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Work-Induced Stress and Its Influence on Organizational Effectiveness and Productivity among Nigerian Workers

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Abstract

The study examined work induced stress and its relationship to Organizational Effectiveness and Productivity amongst Nigerian Employees. Employees of Nigerian Television Authority and Nigerian

Immigration Services were sampled in this study to observe how workplace has interfered with their inputs and organizational productivity. In collecting the needed quantitative data, a structured and a standardized questionnaire was used to collect the needed data and to measure the variables in question with result indicating a strong relationship between work stress, work effectiveness and work productivity. The study concluded by saying that the concept of work-induced stress, and workers effectiveness and productivity are relatively inseparable; and challenged the various organizations in Nigeria to employ the services of Organizational and Clinical Psychologists to help in providing stress coping skills, coaching and counselling to employees as it will help to boost efficiency and high productivity in various organization in Nigeria.

Key words: Work-induced stress, Organizational effectiveness, Productivity

Introduction

Work stress also known as hazard in a traditional working environment is recognized worldwide as a major challenge to workers' health and the healthiness of their organization (ILO, 1992). Stress can be brought about by pressures at home and work. Employers of labour in Nigeria do not protect their workers from stress arising outside and within the work place. It is a real problem that organizations as well as its workers have been facing for some time, considering that employers of labour are not adhering to the international labour organizations protocol which posit that employers of labour should initiate a stress management policy that will not only enhance the effectiveness and productivity of their organization but will boost their morale at work and make them healthier.

Today, workplace stress is becoming a major issue of increasing concern to employees and organizations. It has become a part of life for employees, as life today has become so complex at home as well as outside that it is impossible to avoid stress. Experts opine that stress

is the main cause of all the problems of the modern world and that it affects both the individual and organizational health.

Stress has been defined by many in different ways, as it takes different forms depending on the situation. Olagunju (2010) defines stress as ‘a chronic complex emotional state with apprehension and is characteristic of various nervous and mental disorders.’ In essence, stress is a manifest response to an individual to defiling basic needs of life in an environment of competing needs. Topper (2007) defines stress as a person’s psychological and physiological response to the perception of demand and challenge. Work-related stress is a pattern of physiological, emotional, cognitive and behavioural reactions to some extreme taxing aspects of work content, work organization and work environment. When people experience work-related stress in industrialized countries, they are made to become more familiar with what work-related stress is and how to manage it (WHO, 2005); however, in developing countries like Nigeria, this is not yet the case. Employees of an organization have to be happy in order to deliver efficiency gains and first rate services. How have we achieved this in Nigeria?

Among life situations, the workplace stands out as a potentially important source of stress purely because of the amount of time that is spent in this setting (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2006). Stress is an unavoidable consequence of modern living. It is a condition of strain that has a direct bearing on emotions, thought process and physical conditions of a person (Jayashree, 2010). In fact, stress is much more common in employees at lower levels of workplace hierarchies, where they have less control over their work situation (Beheshtifar & Nazarian , 2013). More recently, studies have targeted occupational stress in various professions, such as nurses, doctors, police officers, teachers and academics (Plattner & Mberengwa, 2010), but little research has been conducted on work-induced stress among employees in Nigeria.

Organizations as open systems exist in environment that is complex and uncertain. To survive and make profit, organizations need to adapt

continuously to the different levels of environmental uncertainty. Environmental uncertainty represents an important contingency for organization structure and internal behaviours (Daft, 1998). Organizational effectiveness has always measured how successfully organizations achieve their missions through their core strategies. Organizational effectiveness studies are concerned with the unique capabilities that organizations develop to assure that success. Given the increasingly complex environments in which all organizations operate now, the capabilities that supported past performance will not work as well in the future.

Productivity is basic to organizational effectiveness. Productivity is defined by Amah (2006) as “the measure of how efficiently and effectively resources (inputs) are brought together and utilized for the production of goods and services (out puts) of the quality needed by society in the long term”. This implies that productivity is a combination of performance and economic use of resources. High productivity indicates that resources are efficiently and effectively utilized and waste is minimized in the organization. Productivity balances the efforts between different economic, social, technical and environmental objectives (Amah, 2006). High productivity provides more profit for investors and promotes the development of the enterprise. Productivity measurement indicates areas for possible improvements and shows how well improvement efforts are faring. It helps in the analysis of efficiency and effectiveness. It can stimulate improvement and motivate employees (Prokopenko, 1987).

Harvey and Brown (2006) revealed that the major stressors in the workplace includes changes in technology, downsizing, sudden reorganization and unexpected changes in the work schedules, competition for promotional opportunities, lack of participation in the decision making, and lack of employee empowerment.

Schabracq and Cooper (2000) findings indicated that occupational stress contributed to low motivation and morale, decrease in performance, high turnover, sick leave, accidents, low job satisfaction,

low quality products and services, poor internal communication and conflicts within an organization

Sun and Chiou (2011) examined the connection among a variety of occupational stress, coping strategies and workers performance, using the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM); the result of the analysis exhibited that occupational stress had a negative impact on workers performance, and the coping strategies were the mediator survivals between work-induced stress and employee performance.

Ude and Coker (2012) investigated the link between incentive schemes and employee motivation and employee productivity in organizations and to provide useful information to management on how best to design and administer incentive schemes. To achieve this objective, the study drew largely from past research findings and cases from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Cases cited include those from Tanzania, Rwanda and Brazil. The findings were that incentive schemes have high significant relationship with employee motivation and productivity in both the organized private sector and public sector organizations in Nigeria.

Oladosu, Aderibigbe, Shuara, and Oyewole, (2006) examined the impact of performance appraisal on employee's productivity in Multi Associates Ltd. The aim of this work is to study employee's performance appraisal and see the impact it has on productivity Also to study employee's perception on performance appraisal programme and to make necessary recommendation on the findings to serve as a guide to business organization. Extensive scientific research conducted by Roelofsen (2002) has also yielded indications suggesting that improving working environment results in a reduction in a number of complaints and absenteeism and an increase in productivity. Sekar (2011) argues that the relationship between work, the workplace and the tools of work, workplace becomes an integral part of work itself. The management that dictate how, exactly, to maximize employee productivity centre around two major areas of

focus: personal motivation and the infrastructure of the work environment.

Manzoor (2012) investigated the relationship between organizational effectiveness and employee motivation. A model was designed based on the literature, linking factors of employee motivation and organizational effectiveness. Three hypotheses were built based on the literature and the model and were tested in perspective of the previous studies and literature. The literature and various studies concluded that factors: empowerment and recognition have positive effect on employee motivation. The more the empowerment and recognition of employees in an organization is increased, more will their motivation to work be enhanced. Also, there exists a positive relationship between employees' motivation and organizational effectiveness.

Research objectives

The main objective of the study was to examine the influence of work-induced stress on organizational effectiveness and productivity of workers. However, the study further examined the following specific objectives:

- ❖ the influence of work-induced stress on the organizational effectiveness of workers
- ❖ the role of work-induced stress on workers' productivity and
- ❖ the study also tried to make plausible recommendations on the effective ways of ameliorating the psychological effects of work-induced stress in work organizations in Nigeria.

Hypotheses

The following four hypotheses were generated from the literature and tested for the purpose of the study:

- i. There will be a significant effect of work-induced stress on the organizational effectiveness of workers.

- ii. Work induced stress will significantly have an effect on worker's level of productivity.

Methodology

The single factor research design was adopted to investigate the effect of work-induced stress on organizational effectiveness and workers' productivity. A total of 147 (81 males and 66 females) participants were selected for the purpose of the study using purposive sampling techniques based on population of workers who were willing to participate in the study. The age range of participants indicated that 53.1% were under 25 years, 23.1% were between 26-35 years, 11.6% were between 36-45 years, 5.4% were aged between 46-55 years, while 6.8% of the participants were aged over 55 years.

The researchers utilized three sets of questionnaire for data collection. These include the work stress scale, the organizational effectiveness scale and the workers' productivity scale. The questionnaires were administered with the cooperation and assistance of the human resource managers at the premises of the selected organizations in North-Central Nigeria. The one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the research hypotheses generated for the study at 0.05 alpha levels.

Results

The results of the analysed data were presented on the basis of the hypotheses generated for the study:

Hypothesis 1: *There will be a significant effect of work-induced stress on the organizational effectiveness of workers.*

Results indicated that there was a significant effect of work-induced stress on organizational effectiveness, $F(1, 45) = 6.548, p = 0.012$ ($p < 0.5$); with organizational effectiveness mean scores of 53.72 and 61.75 for participants with low and high levels of work-induced stress. This implies that the higher the work-induced stress the lower the

organizational effectiveness of the workers'. Tables 1 and 2 show the summary of means and ANOVA results.

Table 1: Mean scores for Organizational Effectiveness across work-induced stress levels

Work-induced stress	N	Mean score	Std. Deviation
Low	79	53.72	17.35
High	68	61.75	20.25
Total	147	58.03	19.32

Table 2: ANOVA Source table for effect of work-induced stress on Organizational Effectiveness

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2354.202	1	2354.202	6.548	0.012
Within Groups	52130.628	145	359.522		
Total	54484.830	146			

Hypotheses 2: *Work induced stress will significantly have an effect on worker's level of productivity.*

The results revealed that there was a significant effect of work-induced stress on productivity of workers', $F(1, 45) = 9.332$, $p = 0.003$ ($p < .05$); with productivity mean scores of 91.10 and 76.12 for workers with low and high levels of work-induced stress respectively. This means that a high level of work-induced stress significantly reduced the level of productivity of workers.

Table 3: Mean scores for workers' productivity across work-induced stress levels

Work-induced stress	N	Mean score	Std. Deviation
Low	79	91.10	30.46
High	68	76.12	28.69
Total	147	84.17	30.49

Table 4: ANOVA Source table for effect of work-induced stress on productivity of worker's

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8204.500	1	8204.500	9.332	0.003
Within Groups	127476.2	145	879.147		
Total	135680.7	146			

Discussion of findings

The findings of hypothesis one revealed that a high level of work-induced stress significantly reduced the level of organizational effectiveness. This outcome agrees with the findings of Manzoor (2012) which investigated the relationship between organizational effectiveness and employee motivation, and found a positive relationship between employee motivation and organizational effectiveness. Furthermore, Adegbe (2010) found that occupational stress significantly reduced the organizational effectiveness among teachers. The outcome of hypothesis one could be explained based on the fact that demands of many work place cause the neglect of other

areas of one's life, such as family, friends, recreation, and religion. This neglect creates stress, which in turn affects job performance and in turns the organizational effectiveness.

Hypothesis two findings revealed that work-induced stress significantly reduced workers level of productivity. This is in line with the findings of Schabracq and Cooper (2000) which revealed that occupational stress contributed to low motivation and morale and decrease in performance of workers. Also, Sun and Chiou (2011) examined the connection among a variety of occupational stress and workers performance, and found that occupational stress had a negative impact on workers performance. More so, Ude and Coker (2012) in their study found that incentive schemes had high significant relationship with employee motivation and productivity in both the organized private sector and public sector organizations. This outcome of hypothesis two could be argued on the premise that high workload in the work place and working environment results in an increase in psychological, mental and physical exhaustion which culminates in low employee productivity.

Conclusion

Stress, both work and non-work-related, can have a profound effect on an organizational climate and morale. For most organizations, great attention is paid to employee morale and workforce engagement levels. If the majority of employees are experiencing negative levels of stress, things like teamwork and effective communications suffer. Many companies conduct yearly employee opinion surveys to measure engagement. There is usually significant correlation between the current climate in an organization and survey scoring. During times of uncertainty (business optimization initiatives resulting in lay-offs), not surprisingly, scores in areas like motivation and company commitment are very low. Conversely, during positive times (company reaches financial targets resulting in incentive payments for staff); survey scores are considerably more favourable. Overall,

manageable levels of stress in an organization will translate into higher organizational effectiveness.

Another impact of work-induced stress on an organization is reduced productivity. Reduced productivity can also result when a workforce is experiencing negative work-induced stress. Employees under stress are much less inclined to channel energy into continuous improvement initiatives or creative problem solving pursuits. While in self-preservation mode when dealing with stress, individuals tend to spend their time and energy doing the bare minimum to keep up. As well, an over-stressed team will have less energy to begin with as studies have shown that stress depletes energy stores and a person's physical and mental capabilities (Beheshtifar & Nazarian, 2013).

Often greater demands are placed on workers in today's competitive marketplace and in today's economic climate, companies are expected to try to do more with less. Although profitability is the focus, this pursuit cannot be to the detriment of the workforce. Putting too much pressure and stress on staff to perform will ultimately have the opposite effect – less organizational effectiveness and workers' productivity. The concept of work-induced stress, and workers' effectiveness and productivity are relatively inseparable; organizations in Nigeria need to employ the services of Organizational and Clinical Psychologists to help in providing stress coping skills, coaching and counselling to employees as it will help to boost efficiency and high productivity in various organization in Nigeria.

Limitation of the study

Reliance on self-report measures always run the risk of response bias and might result in over reporting or under reporting behaviours and self-report measures are not always the most reliable instruments (Coulter, 2007).

Recommendations

Based on findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Workshops on building stress management skills to make employees less vulnerable to its effects, and teaching employees time management and relaxation techniques, or suggesting changes to diet or exercise should be encouraged.
- ii. Effort should be made by management to eliminate or reduce the environmental situation that is creating the stress. This could involve reducing environmental stressors such as noise and pollution, or modifying production schedules and workloads.
- iii. Management can take active steps to minimize undesirable stress in them and their subordinates by clarifying employees task assignments, responsibility, authority, and criteria for performance evaluation.
- iv. The need for management to delegate more effectively and increasing individual autonomy where the situation warrants it, and clarifying goals and decision criteria.
- v. Management should set and enforce policies for mandatory vacations and reasonable working hours.
- vi. Also, there is need to conduct further research which will give a holistic view on the true nature, complex sources and effects of work-induced stress in organizations.
- vii. Organizations should design their rules, policies and organizational structures that give space to the employee to work well and appreciate them on their tasks fulfilment and achievements. This will surely lead to organizational growth

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