

Self-Regulation, Core Self-Evaluations and Threat Anxiety Among Employees of Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Service in South-West Zone, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined self-regulations, core self-evaluations and threat anxiety among employees of Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Services in South-West Nigeria. This study adopted cross-sectional survey design where a population of 415 employees were drawn using census sampling technique. They comprised of 327 (78.8%) male and 88 (21.2%) female employees. Their ages ranged from 24 – 55 years with a mean age of 38.38 years (SD=8.11). The Core Self-Evaluations Scale, Self-regulation Questionnaire and Threat Anxiety Scale were used for data collection. Standard Multiple regression, and Hayes Process Macro Mediation Analysis were used to test the hypotheses. Results indicated a significant positive influence of core self-evaluations on threat anxiety among employees. In terms of the dimensions, only neuroticism had significant positive influence on threat anxiety while self-esteem, locus of control and self-efficacy did not. The result also showed that self-regulation significantly mediated the relationship between core self-evaluations and threat anxiety among employees. The result further showed that affect, awareness and empowerment significantly mediated the relationship between core self-evaluations and threat anxiety among employees. Lastly, there was a significant joint influence of core self-evaluations and self-regulation on threat anxiety among employees. The study recommended that the management of Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Services should set up a distress safe space in the services across all the states where clinical psychologists can offer care for employees assessed to be affected by threat-related anxiety.

Key Words: Self-Regulation, Core Self-evaluation, Threat Anxiety, Employees, Quarantine

Introduction

Globally, there have been differential estimates of the prevalence of occupational threats among employees. In three European states (Poland, Italy and Spain), anxiety was the most prevalent condition – with 17% of the workers reporting being diagnosed with anxiety (Yip & Schweinsberg, 2017). Anxiety-related sleep problems appeared second at 14%, followed by depression at 12%. Poland and Spain had the highest percentages of workers reporting feeling anxious (51%). Similarly, Spain had the highest percentage of workers feeling symptoms of depression and nervousness (48%), followed by Poland (43%). Italy had the highest percentages of reports related to poor optimism (29%), followed by Poland (23%). These figures may be relatively low in developed countries due to the presence of more advanced safety protocols, medical support and knowledge of preventive measures for most of the anxiety-invoking activities, risks and threats (Cheng & McCarthy, 2018). More so, there are gaps in knowledge on the prevalence of threat anxiety among quarantine workers specifically. In Africa, a high number of quarantine workers are reported to be affected by mental health problems (Hill et al., 2022) especially those that are anxiety-related. The high prevalence rates of work-induced anxiety in the African population in comparison to other continents is a source of concern (Chen et al., 2021). For instance, in South Africa quarantine workers reported high levels of work-related mental health problems, and the prevalence of mental distress was 57.4% (Lee et al., 2022). Within the last 10 years, the prevalence of anxiety disorder has been reported to 92.7% among Ugandan agricultural workers (Kirabira et al., 2022). In Egypt, a high prevalence of anxiety, at 49.38%, and poor sleep quality at 67.9% (Al-Otaibi et al., 2022) was reported. Ethiopia on the other hand, reported the prevalence of work-related threats to constitute 78.3% of the anxiety experienced by their workers (Yitayih et al., 2021). In Nigeria, however, there is paucity of research on the prevalence of anxiety among agricultural quarantine workers. Majority of the existing studies were carried out among quarantine workers during the Corona Virus pandemic (Onyeaka, et al., 2020). Among National Agricultural Quarantine Service workers, there are no studies, data and literature to buttress the impact of threat-induced anxiety. One of the likely determinants of threat anxiety among employees is their core self-evaluations. Core self-evaluations are the most fundamental forms of assessment of a person's own worth, strength and abilities (Yang et al., 2023). Core self-evaluations capture the fundamental premises that individuals hold about themselves and their functioning in the world, with higher core self-evaluations reflecting higher self-esteem (i.e. the value one places on oneself), higher self-efficacy (i.e. beliefs in one's ability to succeed), an internal locus of control (i.e. the belief that events are caused by internal forces), and lower neuroticism (i.e. a reduced tendency to exhibit poor emotional adjustment) (Afonso et al., 2022). Core self-evaluations (CSE) and anxiety appear inversely related, meaning individuals with high core self-evaluations are likely to experience lower levels of anxiety, and vice versa. High core self-evaluations are characterized by positive self-regard, self-efficacy, and a sense of control, which can act as a buffer against anxiety (Kao et al., 2024). Conversely, low core self-evaluations, often associated with negative self-perceptions, can increase vulnerability to anxiety. The four characteristic indicators of core self-evaluations; neuroticism, locus of control, general self-efficacy, and self-esteem are associated with anxiety (Afonso et al., 2022). Core self-evaluations can influence how employees appraise a threatening work situation. Thus, employees with higher core self-evaluations are more likely to believe that they are in control of their environment, more confident that they are capable of solving work-related problems, and less likely to focus on negative aspects of a situation or experience doubt of their ability to handle work-related threats. Another likely determinant of threat anxiety is self-regulation. Self-regulation is a disposition to modulate one's self in times of adversity or extreme excitement. Self-regulation has three dimensions that also demonstrate linkages with anxiety (Ugwu et al., 2024). These dimensions include affect regulation, awareness regulation

and empowerment regulation (Chandra et al., 2020). Affect has been conceptualized as an umbrella term encompassing stress responses, emotions, and moods; correspondingly, the term affect regulation encompasses efforts to alter affective states through coping, emotion regulation, and mood regulation, or mood repair, respectively (Gross, 2025). Extremera and Fernández-Berrocal (2020) found self-reported affect and awareness regulation to be negatively related to anxiety and positively related to measures of mental health, general health, vitality, and social function. Nevertheless, given that affect reflects coordinated changes in physiology, cognition, and behaviour, its regulation would likely have broad consequences across functional domains (Gross, 2025). Despite the growing momentum of individual self-regulation, its effectiveness remains questionable, and the evidence regarding its mechanisms is inconsistent. Consequently, its role is still insufficiently studied and understood (de Groot et al., 2021) especially among employees of the Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Service. More so, the mediating role of self-regulation in core self-evaluations and threat anxiety is yet to be established. This call for the present study to bridge this existing gap in knowledge and literature.

Core Self-evaluations and Threat Anxiety

Li et al. (2025) assessed the association of health locus of control with anxiety and depression, and explored the mediating effects of health risk behaviours. Internality was associated with lower prevalence of depression, powerful others externality was also associated with lower prevalence of anxiety and depression, while chance externality was associated with higher risk of anxiety and depression. The mediated proportion of health risk behaviours in associations of internality, powerful others externality, chance externality with anxiety was 7.55%, 2.37% and 2.18%, respectively. The mediated proportion of health risk behaviours in associations of powerful others externality, chance externality with depression was 10.48% and 2.14%, respectively. This study is related to the present study because it assessed the role of health locus of control which is an aspect of core self-evaluations. However, the study failed to assess the role of other facts of core self-evaluations such as self-esteem, self-efficacy and neuroticism. Saleem and Salhotra (2025) investigated the intricate relationship between dispositional optimism, core self-evaluations, and mental well-being among nursing students. The results indicated that core self-evaluations and dispositional optimism are significant predictors of nursing students' mental well-being. Mediation analysis showed that core self-evaluations completely mediated the relationship between dispositional optimism and mental well-being. Furthermore, it was found that the measures of t-value of dispositional optimism, and mental well-being were non-significant at the 0.05 level, while significant differences were found in core self-evaluations. The results of the study demonstrated the predictive role of dispositional optimism and core self-evaluations in the mental well-being of nursing students. Moreover, the study highlighted the underlying mechanism through which dispositional optimism influences nursing students' mental well-being. This study is also related to the present study but differs in the dependent variable used for the study. Aniljose et al. (2025) examined the relationship between death anxiety, general well-being, and personality among nurses. The unrestricted self-selected survey method was used to collect the sample and the study consisted of 150 nurses from various places in Kerala. The death anxiety of the participants was assessed using the Revised Death Anxiety Scale. The participants' general well-being was assessed using Post Graduate Institute General Well-Being Measure (PGI-GWBM). The personality of the participants was assessed using the Big-Five Inventory. The statistical method such as Karl Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Independent sample t-test was used. The study concluded that death anxiety was negatively correlated with general well-being. This study was however limited to cover only a sample as few as 150 nurses. This means that the external validity of the study will be limited.

Self-Regulation between Core Self-evaluations and Threat Anxiety

Haidari et al. (2023) examined whether motivation mediated the relationship between self-efficacy, locus of control, and academic achievement. The analyses suggested that academic achievement significantly correlates with self-efficacy and motivation. Motivation significantly correlated with self-efficacy and locus of control. However, locus of control did not correlate with self-efficacy and achievement. Self-efficacy and locus of control positively influenced motivation. Self-efficacy influenced achievement both directly and indirectly through motivation. The findings provided a general overview of how these variables correlate and affect student achievement. Cristofaro and Giardino (2020) examined core self-evaluations, self-leadership, and the self-serving bias in managerial decision making: a laboratory experiment. Results showed that: (i) a high level of CSE is connected with high levels of self-leadership; (ii) high levels of self-leadership bring individuals to the internal attribution of successes and external attribution of failures. This work reinforced the stream of (the few) studies that considers a high level of CSE and self-leadership as not always being desirable for managerial decision-making processes and consequent performance. However, the study failed to test the mediating role of self-regulation between core self-evaluations and threat anxiety. Adesola and Li (2018) investigated the relationship between self-efficacy, self-regulation, test anxiety and motivation as well as the relationship between test anxiety and academic performance. Twenty-four students of Computer Science in year two of their studies were examined in this study. Self-efficacy was found to be highly correlated with cognitive strategy use and self-regulation indicating that students who report high in self-regulation also applied cognitive strategy and self-efficacy in achieving their goals. The results also revealed that students that report high in self-regulation are more likely to report high in cognitive strategy use. Furthermore, the result of the study revealed that there is high correlation between test anxiety and academic outcomes. However, the sample was different from employees of NAQS.

Core Self-evaluations, Self-Regulation and Threat Anxiety

Botha and Dahmann (2024) examined locus of control, self-control, and health outcomes. They provided the first empirical evidence on the direct link between locus of control and self-control, and how they interact in explaining a range of health outcomes. Using rich Australian survey data, they find that, while the two traits are distinct constructs, a greater internal locus of control is associated with higher self-control. The association between locus of control and health was reduced when self-control was control for, suggesting that self-control mediates at least part of this relationship. Finally, an internal locus of control amplifies the beneficial effects of self-control particularly for physical health. This study failed to examine the joint influence of core self-evaluations and self-regulation on threat anxiety. Abdillah et al. (2023) investigated whether self-regulation, self-evaluations, and self-efficacy can predict students' employability levels, either simultaneously or partially. Based on the results of the analysis, it was known that self-regulation, self-evaluations, and self-efficacy have a very significant effect on the level of employability. Partially, each independent variable (self-regulation, self-evaluations, and self-efficacy) also has a very significant effect on employability. These findings provided evidence that self-originating factors (self-regulation, self-evaluations, and self-efficacy) are sufficiently capable of increasing employability. Thus, it can be concluded that internal factors are one of the critical factors in predicting the employability of vocational students.

Hypotheses

Based on the gaps identified in existing literature, the following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- i. Core self-evaluations will significantly influence threat anxiety among employees of

Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Service in South-West Zone, Nigeria.

- ii. Self-regulation will significantly mediate between core self-evaluations and threat anxiety among employees of Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Service in South-West Zone, Nigeria.
- iii. Core self-evaluations and self-regulation will jointly influence threat anxiety among employees of Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Service in South-West Zone, Nigeria.

Design

This study adopted cross-sectional survey design to examine the role of self-regulation in core self-evaluations and threat anxiety among employees of Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Services in South-West Nigeria. This design is fit because the researchers collected data across the various parameters of the studied population at a single point in time. In this study, the independent variable was core self-evaluations, self-regulation was the mediating variable while threat anxiety was the dependent variable.

Population

The population of the study was 415 employees of National Agricultural Quarantine Service in the South-Western Zone covering Lagos (205), Ogun (95), Oyo (55), Kwara (60) states (NAQS Records, 2025).

Sampling Technique

The sample for this study was drawn using census sampling technique. The population of NAQS employees is as minimal as 415 in southwestern Nigeria. This technique was used to ensure that all the potential respondents were considered for the study. Since one of the researchers was also a staff of the organization, it was easier to work with human resource department to ensure that all the targeted staff are considered in the study.

Participants

The participants for this study were 415 employees of NAQS who comprised of 327 (78.8%) male and 88 (21.2%) female employees. Their ages ranged from 24 – 55 years with a mean age of 38.38 years (SD=8.11). As for their ethnic groups, 81 (19.5%) were Hausa, 76 (18.3%) were Yoruba, 100 (24.1%) were Igbo while 158 (38.1%) were from other ethnic groups. In terms of their religions, 243 (58.6%) were Christians, 166 (40%) were Muslims while 6 (1.4%) were practicing other religions. Considering their educational attainment, 19 (4.6%) had primary education, 183 (44.1%) had secondary education while 213 (51.3%) had tertiary education. As for their marital status, 133 (32%) were single, 246 (59.3%) were Married, 26 (6.3%) were divorced/separated, while 10 (2.4%) were widowed. Concerning their duration of work, 110 (26.5%) worked less than 1 year, 223 (53.7%) worked for 1-10 years while 82 (19.8%) worked for more than 10 years. As for their states, 205 (49.4%) were in Lagos, 95 (22.9%) were in Ogun, 55 (13.3%) were in Oyo while 60 (14.4%) were in Kwara. Still among them, 25 (6%) worked in Zonal HQ Ikeja, 25 (6%) worked at the International Airport, 30 (7.2%) worked at Seme Border, 20 (4.8%) worked at Tican Terminal, 20 (4.8%) worked at PTML, 25 (6%) worked at Apapa, 20 (4.8%) worked at NACHO, 20 (4.8%) worked at SACHO, 20 (4.8%) worked at Lilly Pond, 30 (7.2%) worked at Idiroko, 25 (6%) worked at Imeko, 20 (4.8%) worked at Ihumbe, 20 (4.8%) worked at Ijohun, 30 (7.2%) worked at Ibadan, 25 (6%) worked at Ijio Border, 35 (8.4%) worked at Chikanda while 25 (6%) worked at Kosoboso.

Instruments

Demographic Variables: The respondents' sex, age, ethnic groups, religion, marital status, duration of work, state of service and unit of work were assessed.

Core Self-evaluations Scale: Core Self-evaluations was measured using the Core Self-evaluations Scale developed by Judge et al. (2003). This is a 12-item scale assessed on a 5-point Likert format ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). On this scale, items 2, 4, 12 measures Neuroticism, items 1, 7, 8 measures Self-esteem, items 6, 9, 10 measures Locus of control while items 3, 5, 11 measures Self-efficacy. The scale has items 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 reversed scored. The total score is obtained by summing an individual score across all the items. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the scale is $\alpha=.71$ as reported by the author. The present study reported .84 for the overall scale and .74, .81, .81, and .72 for Neuroticism, Self-esteem, Locus of control and Self-efficacy subscales. Sample of items include; "I am confident I get the success I deserve in life", "I complete tasks successfully".

Self-Regulation Questionnaire: Self-regulation was measured using the Self-Regulation Questionnaire developed by Hrbackova and Vavrova (2014). The questionnaire was developed to measure the level of self-regulation among adults. The scale is measured on a 5-point format of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The 13-item scale has three dimensions; Affect (items 1-4), Awareness (items 5-9) and Empowerment (items 10-13). The total score is obtained by summing all individual scores across all the items. The author obtained an alpha coefficient of .73 for the overall scale, while the subscales had .81, .71 and .73 respectively. The present study obtained an alpha coefficient of .87 for the overall scale, while the subscales had .87, .71 and .71 respectively. Sample of items include: "I can cheer myself up when sad", "I get upset every time things are not my way".

Threat Anxiety Scale: Threat anxiety was measured using the Threat Anxiety Scale adapted from Malakcioglu (2022) by the researchers. The scale has ten (10) items with a response format of 1 (never) to 5 (almost always). There are no reversed items. The total score is obtained by summing individual scores on each item. The developer reported an alpha coefficient of .85 for the scale while the present study obtained .81. Sample of items include: "I feel like something bad will happen due to threats from my work", "I do not feel safe working on new and uncertain conditions of quarantine processes".

Procedure

This study was carried out among employees of Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Services in Lagos, Ogun, Oyo and Kwara states. The researchers got approvals from the Zonal Commander of Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Services for South-West Zone. The approval was obtained and the researchers proceeded to use this approval letter for data collection during the main study. On the questionnaire copies, the researchers sought the consent of the respondents, explained how voluntary participation is, assured confidentiality, and ensured safety of respondents. The researchers prepared the questionnaire on google form and the link was used for administering the questionnaire. This was achieved with the support of the two research assistants (NAQS employees) from each state, who ensured that the link was shared with every staff. The respondents were allowed a period of one week with periodic reminders through the research assistants, to fill and submit their responses. Since the link was shared through their emails, the researchers constantly monitored the google form until all the responses were submitted. The filled and submitted forms were downloaded in Excel and exported to SPSS v.20 for data analysis.

Data Analysis

This study used both descriptive and inferential statistics for data analysis. The researchers used mean, standard deviation, simple percentages and frequencies for describing the respondents. On the other hand, hypotheses 1 and 3 were tested using Multiple regression, while hypothesis 2 was tested using Hayes Process Mediation Analysis

Results

Table 1: Summary of Standard Multiple Regression showing the influence of Core self-evaluations on Threat Anxiety among employees of Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Service in South-West Zone, Nigeria.

Variables	R	R ²	F	df	β	t	sig.
Constant	.172	.030	3.124	4,410		29.010	.000
Neuroticism					.170	3.298	.001
Self-Esteem					-.094	-1.709	.088
Locus of Control					.040	.738	.461
Self-Efficacy					.074	1.395	.164

The results presented in table 1 shows that there was a significant influence of core self-evaluations on threat anxiety among employees; $R^2=.030$, $F(4,410)=3.124$, $p<.05$. The results imply that core self-evaluations explained 3% of the variance in threat anxiety. The result further showed that only neuroticism ($\beta=.170$, $t=3.298$, $p<.001$) made a significant negative contribution to threat anxiety while self-esteem ($\beta=-.094$, $t=-1.709$, $p>.05$), locus of control ($\beta=.040$, $t=.738$, $p>.05$) and self-efficacy ($\beta=.074$, $t=1.395$, $p>.05$) did not. This implies that employees with nervous tension are prone to threat anxiety, while self-esteem, locus of control and self-efficacy had no connection to threat anxiety. Thus, hypothesis one was supported.

Table 2: Summary of Hayes Process Macro showing the mediating role of Self-Regulation between Core Self-evaluations and Threat Anxiety among employees of Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Service in South-West Zone, Nigeria

Variables	R	R ²	F	df	β	t	sig.	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	.449	.201	51.937	2,412		31.861	.000	26.4786	29.9608
Core Self-evaluations					.025	1.342	.000	-.1015	-.0611
Self-Regulation					.148	-10.049	.000	-.1774	-.1193
Int_1(X*M)					.107	11.010	.000	-.1127	-.0265
Constant	.340	.116	3.352	4,410		6.0793	.000	48.0090	48.6690
Core Self-Evaluation					.628	4.0912	.000	.6005	.6885
Affect [Int_1(X*M)]					.275	5.4372	.000	.2114	.2799
Awareness [Int_1(X*M)]					.333	7.9712	.000	.3083	.3567
Empowerment [Int_1(X*M)]					.569	3.3355	.000	.5600	.5861

The result displayed in table 2 shows that self-regulation significantly mediated between core self-evaluations and threat anxiety among employees [$R^2=.201$, $F(2,412)=51.937$, $Int_1(X*M)$ ($\beta=.107$, $t=11.010$, $LLCI=-.1127$, $ULCI=-.0265$]. This means that the influence of core self-evaluations on threat anxiety can be enhanced through self-regulation. The result indicated that both core self-evaluations ($\beta=.025$, $t=1.342$, $p<.001$) and self-regulation ($\beta=.148$, $t=-10.049$, $p<.001$) are significant predictors of threat anxiety. The result also shows that affect significantly mediated between core self-evaluations and threat anxiety among employees; [$Int_1(X*M)$ ($\beta=.275$, $t=5.4372$, $LLCI=.6005$, $ULCI=.6885$]. The result also shows that awareness significantly mediated between core self-evaluations and threat anxiety among employees; [$Int_1(X*M)$ ($\beta=.333$, $t=7.9712$, $LLCI=.3083$, $ULCI=.3567$]. The result

also shows that empowerment significantly mediated between core self-evaluations and threat anxiety among employees; [Int_1(X*M) ($\beta=.569$, $t=3.3355$, LLCI=.5600, ULCI=.5861)]. Thus, hypothesis five was supported.

Table 3: Summary of Standard Multiple Regression showing the joint influence of Core Self-Evaluation and Self-Regulation on Threat Anxiety among employees of Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Service in South-West Zone, Nigeria.

Variables	R	R ²	F	df	β	t	sig.
Constant	.449	.201	51.937	2,412		31.861	.000
Core Self-evaluations					-.159	-7.342	.000
Self-Regulation					-.443	-10.049	.000

The result presented in table 3 indicated that there was a significant joint influence of core self-evaluations and self-regulation on threat anxiety among employees [$R^2=.201$, $F(2,412)=51.937$, $p<.001$]. The result further indicated that both core self-evaluations and self-regulation jointly explained 20.1% of the variation in threat anxiety. This implies that threat anxiety is an interplay of one's core self-evaluations and self-regulation ability. Thus, hypothesis six was also supported.

Discussion

Hypothesis one was tested to find out if core self-evaluations will significantly influence threat anxiety among employees of Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Services in South-West Nigeria. Findings indicated that core self-evaluations significantly influenced threat anxiety among employees. Among the dimensions, only neuroticism positively predicted threat anxiety, while self-esteem, locus of control and self-efficacy did not. Core self-evaluations entail people's evaluation of their levels of confidence, effectiveness, control and emotional stability. Since the results of the present study indicates a direct relationship between core self-evaluations and threat anxiety, this means that employees who have high tendencies for these abilities will experience high levels of threat anxiety (especially those who are neurotic). This finding therefore agreed with Wan et al. (2020) who found that core self-evaluations had significant positive effects on mental health. Another related study by Saleem and Salhotra (2025) indicated that core self-evaluations is a significant predictor of mental well-being. However, they did not specify if it predicted mental disorders such as anxiety. Also, Kao et al. (2024) found that social anxiety and core self-evaluations were related. However, they did not specify the role of core self-evaluations on threat anxiety. Researchers such as Ugwu et al. (2024) and Zhang and Yan (2024) indicated that core self-evaluations and person-job fit alleviate frontline employees' anxiety levels. It is common for employees of Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Services in Southwestern Nigeria who are working in high-risk quarantine contexts to experience threat anxiety, especially for those with high neurotic ability.

Hypothesis two was tested to find out if self-regulation will significantly mediate between core self-evaluations and threat anxiety among employees of Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Services in South-West Nigeria. Findings indicated that self-regulation significantly mediated between core self-evaluations and threat anxiety. In addition, all the dimensions of self-regulation; affect, awareness and empowerment also mediated between core self-evaluation and threat anxiety. Self-regulation is a protective factor for stress, anxiety and depression. Therefore, it is commonly expected among employees, that the presence of this self-regulation skills (affect, awareness and empowerment) will aid them in self-evaluations and in reducing their inclination towards threat anxiety. However, this finding tallies with Haidari et al. (2023) who found that self-regulation did not mediate between self-efficacy and locus of control on mental health. Similarly, researchers such as Cristofaro and Giardino (2020) and Adesola and

Li (2018) also found that self-regulation did not moderate the relations between self-evaluations and anxious feelings. Hypothesis three was tested to find out if core self-evaluations and self-regulation will jointly influence threat anxiety among employees of Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Services in South-West Nigeria. Findings indicated that core self-evaluations and self-regulation jointly influenced threat anxiety among employees. This implies that threat anxiety is a function of multiple psychological factors such as self-regulation and evaluation abilities. This finding agrees with Botha and Dahmann (2024) who found the association between locus of control and mental health to be reduced when self-control was controlled for, suggesting that self-control mediates at least part of this relationship. Also, they found that internal locus of control amplifies the beneficial effects of self-control particularly for mental health symptoms such as anxiety. Relatedly, Abdillah et al. (2023) revealed that self-regulation, self-evaluations, and self-efficacy have a very significant effect on the level of employee's anxiety. In general, the interplay of core self-evaluations and self-regulation might lead to threat anxiety among employees. This finding implies that understanding those connections can help to develop tailored interventions that can address both core self-evaluations and self-regulations among employees.

Recommendations

The researchers have made the highlighted recommendations in line with the findings obtained from the present study. It is recommended that:

- i. The management of Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Services should set up a distress safe space within each state of the service where clinical psychologists can offer care to employees assessed to be affected by threat-related anxiety. The assessments to be conducted for all the staff could include some of the risk factor of threat anxiety such as poor self-esteem, poor locus of control, low self-efficacy and neuroticism which are key aspects of core self-evaluations.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the contributions that this work has offered, it still suffers a setback of numerous challenges. These limitations are highlighted below:

- i. A major limitation of the present study is that it focused solely on anxiety caused by threats within Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Services work as opposed to general anxiety. This means that the external validity of the findings obtained in the present study is limited to the context of Nigeria Agricultural Quarantine Services environment.

Contributions to Knowledge

This study is unique and contributes tremendously to new knowledge on research surrounding threat anxiety. Since quarantine services requires a lot of safety measures and risk exposures, this study is one of the first in Nigeria to assess the interplay of psychological factors in predicting threat anxiety among NAQS employees which was generally very scanty especially at the indigenous (Nigeria) level.

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