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**Relationship between Occupational Maladjustment
and Task Performance of Civil Servants**

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Abstract

Civil servants who occupy high office positions tend to exhibit unacceptable behaviours which include truancy, lateness, not on seat syndrome, among others. This has become an issue of concern to the state government as well as interested persons including the present researchers who have been involved in occupational counselling for many years. Consequently the present researchers motivated by this fact set out to determine the level of relationship between

occupational maladjustment and task performance of civil servants in Anambra state. Three research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. The design for the study is correlational survey used to determine the level of relationship existing among the two variables. The sample for the study consisted of 581 males and females who were experiencing occupational maladjustment. The instrument for the study was a structured questionnaire titled Civil Servants Performance, Occupational Maladjustment (CSAPOM). The data was analyzed using mean and hypothesis was tested using independent t-test at 0.05 level of significance. Based on the analyses, the results showed that; (1) Civil Servants in Anambra State experience high level of occupational maladjustment. (2). that occupational maladjustment of civil servants and their task performance are independent of one another. Based on these findings, recommendations were made among which is: that there is need for counsellors, workers, labour and supervisors to be equipped with up-to-date knowledge of the occupational maladjustment and ways of handling the problems.

Introduction

In Nigeria, the civil service remains the hallmark for policy implementation as it is in most countries of the world. It is charged with the responsibility of taking actions on policies enunciated by policy makers and politicians. Nation is doom to fail without a virile civil service. So for the Nigerian nation to succeed or be removed from the list of failed nations, its civil service must rise up to the challenge of discharging its duties without fear or favour.

According to Hornby (1989), the civil service refers to all government departments other than the armed force. It went further to state that the civil servant is a person employed to work in the civil service. These government departments otherwise called ministries includes; Education, Health, Works and Housing, Agriculture among others. By the definition of Hornby, everyone that works for the government

aside from the armed forces is a civil servant. Though, this may not be totally true as some parastatals of government ministries like tertiary institutions, Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) among others do not see themselves as civil servants.

This distinction has tended to make occupational analysts classify civil servants into core civil servants and non-core civil servants. For the purpose of this study, the loose definition of the term as given by Hornby is adopted. In Anambra, the Civil Service Commission Annual Report (2006) recognizes three categorizations of the civil service in the State namely: ministries (13), Non-Ministries and Departments such as office of the Executive Governor and Government House (10) and Non-civil Service Bodies which have civil servants posted to them such as Post Primary School Service Commission and Judicial Commission among others (7). The Report further categorized the staff ranks into Senior Management (GL13-above), Middle Management Staff (GL 07-12) and junior cadre (GL 01-06).

Generally, civil servants require skills, procedures and insights that are peculiar to their occupation which the worker needs to master to perform efficiently. For example, there must be a willingness to work, cooperate, and be dependable, sincere and prompt among others. These are traits that will ensure an efficient and virile civil service. These traits according to Obi (2001) permeate the different categorizations of the civil service namely; Administrative, Executive and Managerial officers of various departments; clerical workers which encompass secretaries, typists, accountants, clerks, reporters; and professionals like the medical doctors, engineers, lawyers, nurses and teachers among others.

In Nigeria, Anambra State inclusive, the civil service has lately come under severe criticism of non-performance by the citizenry (Aroh, 2001). Performance, according to Harrison (2001) is the ability to operate efficiently, react quickly in the process of carrying out a duty. This implies that performance involves the utilization of one's

physiological, psychological and material resources in the successful execution of one's duties. Work performance can be measured by the quantity and quality of the work done, as well as cost and time taken to do the work. It also has to do with the behavioural aspect of the worker, for example, the worker's dependability, adaptability, patience, reliability, cooperation and punctuality at work (Gottman, 1993). The behavioural aspects, which can be easily accessed by the workers themselves, form the basis of performance assessment in this study. Amongst the most commonly cited acts of civil servants in the State that show non performance are absenteeism, late coming to work, unending school run, non-involvement in tasks assigned to them and utter lack of interest in their day-to-day duties (Aroh, 2001). In fact, according to Aroh, these civil servants tend to show symptoms of occupational maladjustment.

Maladjustment is the inability to adapt to the demands of a social environment and behave in an acceptable way. Expressed in occupational terms, occupational maladjustment may be construed to be the inability of a worker to adapt to the demands of the organization and behave in an acceptable way (Aroh, 2001). Maladjustment can manifest in the following ways – strikes and absenteeism for no just cause (Okorie & Ezeji, 1988); rudeness, lateness to work, sick report obtained falsely, constant phoning rather than settling down to work, and not – on – seat syndrome (Mordi & Asanibare, 1986).

Maladjustment can be internal or external. The external source of maladjustment may be from the job in terms of work overload and ineffective machinery among others. The internal source of maladjustment includes frustrations arising from difficult personal problems. Thus, family, social, financial and even union pressures may provoke in a work situation an explosion that seem to have no apparent cause, (Okorie & Ezeji, 1988). The authors further stress that every action of an employee in his work situation tends to be a reaction to previous experiences or as a result of his inner adjustment to many life forces.

Spill-over or generalization hypothesis specifies a positive relationship between work and non-work satisfactions. Basically, this hypothesis says that satisfying aspects of one's job will spill over or make non-work life more pleasant, whereas, dissatisfying work elements will also spill over to other domains. This means that work and non-work satisfaction are independent in their effects on a person's attitude and life. Kabanoff (2002) supported the literature for each of the compensatory, spill-over and segmentation hypothesis but agrees that methodological problems of definition of work and non-work behaviours make it difficult to interpret data on such studies. He also supports, from his own data, a conservative segmentalist hypothesis stating that work and non-work are not consistently related, the relationship, when they exist, tend to be weak.

Despite the lack of evidence of any consistent relationship between work and non-work satisfaction, another line of research has attempted to determine whether differences in job satisfaction cause differences in life satisfaction. Okorie (2000), in his co-relational analysis study on work satisfaction with 237 married persons, found that the causal effects of work satisfaction were stronger than those of non-work satisfaction among his sample of first line managers. Schmidt and Hunter (2004) in his study on scale as index in America with the sample size of 45 and drew the opposite conclusion in a study of civil service employees. Schmidt et-al (2004) examined the satisfaction ratings of 875 civil service workers and concludes that high job satisfaction has a positive effect on life satisfaction whereas life satisfaction has a positive effect on job satisfaction. Near, Smith, Kendal, and Hulin (2001) arrived at a similar cross-domain spill over effect in a survey of 1515 working people. They noted that living conditions have a reliable, although small effect on job satisfaction and that working conditions have a similar effect on life satisfaction.

If the civil service must live up to its bidding of charting the development of a prosperous and virile Nigeria, and by implication, if Anambra State is to be reckoned with as a pillar of development in Nigeria, its civil service must be rid of all those factors that tend to

distract it from performing. It is against this background that the present study sets out to investigate the relationships that exist between, occupational maladjustment and task performance of civil servants in Anambra State.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between, occupational maladjustment and task performance among civil servants in Anambra State. It is specifically aimed at:

1. determining the level of occupational maladjustment among civil servants in Anambra State.
2. determining the level of task performance among civil servants in Anambra State.
3. determining the relationship between civil servants' level of occupational maladjustment and their task performance.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of occupational maladjustment among civil servants in Anambra State?
2. What is the level of task performance among the civil servants in Anambra State?
3. What relationship exists between civil servants level of occupational maladjustment and their task performance?

Hypothesis:

1. There is no significant relationship existing between civil servants' level of occupational maladjustment and task performances.

Research Methodology

The design for this study is correlational survey. In this study, occupational maladjustment and performance of civil servants are correlated to determine the extent or magnitude of their relationships.

The study was carried out in Anambra State, Nigeria. The state has a total of thirteen ministries, ten non- ministerial departments of civil service and other bodies outside the civil service with civil servants posted to them. All these ministries and departments have their headquarters in the city of Awka where more than 90% of the employees work.

The population for the study consisted of males and females from ministries, non ministries and other non- civil service bodies who are civil servants working in Anambra State.

The total sample for the study consisted of five hundred and eighty one civil servants who were experiencing marital dysfunction.

The instrument for data collection was titled **Civil Servants Performance, Occupational Maladjustment Questionnaire (CSAPOM)**. The instrument was modified and adapted from two other instruments- (1) Spanier's (1976) Scale of Level of Adjustment and Conflicts of Relationship with particular Stress on the Dyadic Adjustment and Conflict Tactics Subscales and (ii) Moors and Insel (1971) Occupational Adjustment Scale.

The research instrument CSAPOM was subjected to a validation exercise to ensure its face and content validity. These experts' suggestions and recommendations were utilized by the researcher to reorganize, restructure and modify the draft instrument.

Mean were used to answer research questions 1 and 2 for each of the questions; the mid-point of the range of scores obtainable from the corresponding section of the instrument was determined. These are 32.50 and 37.50 for occupational maladjustment and task performance sub-scales respectively. The mean scores obtained were judged with the above criterion scores.

Results

Research Question I: *What is the level of occupational maladjustment among civil servants in Anambra state?*

Table 1: Means of Occupational Maladjustment Scores.

	Gender	N	Mean \bar{X}
Occupational Maladjustment	Male	270	37.42
	Female	311	36.49
Total		581	36.95

Table 1 shows that for the male and female civil servants, the mean score (male =37.42; female 36.49). The mean score for both males and females is 36.95 indicating that civil servants in Anambra state are experiencing moderate level of occupational maladjustment. However the females had lower mean score than the males.

Research Question 2

What is the level of task performance of the civil servants in Anambra state?

Table 2: Means of Task Performance scores

	Gender	N	Mean
Task Performance	Male	270	30.50
	Female	311	34.81
Total		581	36.65

Table 2 shows that for both the male and female civil servants, the mean scores are 30.50 and 34.81 respectively. The combined mean for both is 36.65 indicating that civil servants in Anambra state are experiencing moderate level of task performance. However the males mean score is lower than that of females.

Research Question 3

What relationship exists between the civil servants' levels of occupational maladjustment and their task performance?

Table 3: Correlation Matrix for Occupational Maladjustment and Task Performance

Source of Variation	Occupational Maladjustment	Task Performance
Occupational Maladjustment	1.00	0.024
Task Performance	0.024	1.00

Table 3 shows a correlation coefficient of 0.024 between Civil servants Occupational Maladjustment and task performance. This correlation means there is no relationship between civil servants task performance and occupational maladjustment. This means that occupational maladjustment of civil servants and their task performance are independent of one another.

Hypothesis I

There is no significant relationship between occupational maladjustment and task performance scores of civil servants.

Table 4: t- test of Correlation between Occupational Maladjustment and Task Performance

N	R	df	Ca.t	Crit.t	P**
581	0.24	579	0.69	1.96	N.S.

**P>.05

Table 4 indicates that at 0.05 level of significance and 579 df, the calculated t (0.58) is less than the critical t (1.96). Therefore, this null hypothesis is up-held, showing that there is no significant relationship existing between the civil servants' occupational maladjustment and their task performances.

Discussion

Level of Task Performance among the Civil Servants

Tables 1 and 2 show that majority of the respondents had moderate levels of task performance in their work place. With the poor level of satisfaction among civil servants that were studied, (in their work place) it is not surprising that their task performance was poor. Obviously there is low motivation to work hard since they appear not to be receiving encouragement from their boss or colleagues. This supports what Machungwa (2000) said that people perform poorly due to bad interrelationship with supervisors, co-workers, and subordinates as well as marital problems. Locked (2006) also pointed out that poor task performance is an unpleasurable or negative emotional state resulting from lack of appreciations and incentives in ones work place.

Relationship between Civil Servants' Level of Occupational Maladjustment and their Task performance

Tables 3 and 4 show that there is no relationship existing between civil servants' level of occupational maladjustment and their task performances. This is surprising because many of the male and female civil servants who occupy the most vital position in the civil servants arena are maladjusted due to the problem between themselves and their employer judging by the results of the study. The finding contradicts Dana (2004), who pointed out in his research on occupational maladjustment that over 65% of task performance problems resulted from strained relationships between employee and employer, as well as among the employees. This yields to poor performance. He rightly pointed out that occupational maladjustment

is associated with low productivity and increased poor performance. Furthermore, lack of relationship existing between occupational maladjustment and task performance could be attributed to some kind of will power on the part of the respondents to find succour in their work place. In other words, it could mean that if they perceive their homes to be “hell”, they could then begin to look up to their work place to grant them the peace and “heaven” they desire, hence their performance is likely to be independent of the dysfunctionality of their homes.

Implication of the Study

The various findings of the study have strong implications for counselling. The high prevalence of occupational maladjustment and poor performance of civil servants revealed in the study is a reflection of the defectiveness of the methods used in handling occupational maladjustment and poor task performance as well as poor attention given to it. This calls for attention, and there is urgent need to create awareness on the danger associated with occupational maladjustment and poor task performance of the civil servants in the state.

The findings call for the attention of the counsellors, couples, employers of labour, and the government to derive major ways of arresting the issues that contribute to occupational maladjustment which leads to poor task performance.

Recommendations

Considering the far-reaching prevalence of occupational maladjustment and poor task performance:

1. Government should equip counsellors, workers, labours and supervisors with up-to date knowledge of the occupational maladjustment and poor task performance and how to handle the problems when they begin to manifest among the employees, employers among others.

Note:

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