

THE EFFECTS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON JOB STRESS AMONG THE ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

Jong Jee Leong*, Muhammad Idris Bullare @ Bahari & Mohd. Dahlan A. Malek
Faculty of Psychology and Education, Universiti Malaysia Sabah,
Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia.

*Corresponding author: jjl6168@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to examine the effects of emotional intelligence on job stress among the enforcement officer of the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (MDTCA). A bunch of studies only focus on exploring the effects of emotional intelligence on job stress among the policeman and workers of other professions. In other words, the impact of the emotional intelligence on job stress among the MTDCA enforcement personnel is rarely given attention by the researchers. A total of 331 MDTCA enforcement members were involved in this study. The cluster sampling method was used and samples from the MDTCA state offices of Penang, Selangor, Terengganu, Johor and Sabah were randomly selected to participate in this study. Emotional Intelligence Inventory (ECI) and the Job Stress Survey (JSS) are used to test the hypothesis of this study. The data obtained were analysed by using the IBM SPSS Statistic version 20 and SmartPLS Professional version 3.2.8. The results showed that the competencies of self-management and social skills are the remedy to lessen the frequency of occurrence of the job stress that experienced by the respondents during the past six months. Therefore, it is hoped that the top management of MTDCA will give more attention in sharpening the officer's emotional intelligence competencies so that the officers are fit to handle the stress in their daily works.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, job stress, enforcement officer, Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (MDTCA)

Introduction

This research has been proposed to examine the impacts of emotional intelligence on job stress among the enforcement officers in one of the enforcement agencies in Malaysia. The agency we referred is called Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (MDTCA). The function of this agency is to protect the consumer rights; dealing with rising of cost of living; to protect the intellectual property rights and to eradicating the malpractices in subsidized controlled goods [1]. In 2016, the officers have inspected 552,129 premises throughout the country. From that inspection, there were 12,722 investigation papers have been opened in connection to the offences under the Acts they enforced. Besides that, they managed to settle a total of 25,370 complaints that have been lodged by the people in 2016 [1]. The job was carried out by only approximately 200 enforcement officers in each and every state in this country as what has been told by the Minister of MDTCA, Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainudin [2]. That means there were only around 2,300 enforcement officers in that agency to serve a total of 32.0 million people in this country [3] every day. The workload may cause job stress to the officers. Researcher has suggested emotional intelligence may help an individual to be aware of self-emotions and having self-confidence which may enable a person to interpret situations and manage through them effectively [4]. Emotional intelligence may also make a person to be more aware of emotional triggers that can instigate an angry violent response, learning tactics to manage one's own mental state during stressful situations and being more attentive to the impact of daily emotions on long-term moods and attitudes toward colleagues and others [4]. Thus, it is good to know the effects of emotional intelligence on the job stress among the enforcement officer because many studies have confirmed that the higher an enforcement officer in

emotional intelligence, the more they enjoy their work in their workplace. We also wish to propose a model to identify the effects of emotional intelligence on the job stress among the enforcement officer of MDTCA.

Emotional Intelligence

The underlying concept of emotional intelligence was introduced by Salovey and Mayer [5] to describe the subset of social intelligence which involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions. Emotional intelligence determines the potential for learning the practical skills that underline the competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management or social skills [6]. Those emotional competencies show how much of that potential a person has realized by learning and mastering the skills and transform the intelligence into on-the-job capabilities. The domains of self-awareness and self-management explained personal competencies in knowing and managing emotions in oneself while social awareness and social skills described social competencies in knowing and managing emotions in others [6].

Job Stress

The concept of job stress in this proposed research is based on Person-Environment (PE) Fit theory which explained the occupational stress results from an incompatible person-environmental fit can cause psychological strain and stress-related physical disorders [7]. Stress arises when the misfit of person and environment were happened congruently with one another [8]. They also explained that stress happened when the environment does not provide adequate supplies to meet the person's needs or when the abilities of the person fall short of demands that are prerequisite to receiving supplies. They defined stress as the degree of misfit in relation with this theory. In other words, stress only happened if the meeting demands is required to receive supplies or if demands have been internalized as goals or motives of the person as when norms or role expectations are accepted by the person as guidelines for one's own behaviour [8]. Not only that, stress is a subjective appraisal which reflected the supplies are insufficient to fulfil the person's needs with the condition that insufficient supplies may occur as a consequence of unmet demands [8]. Therefore, misfit between person and environment may result in occupational stress.

Previous Studies on Emotional Intelligence and Job Stress

Emotional intelligence is connected with the outcomes which related to police work like stress, trauma, coping and psychological resilience to traumatic and stress events [9]. Researcher has approved that an increase in emotional intelligence predicts lower levels of organizational stress. The increment of an officer's emotional intelligence can assist the officers to manage their stress which generated by organizational stress [9]. This finding was supported by other study that the competencies of self-awareness and empathy are significantly contribute to the reduction of burnout and stress among the police constable officers [10]. On the other hand, previous study has discovered that staff member of nursing school who have high emotional intelligence are able to manage their stressful situations effectively, while others who are unable to control their emotions are more easily stressed with any problems and further vulnerable to develop high level of stress [11]. A study have also explained that the emotional intelligence of the managers in their study is significantly in controlling the work stress [12].

Purpose of the Study

Although the impact of the emotional intelligence on the job stress among the workers has already been established, it is good for the researchers to extend the empirical evidences through this study to understand the level of emotional intelligence, job stress and its relationship since the studied population is rarely given attention by other researchers.

Research Objectives

The objectives in this research are to understanding the level of emotional intelligence and the level of job stress among the MDTCA enforcement officer. This study is also aimed examine the effect of emotional intelligence competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social skills) on the job stress among the said officer. The researchers also wish to propose a model to identify the effects of emotional intelligence on the job stress among the enforcement officer of MDTCA.

Research Hypothesis

In referring to the research objectives, the research hypothesis of the study can be drawn as follows:

- H_1 There is an effect of self-awareness on the job stress among the MDTCA enforcement officers.
- H_2 There is an effect of self-management on the job stress among the MDTCA enforcement officers.
- H_3 There is an effect of social awareness on the job stress among the MDTCA enforcement officers.
- H_4 There is an effect of social skills on the job stress among the MDTCA enforcement officers.

Methodology

Survey research design was used in current study to understand the effect of emotional intelligence on the job stress among the MDTCA enforcement officer. Information was collected from the sample through self-report questionnaire.

The sample of the study was comprised of 331 MDTCA enforcement officers which were selected from MDTCA state offices of Penang, Selangor, Terengganu, Johor and Sabah by using two-stage cluster sampling method. First stage cluster sampling was done by randomly choose the states in Malaysia. The second stage of cluster sampling was carried out by randomly choose the samples from each and every branch in respective five mentioned states.

There were two instruments that have been used in this research. Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI) is used to measure 20 competencies that have been categorized into four clusters, namely Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness and Social Skills. The researchers has used the Malay version [13] of ECI [14] to collect the related data. Subjects evaluated their competencies through 60 items on a 5-point Likert scale (from Never-1 to Consistently-5). Meanwhile, Malay version [15] of Job Stress Scale (JSS) [7] was used to understand the level of job stress that experienced by the respondents. This instrument consists of three main scales (Job Stress Index- JS-X, Job Stress Severity- JS-S and Job Stress Frequency- JS-F) and six subscales (Job Pressure Index- JP-X, Job Pressure Severity- JP-S, Job Pressure Frequency- JP-F, Lack of Organizational Support Index- LS-X, Lack of Organizational Severity- LS-S and Lack of Organizational Support- LS-F). The subjects were asked to rate the 9 point scale on perceived severity of 29 stressor events by comparing it to a standard stressor with a midpoint scale value of 5. Subjects were also required to use a scale of 0 to 9+ days to report how frequent they experienced each stressor that happened for the past 6 months. The JS-X, JS-S and JS-F scaled based on all 30 stressors provide estimate of the overall level of occupational stress experienced by a respondent. The scores of three Job Pressure (JP) and three Lack of Organizational Support (LS) subscales are based on the following 10 items that comprise in respective subscale.

Table 1

The Position of the Item for Job Pressure and Lack of Organizational Support Subscales

Subscale	Item's Position
Job Pressure (JP)	4, 7, 9, 11, 16, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27.
Lack of Organizational Support (LS)	3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, 14, 18, 21, 29.

Data Analysis

The data was analysed by using IBM SPSS version 24.0 to report the demographic information, the level of emotional intelligence and the level of job stress of the respondent. SmartPLS Professional version 3.2.8 is used to determine the effect of emotional intelligence on the job stress among the enforcement officer and to propose a model of cause and effect on the relationship between both latent variables.

Results

Table 2 shows that the total number of subjects in this study is 331 and most of the respondents are within the range of age of 31 to 35 years old and 36 to 40 years old. As expected, majority of them were man (76.4%) and the rest of the subjects is female (N=78).

Table 2
Respondent's Demographic Information

Demographic	Frequency (N=331)	Percentage (%)
Age		
21-25	15	4.5
26-30	43	13.0
31-35	93	28.1
36-40	93	28.1
41-45	32	9.7
46-50	48	14.5
51-55	7	2.1
Gender		
Male	253	76.4
Female	78	23.6
Level of Education		
SPM	94	28.4
Certificate/STPM	69	20.8
Diploma	91	27.5
Degree	73	22.1
Master	4	1.2
PhD	0	0
Year of Service		
1-5	124	37.5
6-10	82	24.8
11-15	92	27.8
16-20	20	6.0
21-25	9	2.7
26-30	4	1.2

The data also shows that the number of subjects with the level of education of SPM amounts to 28.4% (N=94) of the total respondents. The second largest academic qualification group comes from the level of education with Diploma which formed 27.5% of the total subjects in this study. None of the respondent in this study has the highest level of education (PhD). In terms of year of service, most of the respondents (N=124) have only 1 to 5 years working experience in this organization. A number of 27.8% of the total subjects have 11 to 15 years working experience while there was only 4 persons (1.2%) who contribute more than 26 years in this organization.

Subjects were asked to estimate their competencies through 60 items of ECI on the scale from “Never-1”, “Rarely-2”, “Sometimes-3”, “Often-4” to “Consistently-5”. Table 3 shows that respondents are quite often in demonstrating their emotional intelligence competencies when they performed their enforcement tasks every day. Among the emotional intelligence clusters of enforcement officer, cluster of Social Awareness with the mean of 3.65 (SD=1.77) had the highest mean. This is followed by the cluster of Self-Awareness with the mean 3.61 (SD=1.73), Self-Management (M=3.58, SD=1.73) and the cluster of Social Skills had the lowest mean (M=3.54, SD=1.80).

Table 3

Mean Score and Standard Deviation in Measuring the Level of Emotional Intelligence

Cluster	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Self-Awareness	3.61	1.73
Self-Management	3.58	1.73
Social Awareness	3.65	1.77
Social Skills	3.54	1.80

Table 4

Mean Score and Standard Deviation in Measuring the Level of Job Stress

Scale/Sub-scale	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Job Stress Scale		
Job Stress Index (JS-X)	19.51	13.42
Job Stress Severity (JS-S)	5.47	1.26
Job Stress Frequency (JS-F)	3.42	2.13
Job Pressure Sub-scale		
Job Pressure Index (JP-X)	19.20	14.34
Job Pressure Severity (JP-S)	5.50	1.39
Job Pressure Frequency (JP-F)	3.40	2.25
Lack of Organizational Support Sub-scale		
Lack of Organizational Support Index (LS-X)	20.21	14.55
Lack of Organizational Support Severity (LS-S)	5.62	1.39
Lack of Organizational Support Frequency (LS-F)	3.44	2.23

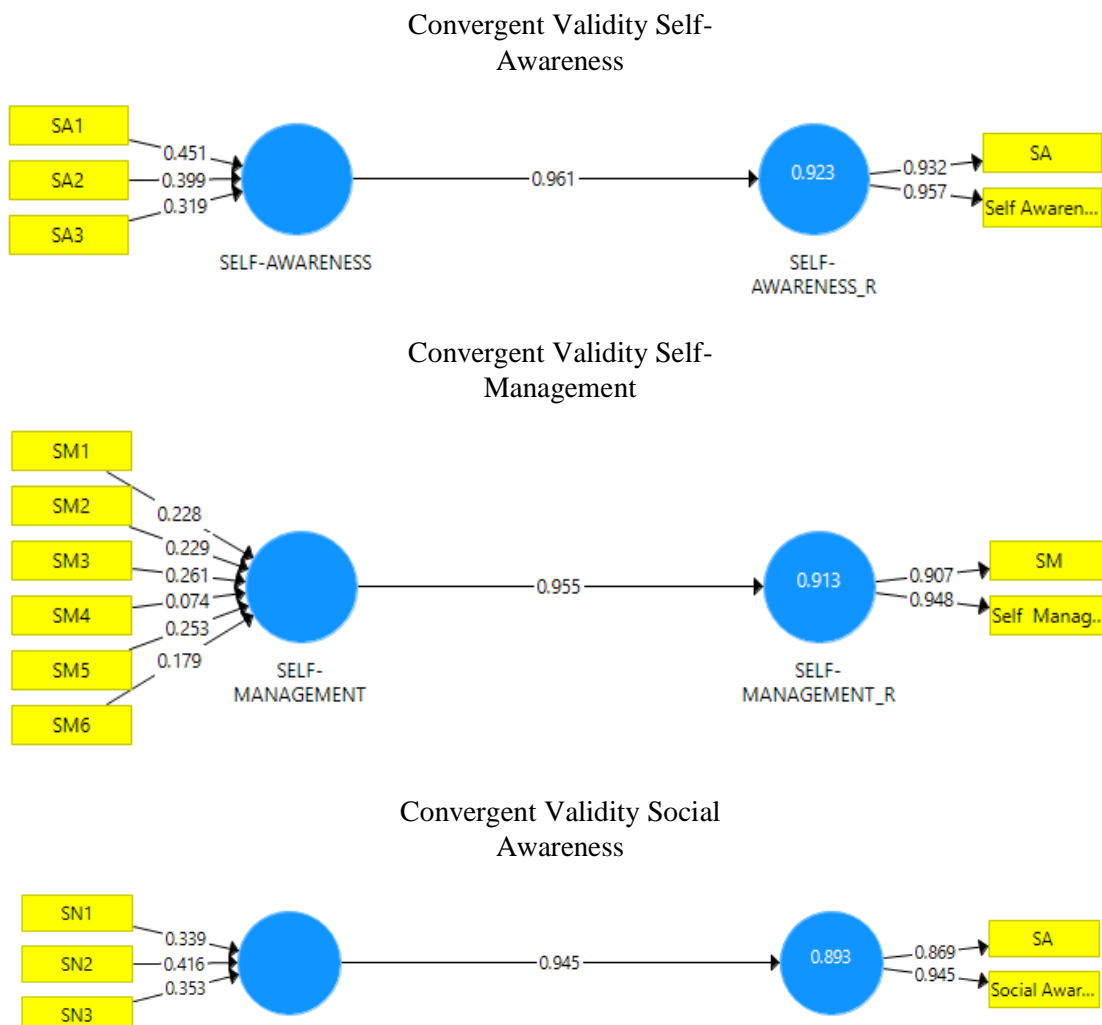
Researchers had justified that the score range for JS-X is 0.00 to 79.8 while the score range for JP-X and LS-X is 0.00 to 81.00 [7]. Besides that, they also mentioned that the possible score range for JS-F, JP-F and LS-F is 0.00 to 9.00. Score ranges of Severity on the scale of Job Stress, sub-scale of Job Pressure and Lack of Organizational Support are 1.13 to 8.87 and 1.00 to 9.00 respectively. Table 4 has concluded that the respondents had experienced moderate level of perceived severity of stressor events JS-S (M=5.47, SD=1.26). They had also encountered moderate level of perceived severity of stressors related to job pressure JP-S (M=5.50) and moderate level of perceived severity of stressors related to lack of organizational support LS-S (M=5.62, SD=1.39). Apart from that, the enforcement officers had undergone around three to four days of JS stressor events (M=3.42, SD=2.13), JP stressor events (M=3.40, SD=2.25) and LS stressor events (M=3.44, SD=2.23) during the preceding 6 months. Overall, the respondents had reported lower mean score in JS-X (M=19.51, SD=13.42), JP-X (M=19.20, SD=14.34) and slightly higher mean score in LS-X (M=20.21, SD=14.55).

The relationship between the clusters and latent variable of emotional intelligence is formative because all of the 20 emotional intelligence competencies were organized into four main clusters in ECI [14]. Thus, the formative measures were used for emotional intelligence construct operationalization. The job stress constructs were accessed by using the same approach since the

items in JSS are the stressor events which can be called as causal indicators that formed the constructs in JSS.

Formative Measurement Model

In order to evaluate the formative measurement models, the redundancy analysis must be carried out first. Figure 1 shows the results for redundancy analysis for the Emotional Intelligence and Job Stress constructs. The analysis indicated that a path coefficient of Self-Awareness yield estimates of 0.961 which is above the threshold of 0.70. The redundancy analyses of Self-Management, Social Awareness, Social Skills and Job Stress yield estimate of 0.955, 0.945, 0.949 and 0.975 respectively. These means that all formatively measured constructs exhibit convergent validity [16].



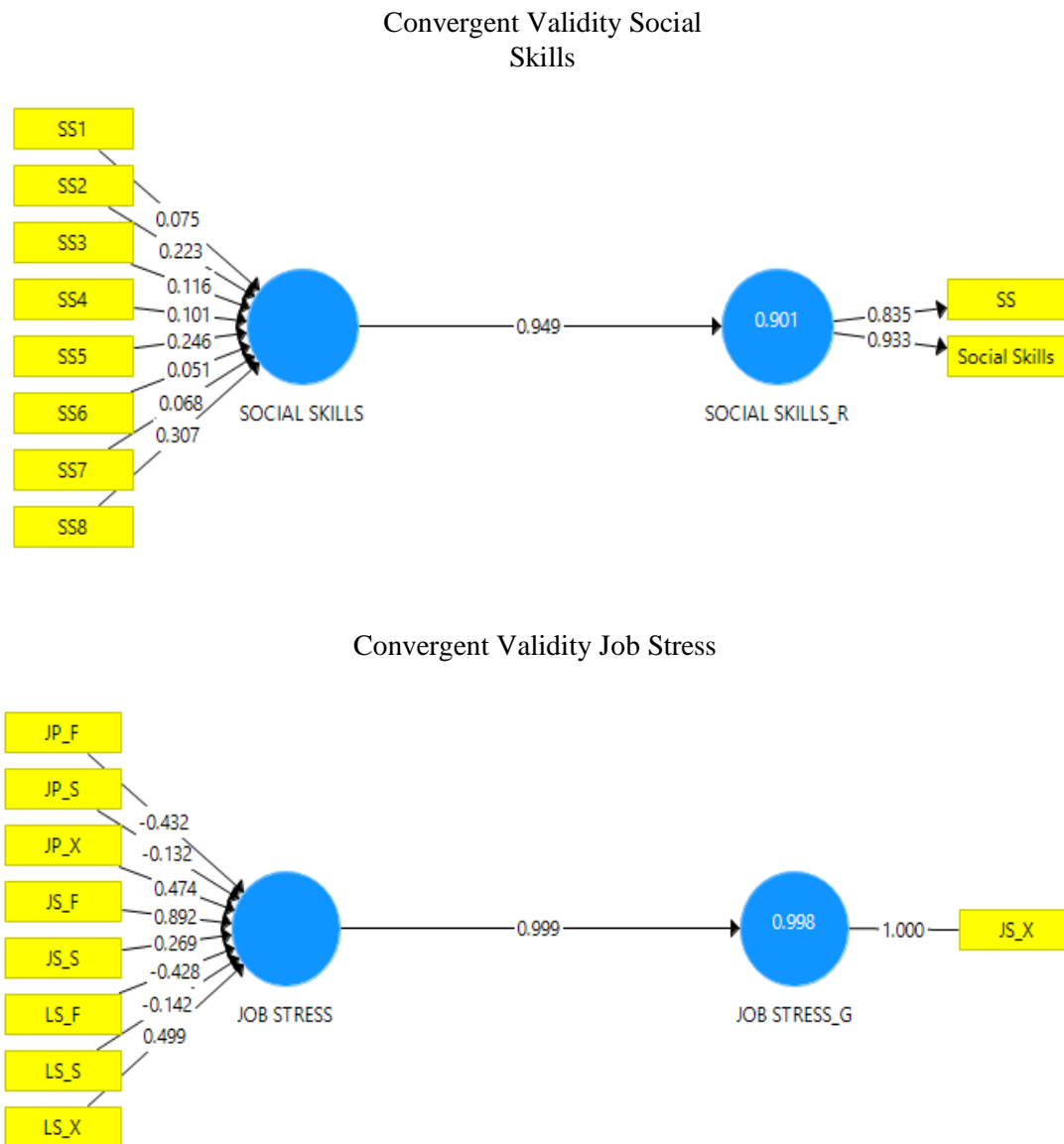


Figure 1 Redundancy Analysis Assessment of Formative Measurement Models

Table 5
Outer VIF Results

Construct	Indicator	Self-Awareness	Self-Management	Social Awareness	Social Skills	Job Stress
Self-Awareness (SA)	SA1	1.945				
	SA2	2.050				
	SA3	1.554				
Self-Management (SM)	SM1		2.483			
	SM2		2.654			
	SM3		2.818			
	SM4		3.425			
	SM5		2.743			
	SM6		1.861			
Social Awareness (SN)	SN1			2.570		
	SN2			2.402		

	SN3	2.687
Social Skills (SS)	SS1	4.239
	SS2	3.146
	SS3	4.631
	SS4	3.033
	SS5	3.196
	SS6	2.935
	SS7	2.927
	SS8	2.584
Job Stress (JS)	JS-F	1.022
	JS-S	1.022

Table 5 shows the inner and outer VIF results of construct emotional intelligence and job stress. All items in respective SA, SM, SN and SS were retained because the value of outer VIF is less than 5 [16]. However, among all the indicators in JS, only two indicators which are JS-F and JS-S can be kept due to multicollinearity issue happened in JS construct. Both remaining indicators can still capture the construct's content from theoretical perspective as researchers explained that JSS was designed to assess the intensity and frequency of occurrence of 30 stressor events that experienced by the worker in the organization [7]. The VIF value of remaining JS-F and JS-S was lower than 5 after that. Table 5 also explained that the inner VIF values of all combinations of endogenous constructs and corresponding exogenous constructs are below the threshold of 5.

In determine the significance and the relevance of the formative indicators, the outer weight was obtained by using the bootstrapping technique. Table 6 shows that the outer weight for JS-F, SM4, SM5 and SS8 are significant at the level of 5% ($t > 1.96$) to contribute in forming the constructs and those indicators were considered relatively important to retain. The indicators of SA1, SA2, SA3, SM1, SM2, SM3, SN1, SN2, SN3, SS3, SS5, SS6 and SS7 are significant at the level of 5% ($t > 1.96$) and there were generally be retained because the outer loading of each of the indicators are higher than 0.5 [16]. The indicators of SS1 and SS2 should also be maintained because both of the indicators are statistically significant ($t > 1.96$, $p < 0.05$) although the outer loading is lower than 0.5. The indicator is only be considered for removal if the outer loading is below 0.5 and not significant [16]. That's why the indicators of JS-S, SM6 and SS4 were removed from the respective constructs.

Table 6

Formative Construct Outer Weights and Outer Loading Significance Testing Results

	Outer Weight	t	p	Outer Loading	t	p
JS-F	1.000			1.000		
SA1->SA	0.320	1.054	0.292	0.841	6.307	0.000
SA2->SA	0.651	2.218	0.027	0.955	10.883	0.000
SA3->SA	0.158	0.558	0.577	0.693	4.005	0.000
SM1->SM	0.351	1.234	0.217	0.703	4.583	0.000
SM2->SM	0.425	1.692	0.091	0.566	3.412	0.001
SM3->SM	0.381	1.272	0.204	0.750	5.234	0.000
SM4->SM	-0.999	3.210	0.001	0.321	1.632	0.103
SM5->SM	0.713	2.757	0.006	0.749	5.748	0.000
SN1->SN	0.561	1.307	0.191	0.906	5.933	0.000
SN2->SN	-0.241	0.559	0.576	0.655	2.899	0.004
SN3->SN	0.693	1.710	0.087	0.936	6.346	0.000
SS1->SS	-0.455	0.243	0.214	0.484	2.616	0.009
SS2->SS	-0.106	0.322	0.748	0.523	3.153	0.002
SS3->SS	0.213	0.545	0.586	0.547	3.006	0.003

SS5->SS	0.126	0.381	0.703	0.683	4.159	0.000
SS6->SS	0.123	0.372	0.710	0.601	3.522	0.000
SS7->SS	0.265	0.817	0.414	0.775	5.337	0.000
SS8->SS	0.827	3.059	0.002	0.959	10.963	0.000

Significant at the level of $p < 0.05$, $t > 1.96$

Note: JS-F – Job Stress Frequency, SA – Self-Awareness, SM – Self-Management, SN – Social Awareness, SS – Social Skills

Structural Measurement Model

Table 7 shows that lateral multicollinearity was not an issue in the structural model because all the inner VIF values for the independent variables are less than 5.

Table 7
Inner VIF Results

	Job Stress Frequency (JS-F)
Self-Awareness	3.117
Self-Management	2.021
Social Awareness	2.693
Social Skills	2.886

Table 8 shows the result of hypothesis testing. There are only two relationship which are found to have t value more than 1.96 and thus significant at level of 5%. To be more specific, the predictors of Self-Management ($\beta = -0.186$, $p < 0.05$) and Social Skills ($\beta = -0.164$, $p < 0.05$) are negatively related on Job Stress Frequency which explains 9% of variances in job stress frequency. Therefore, the hypothesis of H_2 and H_4 are supported. The result also shows that Self-Management ($f^2 = 0.019$) have close to small effect in producing R^2 for Job Stress Frequency. However, Social Skills did not show any effect in producing R^2 for Job Stress Frequency [17]. The Q^2 value for Job Stress Frequency ($Q^2 = 0.044$) is more than 0 and it means that the model has sufficient predictive relevance. In terms of q^2 effect size, only Self-Management on Job Stress Frequency that have close to small q^2 effect size [16].

Table 8
Hypothesis Testing Result

Relationship	β	t	p	95% Confidence Intervals	R^2	f^2	Q^2	q^2
SA->JS-F	-0.023	0.279	0.781	[-0.200, 0.122]		0.000	0.044	0.003
SN->JS-F	0.054	0.542	0.588	[-0.131, 0.243]		0.001		0.001
SM->JS-F	-0.186	2.687	0.007	[-0.311, -0.038]	0.090	0.019		0.016
SS->JS-F	-0.164	2.138	0.033	[-0.346, -0.039]		0.010		0.004

Significant at the level of $p < 0.05$, $t > 1.96$

Note: JS-F – Job Stress Frequency, SA – Self-Awareness, SM – Self-Management, SN – Social Awareness, SS – Social Skills

The result that has been explained previously could be portrayed in a causal model as shown in the Figure 2. In short, the competencies of self-management and social skills among the MTDCA enforcement officer had significant negative effects on job stress frequency.

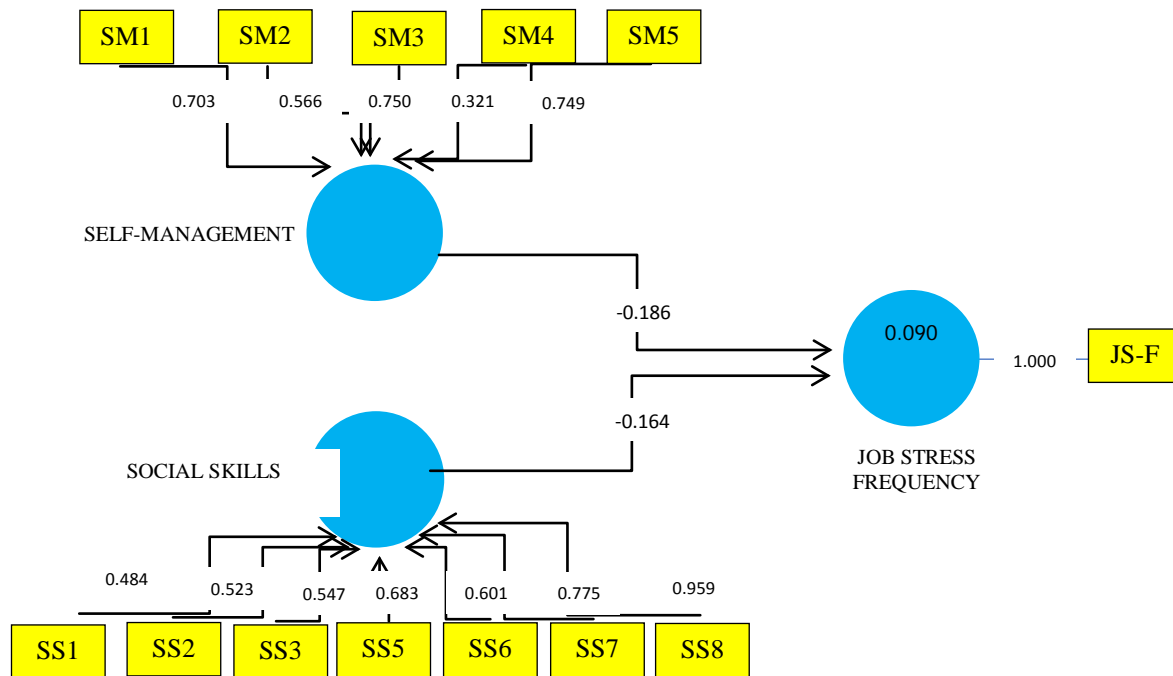


Figure 2 Causal Model of Self-Management and Social Skills on Job Stress Frequency

Discussion and Conclusion

The relationship between SM and SS on JS-F is negatively significant which shows that the higher an enforcement officer in emotional intelligence, the lesser they encountered stress at work. Self-management refers to the capacity of managing ones' internal states, impulses and resources while social skills refers to the one's skills or adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others [14]. That means an enforcement officer who possessed both learned capacities may experience the 30 stressor events less frequently than those who did not possess the said competencies. The findings of the present study are supported [see 9] that the increment of a police officer's emotional intelligence can assist the officers to manage their stress which generated by organizational stress. The researcher explained that the higher an enforcement officer in emotional intelligence, the lower level of organizational stress an officer faced.

The findings of the present research have proved that self-management and social skills competencies are more important in explaining the effects of emotional intelligence on jobs stress among the enforcement officers than the self-awareness and social awareness competencies. This result was contradict with the previous findings [see 10] explained that only the competencies of self-awareness and empathy are significantly contribute to the reduction of burnout and stress among the police officers.

This study measured the competencies of emotional intelligence and job stress among the enforcement officer based on the formative specification. A causal model described the relationship between self-management and social skills on job stress frequency was proposed. The empirical result of this study provides ample an evidence that self-management and social skills are the remedy to lessen the frequency of occurrence of the job stress that experienced by the enforcement officers during the past six months. This causal model helps to determine how the top management of MTDCA can pay more attention in sharpening the officer's emotional intelligence competencies so that the officers are fit to handle the stress in their daily works.

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