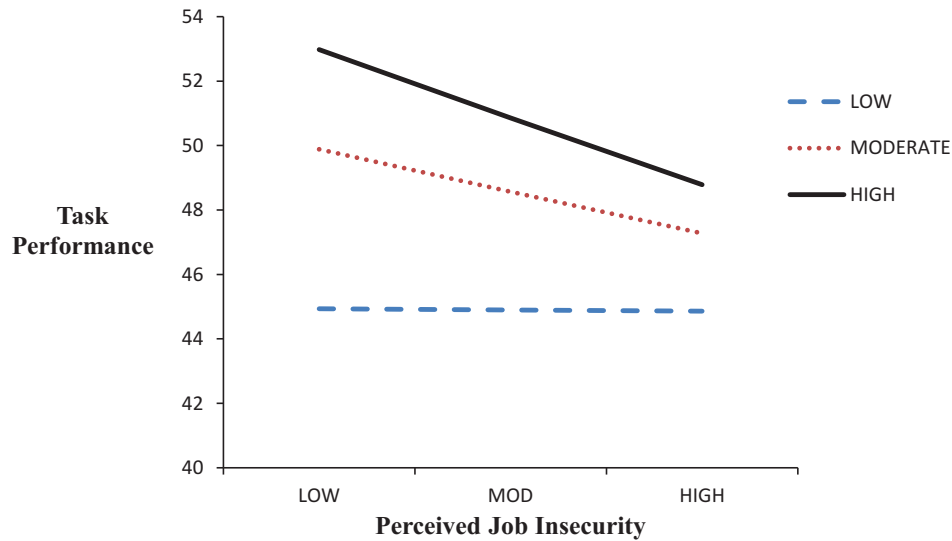


Fig. 2. Interaction between perceived job insecurity and emotional intelligence showing increasing level of emotional intelligence, which leads to a significant reduction in the negative relationship between perceived job insecurity and task performance.

3.2 Testing mediation–moderation

As it was considered necessary to ascertain whether the moderated relationship between perceived job insecurity and task performance is mediated by self-efficacy in such a way that the indirect effect varies across levels of emotional intelligence, a moderated–mediated analysis was carried out by utilizing the Process macro as recommended by Hayes (2013). This is because combining the examination of these effects in a single analysis may not only assist the researcher to identify mediating processes through which job insecurity achieves its effects but also identify the various boundary conditions under which the effects are achieved (Fairchild & MacKinnon, 2009). The results of the analyses are presented in Tables Table 6 and 7.

The analysis on the mediation of the moderated effect of perceived job insecurity on task performance is presented in Table 6. In the first step of the analysis, where self-efficacy is the outcome variable, it is shown that after holding the effect of all control variables constant, perceived job insecurity exercises a significant and negative effect on self-efficacy, $\beta = -0.0976$, $p = .0044$ ($p < .05$), while emotional intelligence has a significant and positive relationship with self-efficacy, $\beta = 0.6974$, $p = .000$, $p < 0.05$. Meanwhile, as it is also shown by the significant interaction term between emotional intelligence and perceived job insecurity that emotional intelligence is a significant moderator of the relationship between perceived job insecurity and self-efficacy, $\beta = -0.0208$, $p = .0000$ ($p < .05$), this serves as a pointer that self-efficacy is a potential mediator of the moderated relationship between per-

Table 6. Moderated analysis of the indirect effect of job insecurity on task performance with emotional intelligence as a moderator.

Models	Beta	SE	T	Sig
Step 1 (Outcome Variable = Self-Efficacy)				
Constant	35.1696	1.5305	22.9795	.0000
Gender	0.0211	0.4845	0.0436	.9652
Age	0.5413	0.4481	1.2079	.2279
Bank	0.2106	0.2828	0.7447	.4570
Marital	−0.6008	0.5354	−1.1223	.2626
PJI	−0.0976	0.0340	−2.8678	.0044
EM	0.6974	0.0410	17.0217	.0000
PJI* EM	−0.0208	0.0038	−5.4706	.0000
(R^2 .4776)	(F -stat 38.0499)	(Sig .0000)		
Step 2 (Outcome Variable = Task Performance)				
Constant	25.3119	5.1399	4.9246	.0000
Gender	0.5890	1.0119	0.5821	.5609
Age	−0.2826	0.9379	−0.3013	.7634
Bank	0.4722	0.5910	0.7989	.4249
Marital	0.5259	1.1202	0.4695	.6390
PJI	−0.3737	0.0720	−5.1928	.0000
SE	0.3714	0.1144	3.2452	.0013
EM	0.1861	0.1170	1.5900	.1128
PJI* EM	−0.0149	0.0083	−1.7936	.0738
(R^2 .4587)	(F -stat 30.5056)	(Sig .0000)		

ceived job insecurity and task performance (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

In the second step, task performance was treated as the outcome variable, while perceived job insecurity, emotional intelligence, and self-efficacy were treated as the independent variable, moderating variable, and mediating variable, respectively. After controlling for demographic characteristics, job insecurity exercises a negative effect on task performance, $\beta = -0.3737$, $p = .000$ ($p < .05$). Also, self-efficacy is

Table 7. Conditional indirect effect of perceived job insecurity on task performance at values of the moderator.

EM	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
–2.7164	–.3333	.0745	–4.4729	.0000
0.2836	–.3779	.0721	–5.2416	.0000
4.2836	–.4374	.0815	–5.3639	.0000
Index of Moderated Mediation	Index	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
	–.0077	.0037	–0.0155	–.0012

positively and significantly related to task performance, $\beta = 0.3714$, $p = .013$ ($p < .05$), while emotional intelligence exercises an insignificant and positive impact with a beta value of 0.1861, $p = .1128$ ($p > .05$). With respect to the moderating influence of emotional intelligence in this model, the interaction term of $-.0149$, $p = .0738$ ($p > .05$) confirms that emotional intelligence is an insignificant moderator of the relationship between perceived job insecurity and task performance whenever the effect of self-efficacy is taken into account, which means that the moderating influence found earlier for emotional intelligence is contingent on the indirect influence of self-efficacy. Furthermore, bootstrap estimates and a bias-corrected confidence interval (95%) were used to test the indirect effect of self-efficacy (e.g., Edwards & Lambert, 2007; Hayes, 2012; Preacher et al., 2007). The results indicate that the overall indirect effect of self-efficacy is significant, as shown by the upper bound and lower bound of the moderating–mediating index in Table 7, which contain the value of zero. In sum, the implication of this result is that hypothesis 3, which predicted that self-efficacy mediates the moderated relationship between quantitative job insecurity and task performance, is supported.

4 Discussion of findings

This study makes use of the cognitive appraisal theory by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and the conservation-of-resources theory (see Hobfoll, 1989) to advance insight into the relationship between perceived job insecurity and employee task performance, as well as the moderating influence of emotional intelligence in this relationship. By focusing on employees in the Nigerian banking industry, three research hypotheses were raised, and the following was uncovered.

First, in line with the prediction that perceived job insecurity exercises a significant and negative impact on task performance, it was revealed that job insecurity indeed exercises a negative and significant impact on task performance, which means that every unit increase in job insecurity leads to a negative and significant decrease in task performance. While this

finding supports hypothesis 1, it also lends support to the cognitive appraisal theory by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), which posits that a high level of stress exerts a negative impact on employee attitude and behavior, as well as to some other studies (Adekunle & Adegoroye, 2021; Dahiya, 2021; De Angelis et al., 2021; De Cuyper et al., 2020; Fischmann et al., 2019; Setti et al., 2015; Shin & Hur, 2019; Wang et al., 2015) where significant main effects were found for the relationship between these two variables.

Meanwhile, as a few other studies (e.g., Aguiar-Quintana et al., 2021; König et al., 2010; Kurnia & Widigdo, 2021; Makori & Odero, 2017; Pilipiec, 2020) investigating these two variables have uncovered insignificant effects, the finding in the current study further strengthens the recommendation by, for example, De Cuyper et al. (2020), Pilipiec (2020), Shin and Hur (2019), and Kim and Kim (2020) on the need to continue to advance research in the identification of undiscovered factors which may have an influence on the strength or direction of this relationship.

With a view to probing deeper into the nature of this relationship, hypothesis 2 was tested by introducing emotional intelligence as a potential moderating variable of this relationship. Results also support the proposition that emotional intelligence moderates the relationship between these two variables, thereby leading to the acceptance of this hypothesis. Accordingly, it is shown that the significant negative relationship uncovered for perceived job insecurity and task performance is not generalizable and that the perceived job insecurity versus task performance relationship is weaker among those respondents reporting higher levels of emotional intelligence and stronger for those who reported lower levels of emotional intelligence, thereby lending support to the conservation-of-resources theory by Hobfoll et al. (2018) and Hobfoll (1989), which posits that there are human characteristics that are capable of acting as boundary conditions that strengthen or weaken employees' reactions to negative work events, such as those emanating from the threat of job loss.

From an empirical perspective, the adaptive value of positive affect in promoting resilience and successful adaptation to stress has been demonstrated

by a wide spectrum of evidence (e.g., Danner et al., 2001; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000; Gloria et al., 2013). Also, the empirical evidence provided by Mangnus (2012), where emotional intelligence was identified as capable of promoting adaptive behavior to sustain performance outcome among frontline executives in selected Dutch services firms, lends support to this line of reasoning. Thus, in work settings where bank workers are under a threat of perceived job insecurity, which may culminate in low task performance outcome, such as low quality customer service, inability to meet customer expectations, inability to deliver timely customer service, for those who have a better understanding of their own emotions, as well as those of co-workers, customers, and supervisors, are better in controlling and managing their own emotions and in making use of good moods to help themselves keep trying in the face of obstacles, it is likely that these qualities assist them in mitigating the effect of the negative emotions that emanate from this perception and, by so doing, ensure that they maintain quality and timely customer services, while also meeting customer expectations to an acceptable level.

Furthermore, with a view to testing hypothesis 3, which predicted that self-efficacy mediates the moderated relationship between perceived job insecurity and task performance, it was first considered imperative to examine the nature of the effect that job insecurity exercises on self-efficacy. Findings revealed that job insecurity exercises a negative effect on self-efficacy, $\beta = -0.0976$, $p = .0044$ ($p < .05$), which suggests that it is imperative for managers to continue focusing on improving self-efficacy for employees faced with the threat of job loss.

To determine whether this negative effect is moderated by emotional intelligence, as well as whether self-efficacy mediates the interaction effect of perceived job insecurity and emotional intelligence on task performance, a moderated–mediated test of the indirect relationship between job insecurity and task performance was conducted. In line with expectations, the result of the moderated–mediated regression analysis conducted shows that while job insecurity exercises a negative and significant impact on self-efficacy, there is significant negative interaction between emotional intelligence and the latter, which means that the significant relationship between job insecurity and self-efficacy is not generalizable across the respondents but moderated by emotional intelligence as an increase or decrease in emotional intelligence changes the strength of this relationship or its direction. Clearly, this finding is in tandem with other empirical studies where it has been shown that when workers attend their positive emotional experiences, their self-efficacy rises (Gloria et al.,

2013; O'Malley & Gregory, 2011; Staw et al., 1994; Xanthopoulou et al., 2012). With respect to the mediating influence of self-efficacy on the moderated relationship between job insecurity and task performance, findings also reveal that whenever the effect of self-efficacy is taken into account, this moderating influence tends to become insignificant, meaning that the moderating influence found earlier for emotional intelligence is contingent on the indirect effect of self-efficacy. Thus, the conditional indirect effect of job insecurity on task performance through self-efficacy and the moderated–mediated index in Table 5, which does contain the value of zero, provides evidence of an indirect relationship which tends to vary with decreasing or increasing level of emotional intelligence.

By implication, these results reinforce Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions, which posits that the experience of positive affect expands one's scope of attention and cognition and thus enables more flexible and creative thinking to promote successful adaptation to stress (see Fredrickson et al., 2000; Gloria et al., 2013). In more explicit terms, the theory averred that while the negative emotion that emanates from the perception of future job loss should impact negatively on employee self-efficacy and reduce their self-confidence (Chan, 2004), the higher the emotional intelligence and the positive affect individuals attribute to themselves, the higher the chance to build positive aspects of the self (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005).

Thus, since the ability to balance positive and negative affects regarding workplace events (e.g., Diener et al., 1999) was indeed found to be related to efficacy beliefs in an Italian sample (Caprara & Steca, 2006), and the empirical studies by Gharetepeh et al. (2015) among a total of 129 public health students at Iranian universities revealed that students whose performance scores were higher also scored higher in both self-efficacy and emotional intelligence and that the significant relationship between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy tends to be stronger among students who have higher performance scores, the finding in this study supports this line of reasoning.

Taken together, these results show that while emotional intelligence may be useful in achieving a significant reduction in the negative relationship between job insecurity and task performance, the usefulness of emotional intelligence in this regard is facilitated through the relationship between job insecurity and self-efficacy. Thus, in a work atmosphere characterized by a high level of job insecurity, which may impact negatively on employee task performance, managers would benefit more by emphasizing the indirect relationship between these two variables whenever there is a need to make use of emotional

intelligence in maintaining positive affect to promote higher performance outcome.

By making use of the conservation-of-resources theory (see [Hobfoll, 1989](#)), this study is one of the few that have provided evidence on how human cognition may interact with their emotional resources to attenuate the negative performance outcome that may be experienced by employees that work in an organizational environment characterized by a high level of perceived job insecurity and a mechanism through which such interaction may take place. For instance, some previous studies have tested organizational justice, workplace incivility, self-efficacy, and organizational justice (see [De Angelis et al., 2021](#); [Feng et al., 2008](#); [Shin & Hur, 2019](#); [Wang et al., 2015](#)) as moderators of the association between job insecurity and task performance. Hence, as there is scanty evidence of any study that has considered testing the moderating role of emotional intelligence as well as the mediating influence of self-efficacy in this association, the results of this research provide answers to the call by [Charkhabi \(2017\)](#) on the need for future research to provide evidence on how and when the perception of job insecurity may exercise an effect on the task performance outcome.

4.1 Limitations and future direction

The data in this study was obtained from three different money deposit banks, so there is potential for more generalization. As employees from other industries apart from banking are likely to find themselves under the influence of certain situational or contextual factors that make their responses different from the ones obtained in this study, it is necessary for future studies to focus on multiple industries with a view to improving the generalizability of the findings in this study. Also, while it was ascertained that common method variance (see [Podsakoff et al., 2003](#)) was not an issue with the dataset in this study, it is still encouraged that prospective researchers replicate the model by adopting objective measures of job insecurity and job performance as better measures.

A significant and positive relationship has been uncovered for self-efficacy and task performance in line with expectations; however, since it has been suggested that this relationship is contingent on the moderating influence of task complexity (see [Iroegbu, 2015](#); [Judge et al., 2007](#)), it may be worthwhile for future researchers to examine the research model in this study among professionals such as researchers and innovators, software programmers and developers, architects and building engineers, whose job tasks are characterized by more complexity than those in the banking industry ([McGrath et al., 1995](#)), or manufac-

turing, car assembly workers, and machine operators, who are deemed to have job tasks that are characterized by lower complexity ([Jung et al., 2020](#)).

Since job insecurity was conceptualized as a unidimensional construct in this study, future researchers are encouraged to attempt to determine the specific nature of the relationship between the different facets of job insecurity and task performance due to the fact that research evidence has shown that different effects exist for these facets in relation to performance outcomes.

4.2 Practical implications

Job insecurity, along with its negative consequences, is likely to continue as a common phenomenon in organizations worldwide as long as trends towards globalization, restructuring, lockdown, social distancing, and downsizing continue. As this study shows, the likelihood of job insecurity and its negative impacts on employee performance may be mitigated if the management of organizations, particularly in the banking industry, strives to place a high premium on the promotion of emotional intelligence skills among their employees, by initiating training programs aimed at promoting the core domains of emotional intelligence, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills. Other intervention strategies that could be devised by the managements of banks may include introducing emotional intelligence as a separate test in job interviews and job evaluation, as well as carrying out a direct observation of employees to have a clear view of those aspects of emotional intelligence where training is needed by such employees.

As it has been uncovered in this study that self-efficacy mediates the moderated relationship between perceived job insecurity and task performance, it has therefore become imperative for human resources managers, particularly in the banking industry, to note that in situations where there is a need to make use of emotional intelligence in mitigating the negative impact of job insecurity on task performance, such intervention should be targeted towards improving self-efficacy, in a bid to motivate a higher performance outcome, as such a strategy is likely to culminate in an optimal outcome.

Last, it is suggested especially in the current times of the COVID-19 pandemic that governments worldwide provide companies with financial subsidies to avoid layoffs. In addition, public policies that support social security and unemployment benefits should be enacted by legislature and promoted by governments to reduce the fear of threat associated with job loss

among employees in both public and private organizations.

Data availability

The datasets analyzed and generated during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Ethical statement

In accordance with the ethical standards as laid down in the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards, an approval of this study and the data collection instrument was obtained from the ethical committee of the Department of Business Administration, Bayero University, Kano. In addition, the managements of the money deposit banks under focus were informed of the nature of the study and were asked for their approval before the administration of the questionnaire.

Consent to participate

Before participation in the study, informed consent was acquired from all the employees in the study, and it was brought to their awareness that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time as they deemed fit and that there was no financial or any other form of compensation for participation.

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All effort by the managements of the commercial banks whose employees participated in this study is highly appreciated.

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