Classified Organisations' Personnel Burnout Effects and Performance Outcomes: Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

Classified personnel, particularly those working for intelligence and security organisations, are subjected to high psychological and operational pressures that influence their well-being and performance. This study investigates the role of job satisfaction as a mediating factor in the interaction between work environment, job demand, transactional stress, and social support on performance outcomes in Nigeria's classified sector. 344 respondents were chosen by random sampling, and Likert-scale 1 – 7 questionnaires were used to gather data. SmartPLS v4.1.0.1 and SPSS v25 were used for descriptive and inferential analysis. Results show that the impacts of all four exogenous variables on performance are considerably mediated by job satisfaction. Supportive work environments improved performance and satisfaction, and high job demand also had a beneficial impact, suggesting that employees are resilient. Through satisfaction, social support and transactional stress also affected results. At the 5% level, every hypothesis was accepted. The study emphasises the necessity for emotionally helpful work environments and incorporates the Job Demand-Control-Support and Social Support theories within Nigeria's classified agencies. To prevent burnout and maintain high performance, institutional changes including planned rest, psychological support, and compassionate leadership are suggested. Despite data restrictions brought on by confidentiality requirements, the results provide a distinctive perspective on the psychological makeup of classified personnel, with ramifications for human resource planning and national security management.

Keywords: burnout, classified organisations, job satisfaction, performance outcomes, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Personnel in classified organisations, particularly those entrenched within secret intelligence agencies, work in uniquely difficult situations characterised by high degrees of confidentiality, strict operating standards, and enormous responsibility. These agencies are responsible for handling sensitive national security information, often under great pressure and with a limited margin for error (Mahlatsi, 2019; Masilela & Nel, 2021). Employees in classified roles have high psychological challenges due to the need for precision and secrecy, setting them

apart from the regular workforce (Čtvrtník, 2022).

To protect important data and ensure operational integrity, such institutions, especially defence and intelligence departments, use rigorous access controls (Marchetti & Marks, 1974; German, 2007). While necessary for national security, these structural constraints frequently limit interpersonal assistance, impede transparency, and raise the stakes of everyday tasks. These conditions contribute to a stressful work environment, which has been found to have a negative influence on classified personnel's well-being, morale, and psychological resilience.

Despite their strategic importance, personnel in classified organisations are increasingly vulnerable to burnout, a chronic state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion that extends beyond routine stress. Recent studies have revealed that these individuals may experience burnout at levels comparable to or even exceeding those of frontline medical workers (Yue et al., 2022). This is attributed to prolonged vigilance, high-performance expectations, frequent task interruptions, and insufficient institutional support (Isenhardt & Hostettler, 2020; Pindek et al., 2019). Burnout in these environments often manifests as emotional detachment, performance decline, and psychological distress (Bunjak et al., 2023).

While burnout has been extensively studied in civilian and frontline professions, there remains a noticeable gap in empirical research on its effects within classified and intelligence-focused institutions, largely due to access restrictions and the sensitive nature of such organisations. Existing scholarship often overlooks how internal support structures, emotional intelligence, and leadership dynamics mediate the effects of burnout in these high-security settings. Additionally, much of the existing literature is skewed toward Western contexts, with limited attention given to African intelligence communities, including those in Nigeria. This study seeks to address this gap by exploring how burnout affects job performance in Nigerian classified organisations. Specifically, it investigates the roles of job satisfaction, job demand, and organisational support while also examining the moderating effects of transactional leadership and social support. By bringing empirical scrutiny to a typically opaque sector, the study advances our understanding of occupational health in intelligence services and emphasises the critical need for systemic support to reduce psychological burnout among security personnel (Thompson et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2020a).

2. Literature Review

Conceptual Review

Secret Service Organizations

Secret service organisations operate in all countries. In the United States of America (USA), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is considered the most active and result-oriented from a global perspective; the National Security Agency (NSA), Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) are confirmed to be domiciled in the USA for counterintelligence activities, and Israeli Mossad. Africa has the External Intelligence Service (SIE) of South Africa (Mahlatsi, 2019); Egypt's General Intelligence Directorate (GID); Ethiopia's National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS); Somalia's National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA); and Nigeria's Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), and National Intelligence Agency (NIA), among others.

Conceptual Framework

The following diagrams illustrate this study's framework:

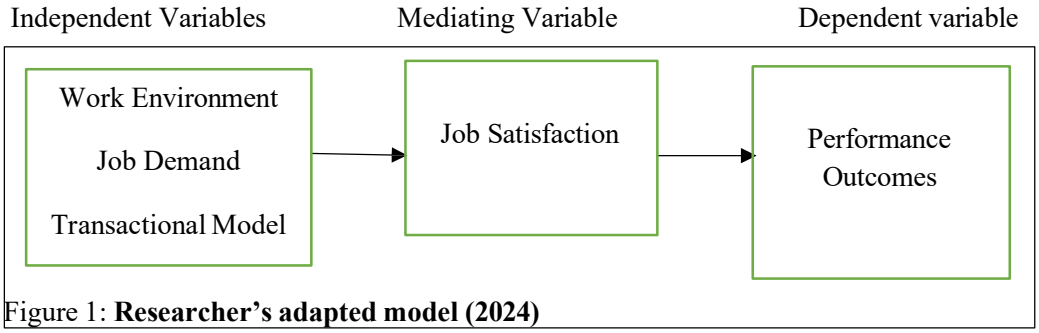

Figure 1: **Researcher's adapted model (2024)**

Theoretical Review

Job Demand-Control-Support Model

Karasek's Job Demand-Control-Support (JDCS) model proposes that job stress is caused by the combination of job demands, job control, and social support (Rader, 2021; Wu et al., 2023). This concept is especially relevant in Nigeria's classified work environment, such as the DIA, NIA, or military intelligence operations. Personnel frequently face high job demands, including lengthy hours, operational secrecy, exposure to sensitive intelligence, and severe decision-making pressure.

However, hierarchical command systems, restricted operational discretion, and centrally prescribed assignments typically result in minimal task control.

For example, intelligence operators may lack the ability to change their schedules or techniques in the face of heavy workloads or new security dynamics, resulting in increased professional strain and psychological depletion. Such restrictive structures, along with insufficient institutional support, increase the likelihood of burnout, according to the JDCS model.

Furthermore, work-life balance (WLB) for intelligence officers in Nigeria is frequently disrupted by unanticipated deployments and extended field assignments. This is consistent with recent results that poor WLB in these sectors leads considerably to mental health degradation and performance decline (Khatri & Shukla, 2024; Le et al., 2020). JDCS's significance in Nigeria is highlighted by increased claims of emotional tiredness, work dissatisfaction, and attrition among security personnel, demonstrating the model's applicability to classified environments in Sub-Saharan Africa (Ahmed et al., 2024).

Social Support Theory (SST) in Nigeria's Context

Cobb and Weiss developed Social Support Theory (SST), which emphasises the role of emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support in stress management (Bhardwaj, 2023; Cho et al., 2023). Within Nigeria's classified agencies, SST provides an important perspective for understanding how interpersonal networks, both within and outside of the workplace, act as buffers against chronic job stress.

In practice, many Nigerian operatives suffer in silence since institutional cultures stigmatise emotional weakness or help-seeking behaviour. This reduces access to emotional support, particularly from superiors or colleagues within the same chain of command. However, instrumental support from close-knit peer groups, such as joint task force operations, has been found to boost morale and resilience (Jessiman-Perreault et al., 2021).

Further, in a resource-strained environment like Nigeria's security sector, the absence of structured **informational and appraisal support systems** (e.g., regular debriefings, peer feedback, mental health counselling) places a heavier psychological burden on personnel. Studies show that operatives with access to community, family, and religious support systems are better equipped to

withstand occupational stress (Perry et al., 2023). This affirms SST's claim that **social networks are essential protective factors** that mitigate the adverse effects of workplace strain.

Hypotheses

H1: A conducive work environment decreases personnel burnout and increases performance outcomes.

A positive and enabling work environment is critical in reducing burnout and improving performance, particularly in classified organisations where pressures are intrinsically high. A workspace that promotes physical comfort, psychological safety, and professional autonomy can help reduce chronic stress. Empirical research shows that workplace settings such as adequate lighting, ergonomic amenities, designated rest places, and flexible scheduling greatly minimise emotional tiredness and psychological strain (Ahmed et al., 2024; Khatri & Shukla, 2024). In high-risk intelligence workplaces where exposure to traumatic or sensitive material is routine, a favourable work environment can imply the difference between functional capacity and fatigue-induced error. Thus, boosting environmental quality has a direct correlation with increased job satisfaction, motivation, and operational efficiency.

H2: Workplace pressures relating to job demand led to burnout, which has a detrimental effect on performance outcomes.

Job demands, which include workload, deadlines, and psychological strain, have consistently been found as significant predictors of burnout. The Job Demand-Control-Support (JDCS) model argues that when job demands are high and control is low, psychological strain is unavoidable (Wu et al., 2023). The weight of job demand is accentuated in Nigeria's classified organisations, where staffs frequently work erratic hours, perform mission-critical jobs, and follow rigorous command structures. This not only causes physical and emotional tiredness, but it also weakens judgment, diminishes attentiveness, and raises the risk of operational errors. According to research, there is a substantial inverse association between elevated job stress and productivity, demonstrating that excessive job expectations considerably impair performance outcomes (Pindek et al., 2019b).

H3: Burnout diminishes when cognitive capacity is applied effectively, and this optimises performance.

Cognitive resources such as attention, memory, and problem-solving abilities are critical for managing job stress and navigating complex decision-making situations. Personnel with good cognitive capacity and emotional regulation are better able to perform stressful work, minimising the development and severity of burnout (Isenhardt & Hostettler, 2020). Individual mental ability is not sufficient for effective cognitive capacity deployment; institutional assistance through training, workload management, and strategic task alignment is also required. Mental agility and resilience allow operatives in high-security industries to execute at their best even while under pressure. Cognitive effort directed constructively improves situational awareness, decision accuracy, and mission success (Htet Yie Win, 2023; Alsughayir, 2021).

H4: Burnout is reduced and performance outcomes are improved when there is effective social support.

According to Social Support Theory, emotional, informational, instrumental, and appraisal support from peers, supervisors, and family reduces stress and improves individual coping strategies (Bhardwaj, 2023). In Nigeria, where cultural norms place a great priority on community and interpersonal ties, social support networks are critical. When employees in intelligence or classified services get mentoring, peer encouragement, and mental health outreach, they report lower levels of emotional tiredness and improved job satisfaction (Perry et al., 2023; Jessiman-Perreault et al., 2021b). Supportive work environments promote belonging, reduce isolation, and allow employees to manage job-related stress more efficiently, resulting in enhanced well-being and long-term performance.

H5: Positive performance outcomes are impacted by job satisfaction, which also eliminates burnout.

Job pleasure is both a preventative measure against burnout and a motivator for peak performance. When employees feel appreciated, motivated, and aligned with organisational goals, their engagement rises while stress levels fall (Le et al., 2020a). Satisfaction comes from a variety of sources, including recognition, professional development, fair salary, and meaningful work. Job pleasure provides psychological reinforcement that protects against emotional exhaustion and cynicism in classified organisations, where the stakes are frequently life-or-death. According to studies, contented employees are more productive and committed, and have fewer burnout symptoms (Chen et al., 2020a; Nobles, 2022).

As a result, improving job satisfaction is a strategic objective for preserving morale and mission readiness.

Empirical Review

According to Ivie and Garland (2011), data from a study of stress and burnout in policing and military experience in the United States demonstrate that all officers' burnout was influenced by unfavourable exposure to demanding conditions. Officers with no combat experience, on the other hand, reported unfavourable encounters having an impact on their stress levels. Coping mechanisms were significant predictors of stress and burnout across all groups; however, contrary to expectations, the number of years of police experience was not significant in either model. With the exception of gender, which was only a significant predictor of stress in the non-military group, demographic controls had no effect on either group's stress or burnout.

Schaufeli and Peeters (2000) conducted a literature analysis on job stress and burnout among correctional officials (COs) in the United States, Great Britain, Sweden, the Netherlands, Israel, Canada, and Australia. The findings revealed that COs experienced a variety of stress reactions, including psychosomatic disorders, burnout, job dissatisfaction, turnover, and absenteeism. The empirical evidence demonstrating the presence of 10 distinct stresses in the Cos' job was summarised. The most common sources of stress for COs were identified as role difficulties, work overload, stressful social contacts (with convicts, coworkers, and supervisors), and low social standing.

In the same manner, a paper investigated the impact of excessive stress on deviant behaviour among Malaysia's Royal Police. It also reviewed the conceptual model that connects job stress to eccentric behaviour and emotional intelligence to work-related misconduct among Malaysia's Royal Police (RMP) (Cox et al., 2022). According to the findings, emotional intelligence can help to reduce the link between professional stress and deviant behaviour. It also investigated how effectively emotional intelligence works to prevent disruptive behaviour in the workplace. Emotional intelligence is critical in lowering an individual's unwanted behaviour (D'Souza et al., 2023).

Several studies were undertaken in Nigeria on staff burnout and stress management in the correctional service, police, and other paramilitary groups. Dotun, Nneka, and Akinlolu (2013) conducted an empirical study on job burnout

and intention to quit among Nigerian police officers. The study discovered a significant positive relationship between job fatigue and the urge to resign. Furthermore, the study discovered that the degree of education, years of experience, and job burnout on the one hand, and the intention to quit on the other, had a favourable correlation with the experience of police officers with burnout based on numerous biographical and personality characteristics. The findings of Ogungbamila and Fajemirokun's (2016) study, revealed that job stress significantly predicted occupational burnout, implying that an increase in job stress was associated with an increase in the degree of occupational burnout. Female police officers were more likely to experience occupational burnout as a result of job stress than their male counterparts (Illias et al., 2024). The reason for this is because it altered the relationship between job stress and occupational burnout. Married police officers reported higher levels of occupational burnout in response to job stress than single officers. This is because marital status influenced the relationship between job stress and burnout (Yuan et al., 2023).

Ojedokun and Idemudia (2014) examined emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, optimism, organisational-based self-esteem, and burnout in their study. The results indicated the link between psychological resources and burnout. Burnout was found to be highly influenced by a variety of characteristics, including organisational self-esteem, optimism, self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence. According to the findings, firms can prevent employee burnout by assisting employees in becoming more adaptive through relevant training and development programmes.

Lambert et al.'s (2022b) examined the usefulness of the job demands-resources model in understanding the life satisfaction of Nigerian prison employees, as well as the effects of work-family conflict among 120 Nigerian prison personnel, which left some theoretical and practical gaps that this study aimed to close. A multivariate model analysis of the survey data found that strain- and behaviour-based conflict considerably reduced job stress, although time- and family-based conflict did not. The outcome variable was life happiness, and the job demand variables examined were role overload and fear of workplace victimisation, while the job resource variables included training quality, job autonomy, and job diversity. A multivariate Ordinary Least Squares regression study indicated that employment variety, job autonomy, and excellent training all have a positive relationship with overall satisfaction. However, no significant link was found between role overload and fear of victimisation (Lambert et al., 2022a).

This study was inspired by deficiencies in prior studies on the use of statistical techniques, as well as the inability to analyse burnout effects and performance outcomes in personnel within Nigerian intelligence community agencies. Investigating how employees of Nigerian classified agencies deal with stress and burnout at work is a timely endeavour.

Operationalization of variables

Variables are operationalized in functional form using the notation Y = f(X), with each dependent variable (Y) written as a function of one or more independent (exogenous or mediating) variables (X).

1. Performance Outcomes (PO) as the Main Dependent Variable

PO = f(WEM, JBD, TSM, SST, JBS)

$PO = \beta_0 + \beta_1 WEM + \beta_2 JBD + \beta_3 TSM + \beta_4 SST + \beta_5 JBS\ ei$.....eq.i

The Work Environment (WEM), Job Demand (JBD), Transactional Stress Model (TSM), Social Support Theory (SST), and Job Satisfaction (JBS) all contribute to performance outcomes. These five criteria determine the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of personnel performance.

Job Satisfaction (JBS) as a Mediating Variable

JBS = f(WEM, JBD, TSM, SST)

Job Satisfaction (JBS) is determined by four major exogenous variables: work environment (WEM), job demand (JBD), the Transactional Stress Model (TSM), and social support (SST). Each of these factors influences how satisfied employees are with their professions, which in turn influences their psychological resilience and overall performance.

Full Mediation Structure Using Nested Functional Relationships

PO = f(JBS) = f(WEM, JBD, TSM, SST))

Performance Outcomes (PO) are indirectly influenced by Job Satisfaction (JBS), which is a function of the four exogenous variables. This tiered model represents the mediation structure of the study.

3. Methodology

This study used a quantitative, cross-sectional survey approach to analyse interactions amongst personnel in Nigeria's classified security agencies. The design permitted the systematic collecting of primary data over a set time period, allowing for statistical analysis and generalisation. Personnel from the DIA, and NIA, among others were among those that participated. A simple random sample procedure was used to pick 360 participants in total. Meanwhile, the involvement of multiple agencies increases data reliability while maintaining assurances of representation in a security-sensitive context.

A systematic questionnaire was created and disseminated digitally to personnel using Google Forms. The tool used a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (undecided) to 7 (strongly agree). Data were collected between March and May 2024. 344 of 360 questionnaires were completed and returned, resulting in a 95.5% response rate and reducing potential nonresponse bias.

Descriptive statistics and preliminary data screening were performed with IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 25). SmartPLS (Version 4.1.0.1) was used to evaluate hypothesised correlations between independent, mediating, and dependent variables using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) approaches. Both tools are commonly acknowledged as having strong analytic capabilities in behavioural research (Hair et al., 2019c). This study identified colleagues from DIA, NIA, and other agencies, which provided significant information on data sensitivity management or ethical clearance since their management was not opposed to the work. Meanwhile, the lack of specific review board approval and consent processes, which may not be permitted given the sensitive nature of the subject matter, all contributed to the confidentiality that was ensured.

Reliability and Validity of Data

Hair et al. (2019a) recommend using Cronbach's alpha and the composite reliability of each construct to assess construct reliability. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values > 0.7 are desirable. When calculating the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, each variable is assumed to be equally weighted and significant. The concept behind composite reliability, on the other hand, is that different components should have different weights, with each item weighted based on how dependable it is on its own, which checks the stability and consistency of the measurement apparatus for reliability (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). The outer model is evaluated using partial least squares (PLS), which consider concept

validity, internal consistency, and individual item reliability. Table 1 shows that composite reliability >0.700 and average variance extracted (EVA) >0.500; the lower Cronbach's alpha threshold value of WEM 0.700 does not invalidate the results (Hair et al., 2019a).

Table 1: Results of reliability and validity tests

Constructs	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
JBD	0.709	0.720	0.839	0.637
JBS	0.723	0.745	0.827	0.546
PO	0.770	0.779	0.845	0.523
SST	0.852	0.869	0.893	0.625
TSM	0.745	0.758	0.84	0.569
WEM	0.710	0.706	0.833	0.625

Source: Researcher's Processed Data (2024)

4. Results and Discussions

The descriptive analysis of the respondents' demographics was performed with IBM SPSS v25, as displayed in Table 2:

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Variable	Item	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	246	72
	Female	98	28
	Total	**344**	**100**
Age	18 – 30	90	26
	31 – 40	136	40
	41 – 50	109	32
	51 – 60	9	2
	Total	**344**	**100**
Cadre	Director	11	3
	Senior Officer	138	40
	Intermediate officer	127	37
	Rank and file	68	20
	Total	**344**	**100**
Educational Qualification	PhD	6	2
	M.Sc	51	15
	B.Sc	135	39
	National Diploma	87	25
	Ordinary Level	65	19
	Total	**344**	**100**

Source**:** Researcher's Processed Data (2024)

According to Table 2, the demographic distribution of the 344 respondents yields interesting results: 72% were men (n = 246), while 28% were women (n = 98), illustrating the gender discrepancy common in Nigeria's security sector. Age-wise, 40% were aged 31-40 (n = 136), followed by 32% aged 41-50 (n = 109), 26% aged 18-30 (n = 90), and only 2% aged 51-60 (n = 9). Senior officers (40%) and intermediate officers (37%) dominated the organisational hierarchy, with fewer rank-and-file individuals (20%) and directors (3%). Academic qualifications revealed that the majority held a bachelor's degree (39%), with others holding M.Sc. (15%), national diplomas (25%), ordinary level education (19%), and PhDs (2%).

Inferential Statistics

The inferential statistics were carried out using Smart Partial Least Squares (SmartPLS v4.1.0.1. This comprises algorithm-measurement equation modelling and bootstrapping-structural equation modelling (Hair et al., 2023). In Figure 2, two items (WEM2 0.535 and JBD4 0.548) with weak loading <0.700 were eliminated, as long as the deletion did not exceed 20% of total items (Hair et al., 2019a). The measurement equation modelling demonstrated the study's convergent validity and internal consistency of data. Hair et al. (2019a) use the Fornell-Larcker criterion and heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) matrix to determine the discriminant validity of data.

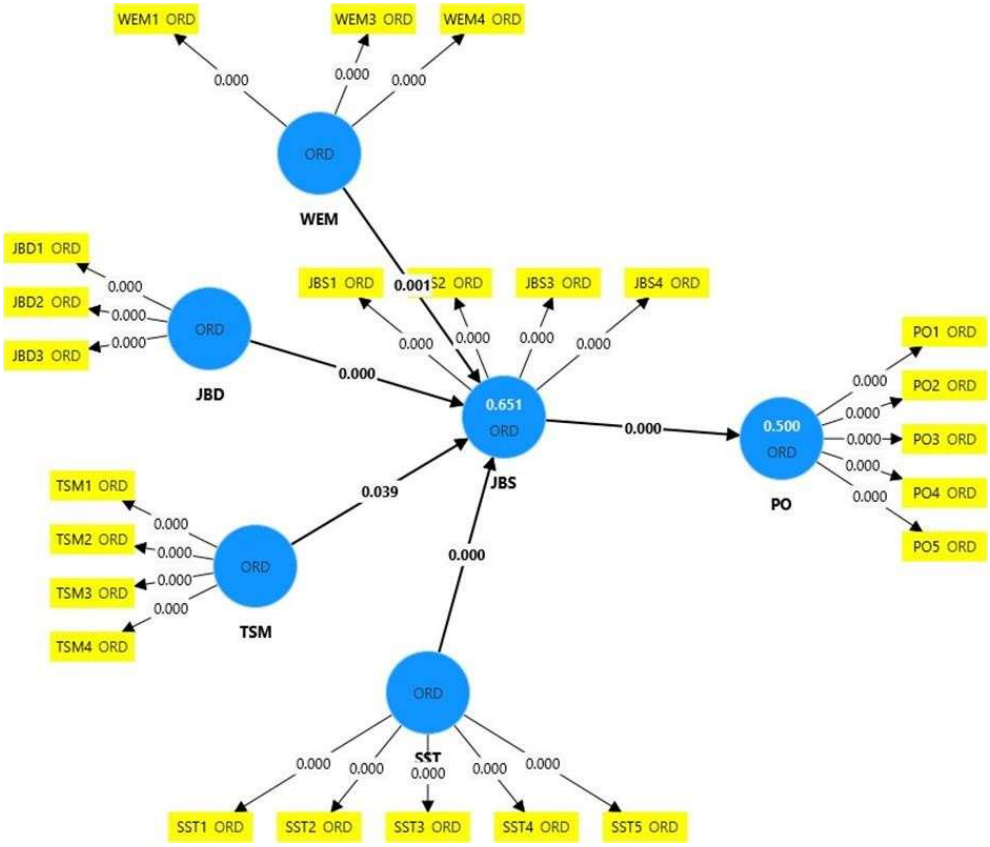

Figure 2: **Structural Equation Model (SEM)**

The SEM calculates the path coefficient of data, which is analogous to the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) in the SPSS statistical software. The SmartPLS

SEM bootstrapping sequence demonstrated the study's hypothesis testing results. As a result, the Figure 2 results are shown in Table 3, while the hypothesis decision is reflected in Table 4.

Table 3: **Specific Indirect Effects**

Variables	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
JBD -> JBS -> PO	0.251	0.251	0.039	6.516	0.000
SST -> JBS -> PO	0.184	0.179	0.04	4.577	0.000
TSM -> JBS -> PO	0.089	0.096	0.043	2.067	0.039
WEM ->JBS -> PO	0.147	0.152	0.044	3.352	0.001

Source: Researcher's Data Analysis, 2024

Table 3 clearly shows the particular indirect effects that determined the power effect of job satisfaction as a mediator between the exogenous and endogenous variables. The exogenous variables confirmed that job satisfaction has a significant impact on the endogenous variable. Variable iteration confirmed that the estimated t value exceeds the tabulated t value. When the estimated t value exceeds 1.96, the p value must be less than the 5% level of significance.

Table 4: **Decision on hypotheses testing**

Hypotheses	Relationship	β	t value	p-value	Decision
H1	WEM -> JBS -> PO	0.147	3.352**	0.001	Accepted
H2	JBD -> JBS -> PO	0.251	4.577***	0.000	Accepted
H3	TSM -> JBS -> PO	0.089	2.067*	0.039	Accepted
H4	SST -> JBS -> PO	0.184	4.577***	0.000	Accepted

***p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.00**

Table 4 shows the decision on the four hypotheses, which revealed that the hypothesised variables were accepted. The operationalisation of variables is as follows:

$PO = \beta_0 + \beta_1 WEM + \beta_2 JBD + \beta_3 TSM + \beta_4 SST + \beta_5 JBSei$.....eq.i

$PO = \beta_0 -0.671+ \beta_1 0.147 + \beta_2 0.251 + \beta_3 0.089 + \beta_4 0.184 + \beta_5 0.707ei$ ….eq.i

Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this study was to determine the mediating function of job satisfaction (JBS) in the interaction between exogenous factors (WEM, JBD, TSM, and SST) and endogenous variables (PO). The empirical findings give strong evidence for JBS's mediating influence, with each hypothesis tested yielding statistically significant outcomes, indicating the importance of work satisfaction in improving performance, especially in classified and high-pressure operating environments.

H1: WEM -> JBS -> PO ($\beta = 0.147$, $t = 3.352$, $p = 0.001$)

According to the first hypothesis, job satisfaction was positively impacted by a favourable work environment, and this, in turn, greatly improved performance outcomes. This is consistent with the findings of Burbar (2021) and Pimpong (2023), who highlighted the clear correlation between employee motivation and performance and supportive, well-structured environments. Even little improvements in workstation comfort, relaxation opportunities, and communication transparency result in quantifiable gains in satisfaction in the classified context, where environmental stresses like operational uncertainty and surveillance fatigue are considerable. The results demonstrate that environmental quality is a psychological and physical safeguard that lowers mental strain and allows employees to function at their best.

H2: JBD -> JBS -> PO ($\beta = 0.251$, $t = 6.516$, $p = 0.000$)

The data shows that work demand has a positive indirect influence on performance through job satisfaction, defying the conventional wisdom that high job demand invariably results in lower job satisfaction. This implies that even in high-pressure positions, employees may experience intrinsic fulfilment when they are actively involved and believe their work is essential to maintaining national

security. Memon et al. (2023a) and Bunjak et al. (2023b) also discovered that, particularly in mission-centric organisations, purpose-driven work mitigates the detrimental impacts of burden. This suggests that job demand might serve as a motivator rather than a stressor when combined with institutional acknowledgement and personal competency. Therefore, perceived significance and institutional trust may transform pressure into motivation to improve performance in Nigeria's classified services.

H3: TSM -> JBS -> PO ($\beta = 0.089$, $t = 2.067$, $p = 0.039$)

This finding confirms that when job satisfaction acts as a psychological buffer, employees continue to perform well even under the psychological strain described by the transactional stress model. These findings support the transactional model of stress, which holds that stress is a product of an individual's assessment and coping strategies. Employees appear to be reinterpreting job pressures in a positive way by using coping mechanisms, professional identity, and resilience. Even in psychologically demanding settings, those with greater emotional intelligence, purpose alignment, and task mastery report higher job satisfaction and performance, according to studies by Setiani and Rizaldy (2021) and Hundie and Habtewold (2024). This suggests that in Nigeria's categorised institutions, job satisfaction has a significant intrinsic-regulatory role.

H4: SST -> JBS -> PO ($\beta = 0.184$, $t = 4.577$, $p = 0.000$)

Social Support Theory was further validated when it was demonstrated that social support greatly increased job satisfaction, which in turn led to better performance outcomes. This result is consistent with research by Garmendia et al. (2023), which emphasised that instrumental and emotional support reduces occupational stress, particularly in risky and hierarchical environments. The community and relational culture in Nigeria make support systems, whether they be administrative, collegial, or familial, more successful. This hypothesis's importance highlights the importance of supervisor empathy, peer networks, and debriefing sessions in classified employment. Morale and operational commitment are raised by psychological safety, which is facilitated by these social ties.

Table 5: Model Fit and Predictive Validity
The goodness of fit in Table 5 referred to the degree of statistical accuracy of data collected in the study. The goal is to determine the model fit alignment with the data collected.

Constructs	R-square	R-square adjusted	Q^2predict	RMSE	MAE
JBS	0.652	0.648	0.635	0.607	0.456
PO	0.499	0.498	0.573	0.657	0.512

SRMR = Saturated model 0.088, Estimated model 0.103

The structural model's resilience is further reinforced by the model fit indicators. The hypothesised model appears to accurately reflect the observed data, as indicated by the SRMR values of 0.088 (saturated) and 0.103 (estimated), which are within acceptable levels (Hair et al., 1998). Furthermore, significant predictive relevance is indicated by the Q^2 values of 0.635 for JBS and 0.573 for PO, demonstrating that the model can accurately describe performance results and work satisfaction (Henseler et al., 2016; Raithel et al., 2012).

Interpretive Reflection
When combined, these results support the idea that job satisfaction plays a key role in mediating the relationship between psychological and environmental factors and performance in delicate national tasks. By proposing a complex, relational mechanism by which people's contentment with their working environment converts stressors into motivators, the research goes beyond linear stress-performance models.

Additionally, the data calls into question the conventional burnout theory, which frequently holds that performance is inevitably diminished by stress. However, this study demonstrates that these effects can be neutralised or even reversed by strategically placed buffering variables, such social support, cognitive assessment, and job satisfaction. This knowledge is particularly important in Nigeria, where classified personnel's psychological fortitude is crucial to national security but frequently ignored or understudied.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study looked into the effects of burnout on workers' job satisfaction and performance results in classified enterprises. The results unequivocally demonstrated that Nigerian DIA, NIA, and other agencies employees are contented with their work schedules, which results in top performance, despite all obstacles. The significant mediating function that job satisfaction plays in classified work situations is demonstrated by the constant acceptance of all four alternative hypotheses. These findings should inform leadership strategies in Nigeria's intelligence and security sectors, prioritising team-based cultures, supportive environments, realistic work demands, and mental health practices. The study offers a comprehensive model for understanding and improving the relationship between performance and well-being in high-stakes, private organisational settings because of its theoretical framework, which integrates JDCS, SST, and transactional views. This study may be limited by the fear of consequences for disclosing official information by participants. The results were supported by the data collected from the respondents, accounting for biases and non-response rates. Because of the delicate security context, future research must prioritise informed consent documentation, transparent ethical review, and safe data handling procedures.

Based on the findings, the study recommends the following**:**

i. **Policy Reinforcement in Job Structuring**: To make sure that jobs are relevant, goal-aligned, and adaptable in changing security environments, intelligence agencies should devote resources to ongoing job analysis and enrichment initiatives.
ii. **Supervisory Leadership Training**: To strengthen middle and senior managers' ability to provide support, structured leadership development programmes ought to be established.
iii. **Targeted Skill Alignment Initiatives**: To improve job satisfaction and minimise inconsistency, training and recruitment initiatives should be in line with job requirements.
iv. **Work Environment Optimisation**: To promote a culture of psychological safety and productivity, agencies should set aside funds to enhance the operational and psychosocial aspects of work environments.
v. **Improvement of the Ethical Framework**: Consent procedures, participant anonymity protections, and open ethical review procedures should all be incorporated into future institutional research by global best practices.

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