

THE IMPACT OF ELDERLY CAREGIVING ON JOB PERFORMANCE OF COMMERCIAL BOAT OPERATORS IN WARRI SOUTH-WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The strain of caring for elderly family members alongside work demands associated with commercial boat jobs are daunting responsibilities which have a nexus with workplace performance. To unearth the nexus, this research, conducted among commercial boat drivers in Warri South-West Local Government of Delta State, Nigeria, utilized the spillover-crossover model. The population of the study was obtained through Snowball technique. Copies of close ended questionnaire were distributed to 25 respondents which constituted the sample size. Responses were analyzed using the Chi-square statistics. Findings showed that caregiving stress has no negative crossover effects on regular attendance to work. However, respondents opined that their employers and colleagues show little understanding for the stress they pass through in combining elderly caregiving with work demands. They agreed that this stress could lead to confrontations and animosity with their colleagues. The fear of losing their jobs as a result of these makes them report for work even when their minds are preoccupied on elderly family members at home. Thus, presenteeism sets in, leading to loss of concentration on the job, accidents, poor performance and low productivity. The paper recommends that boat operators should create informal, after-work leisure times in order to ease caregiving stress and promote collegiality. Employers and boat operators should adopt flexible work plans that will enable working caregivers to visit elderly family members. Caregivers who work afar from home should utilize the services of formal caregivers, while employers and colleagues should show support for caregivers.

Keywords: Caregiving, Collegiality, Commercial boat operators, Performance, Presenteeism, Stress.

Introduction

In this modern and dynamic world, human beings are involved in daily work activities that attract corresponding roles. As workers and members of a family, they are expected to earn a living and contribute towards the wellbeing of their dependent relatives. Because individuals are first born into a family before becoming workers, they are expected to perform certain domestic roles in combination with their job, one of which is caregiving for elderly or sick parents. Okoye (2011) defines caregiving as the provision of assistance to an elderly, ill or disabled person. It requires attention to the physical, mental, social and psychological needs and well-being of both the caregiver and the elderly person requiring care. Therefore, caregiving for the elderly is a social role which most working people do not consciously

envisage. As parents get old, the realities associated with old age dependency and expectations arising from work roles begin to create internal conflict on their young working family members.

Caregiving is on the increase owing to improvement in reproductive health and life expectancy which have led to an increase in human population (WHO, 2011). Data from WHO (2011) revealed that in 2010, an estimated 524 million people were aged 65 years and above; this number is expected to nearly triple to about 1.5 billion people. The report continues that, “between 2010 and 2050, the number of older people in less developed countries is projected to increase more than 250 percent compared with a 71 percent increase in developed countries” (WHO, 2011). As the world gets older, the increasing population, propelled by the in-built population momentum since the last 3 decades has impact on the increasing population (Shofoyeke & Amosun, 2014). This increase in global population structure will be most felt in developing countries such as Nigeria where emphasis is placed on the socio-cultural and economic importance of large family size and tremendous considerations for care at old age, little wonder Nigeria has the largest number of elderly people of 60 years of age (Mudiare, 2013; Okoroafor, 2015).

According to a UN (2006) prediction, the population of Nigeria aged 60 years and above will increase to 26 percent by 2020 and 38 percent by 2050. The steady growth in the number of ageing people will result to a corresponding increase in the number of caregivers with attendant responsibilities on family members. This is because most caregivers are family members and relatives (Okoye & Asa, 2011; Okoye, 2012; Shofoyeke & Amosun, 2014). Socio-culturally, children are regarded as a veritable form of social capital valued for the needs they meet and the services they provide (Hoffman, Thornton & Manis, 1978). In fact, economic support at old age is regarded as a major reason for bearing children in many African societies including Nigeria. Other reasons for raising children include social status and psychological comfort. Okoye (2012) agrees that in Nigeria, cultural norms expect children to provide material and non-material care for their aged parents. Placing parents or grand-parents under external caregiving is culturally unacceptable (Okoroafor, 2015), and may be regarded as disrespectful to the prestige associated with old age in Nigeria. This makes children the most culturally accepted and expected caregivers to elderly family members in Nigerian societies.

Caregiving requires emotional commitment, time, patience and financial wherewithal in order to provide medical and nutritional needs for old and sick family members. As a result, most caregivers may be faced with the difficult decision of whether to quit working or to stop caregiving. Furthermore, caregiving role for an ill or disabled relative may depend on the flexible and intensive demand of caregiver’s job. Unfortunately, jobs in the maritime sector are risky, strenuous and do not often conduce for flexibility (Oldenburg, Baur & Schlaich, 2010; Carotento, Molino, Fasanaro & Amenta, 2012). Consequently, commercial boat operators (CBO) are engaged in a demanding job which exposes them to occupational hazards such as cold, exposure to polluted water, accidents, and water piracy. As a result, they require unhindered concentration and mental alertness on the job.

It is therefore worrisome that with little flexibility in their job, CBO may less likely take on elderly caregiving responsibilities or may reluctantly leave their jobs to accommodate elderly caregiving role. Leaving an elderly family member without care will result in societal

rebuke, this is more so in an African society which places emphasis on respect for old age. For CBO who chose to combine both roles, the attendant stress and role conflict will have great consequences on caregiver's health, income, and employee workplace relationship (Gilbreath & Karimi, 2012; Fatigue Science, 2014). The attendant role conflict and psychological strains associated with caregiving responsibilities may therefore have adverse effect on CBO relationship with colleagues, commitment to work and performance level. Based on this background, this study seeks to examine the impact of caregiving on the performance of CBO in Warri South-West Local Government Area, Delta State Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Caregiving is a workplace concern with multifaceted psychological, health and economic impact on workers job performance. Job performance assesses whether a person performs a job well (Indraja, 2016). It is an agglomeration of employee's knowledge, skills, and attentiveness to work task. It is the relationship between prompt completion of job tasks, improved work competencies and low incidences of accidents or breach of safety in the workplace. However, job performance can be mitigated by stress arising from family demands (Smith, 2014).

One of the effects of combining caregiving with commercial boat operation is the stress implication on CBO. Sohana (2017) defined stress as a negative experience associated with new physical symptoms, including increased heartbeat, swiftness of breath, dry mouth, stomach upset and serious digestive upset, cramp and raised blood pressure, and resultant cardiovascular disease. The accumulation of sleep debt arising from caregiving can lead to insomnia (Fatigue Science, 2014). This results to loss of energy, poor cognitive function, decreased productivity and inability to cope with job demands (Fatigue Science, 2014). A study by the Pulse Institute (2014) reveals that employees who are deprived of sleep experience 23% reduced concentration, 18% reduced memory function, and 9% increased difficulty in performing work. Accumulation of caregiving and workplace stress is linked to six leading causes of death which are heart diseases, cancer, liver diseases, lung ailments, accidents and suicide (Sohana, 2017). Stress is associated with workplace absenteeism, increased medical expenses, loss of productivity, insomnia, cognitive impairment, depression, neurological illness, hypertension, arthritis, ulcers, asthma, migraines, immune system disturbances, skin disease, aggression, relational conflict, substance abuse, fatigue and negative effects of ageing (Sohana, 2017). "Unmanaged stress also negatively impacts memory" (Boyum, 2015), increases human error and accidents at work (Smith, 2014; Sohana, 2017), and diminishes self-confidence and concentration level among CBO, thereby increasing chances of accident in the course of navigating the waterways.

As a result of strains arising from caregiving and job demands, some caregivers seek solace in prayers, reading bible and consulting with religious leaders in the midst of their challenges (Faronbi. 2018). CBOs may be irrational when interacting with colleagues, others may be unable to socialize with their coworkers, show less concern for passengers' safety, speedily and carelessly navigate the waterways in order to rush home and attend to their elderly relatives at home. The situation becomes worst when passengers attempt to caution CBO disposition to safety at waterways without considering the crossover effects of family caregiving they are passing through. This scenario could lead to distraction and in extreme cases result into physical confrontations. CBO may regard their passengers and colleagues as inconsiderate to their plight. This could lead to fractured relationship and workplace enmity with their colleagues and boat owners. CBO may be disengaged as a result of this. The fear of disengagement

therefore compels CBO to be physically at work, but perform at a decreased capacity due to physical and psychological worries of caregiving thus resulting to presenteeism. Presenteeism occurs when a worker is physically at work but unable to fully participate in work environment (Diane and Lack, 2011), this condition promotes mistakes, less innovation (Gilbreath & Karimi, 2012) and reduces productivity (Aetna, 2017; Diane and Lack, 2011), low productivity correlates to decreased profit margin and compel boat owners to close their commercial boat business.

Caregiving may cause CBO to arrive late for work, incessantly leave for home and make care calls while on the job, these disrupt work and limits job commitment. As a result, employers may replace valued employees with non-caregiving workers due to the demanding caregiving responsibilities they face. One of the implications of replacing valued employees is the demand of replacement. These unplanned replacements have adverse effect on boat owners and portray them as inconsiderate employers. In worst scenarios, the new employees, in a short while, may assume caregiver roles, having to combine work and caregiving, thus leading to a vicious cycle of recruitment and disengagement.

With the prevailing unemployment and underemployment in Nigeria, commercial boat enterprise may not conduce for flexibility or leave options, and since stay-at-home caregiving is not an option in the present economic milieu, CBO are faced with two dilemmas; whether to quit employment, or quit caregiving. Quitting a job results to a decrease in family income and low purchasing power needed to provide nutritional and medical needs for care recipients. Quitting caregiving is culturally frowned at. Similarly, leaving family elders to formal caregivers or old people's home is culturally unacceptable, and an act of irresponsibility which can generate condemnation from family, friends and the society (Okoroafor, 2015). Implicitly, CBO may exhibit presenteeism, reduced workplace collegiality, stress, low level of concentration and accident as they are caught in scenarios which can adversely affect their job performance.

Theoretical Framework

This study will adopt the spillover-crossover model in unearthing the relationship between caregiving and its impact on the job performance of CBO. The crux of spillover-crossover model is the overlapping effect of workplace activities on the home front and vice versa. According to the model, "employees experiences at home spillover to the work domain, which then influence their behaviour and wellbeing at work, having impact on their colleagues and organizational wellbeing (crossover) (Bakker, 2011). Spillover effect is the transmission of behaviour, emotions, attitudes, or stress of one life domain to another life domain (Geurts & Demeruti, 2003). Spillover is bidirectional, it can occur at work or at the family level as a result of the effects of caregiving. Amstad and Semmer (2011) argued that, "a spillover effect occurs within a person and is therefore an intra-individual transmission of stress. The resultant effects of caregivers' spillover manifest in care burnout, stress, fatigue, and psychological behaviour which has crossover effects on employers, customers and colleagues. Crossover effect can be divided into two. Firstly, if the strains from an individual's work life is transmitted to their significant others at the home domain (Hatfield, Cacioppo & Rapson, 1992; Bakker & Schaufeli, 2000). Secondly, if the productivity levels of the significant others are reduced by the strains emanating from working family members (Amstad & Semmer, 2011).

As a result of role conflicts arising from caregiving, CBO may exhibit some spillover effects such as stress and fatigue, presenteeism, psychological trauma, and health challenges. The crossover effect may result into anger, frustration, guilt, isolation, unhappiness in marriage,

anxiety, depression, a diminished social life, loss of self-esteem from time to time and dissatisfaction with life (Albert & Schulz, 2010; Okoye & Asa, 2011). Crossover manifests when CBO becomes insubordinate to employers, makes care calls while on the job, withdraws from colleagues, falls ill, and incessantly borrows to offset care bills. This spillover-crossover effect has far reaching impacts on CBO earnings and performance rate.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to assess the impact of elderly caregiving on job performance of commercial boat operators in Warri, Delta State, Nigeria. Essentially, the objectives of the study are to:

1. Assess the relationship between elderly caregiving stress and regular attendance to work.
2. Examine the relationship between elderly caregiving stress and work place collegiality.
3. Explore the relationship between elderly caregiving stress and presenteeism at work.

Methodology

This research is a survey design conducted among Commercial Boat Operators (CBO) in Ogbe Ijaw Main Market jetty in Warri South-West Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria. Commercial boat operation is essentially a male dominated job. As a result, all respondents are adult males between 19 to 44 years old.

The study adopted the snowball sampling technique. “This technique is used in hidden populations which are difficult for researchers to access” (Katz, 2006). It is used in cases where a sampling frame is hard to establish and it is assumed that cases are affiliated through links that can be utilized to find other respondents who share similar experience (Katz, 2006). The peculiarity of the research makes it imperative that the researchers have to rely on referrals from CBO who share similar elderly care-giving experiences.

Based on the population derived from snowball sampling methods, all respondents were commercial boat operators who work for various boat owners. Open ended questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents. The questionnaire was administered to respondents towards the close of work, and it was retrieved a week later. The entire population of the study was 27 CBOs, out of which 25 respondents returned their questionnaire. Hence, 25 CBOs constituted the sample size. Chi square was used to test the three hypotheses formulated for the study. The results were presented thus

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

H₀: Elderly caregiving stress does not affect regular attendance to work.

H₁: Elderly caregiving stress affects regular attendance to work.

Table 1: Caregiving Stress and Regular Attendance to Work

Responses	O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	$\frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$
Agreed	16	12.5	3.5	12.25	0.98
Disagreed	9	12.5	3.5	12.25	0.98
Total	25				$\chi^2_{cal} = 1.96$

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

DF = 1

Error level = 0.05

At 1df and 0.05 level of significance, the critical value of χ^2_t is = 3.841

Result: $\chi^2_c (1.96) < \chi^2_t (3.841)$

Decision Rule: Reject H_0 and accept H_1 if calculated value of χ^2 is greater than table value.

Decision: The H_0 which states that elderly caregiving stress does not affect regular attendance to work is hereby accepted.

Hypothesis II

H_0 : Elderly caregiving stress does not affect workplace collegiality.

H_1 : Elderly caregiving stress affects workplace collegiality.

Table 2: Caregiving Stress and Workplace Collegiality

Responses	O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	$\frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$
Agreed	18	12.5	5.5	30.25	2.42
Disagreed	7	12.5	5.5	30.25	2.42
Total	25				$\chi^2_{cal} = 4.84$

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

DF = 1

Error level = 0.05

At 1df and 0.05 level of significance, the critical value of χ^2_t is = 3.841

Result: $\chi^2_c (4.84) > \chi^2_t (3.841)$

Decision Rule: Reject H_0 and accept H_1 if calculated value of χ^2 is greater than tabulated value.

Decision: The H_0 which states that elderly caregiving stress does not affect work place collegiality is hereby rejected.

Hypothesis III

H_0 : Elderly caregiving stress does not result to presenteeism at work.

H_1 : Elderly caregiving stress results to presenteeism at work.

Table 3: Caregiving Stress and Workplace Presenteeism

Responses	O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	$\frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$
Agreed	20	12.5	7.5	56.25	4.5
Disagreed	5	12.5	7.5	56.25	4.5
Total	25				$\chi^2_{cal} = 9$

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

DF =

Error level = 0.05

At 1df and 0.05 level of significance, the critical value of χ^2_t is = 3.481

Result: $\chi^2_c (9) > \chi^2_t (3.481)$

Decision Rule: Reject H_0 and accept H_1 if calculated value of χ^2 is greater than tabulated value.

Decision: The H_0 which states that elderly caregiving stress does not lead to presenteeism at work is hereby rejected.

Analysis of Objectives

Frequency counts of responses drawn from research objectives were subjected to χ^2 tests as shown in table one, table two and table three above. In table 1, majority (16) of the respondents agreed that elderly caregiving stress does not affect regular attendance to work, while 9 respondents posited that elderly caregiving stress affects regular attendance to work. Result from the hypothesis in table 1 ($\chi^2_c (1.96) < \chi^2_t 3.841$) was in line with the opinion of respondents.

Majority (18) of the respondents believed that elderly caregiving stress affects workplace collegiality, while 7 respondents opined that elderly caregiving stress does not affect workplace collegiality. Responses were further tested in table 2 and the result from the hypothesis ($\chi^2_c (4.84) > \chi^2_t (3.841)$) showed that caregiving stress does not affect workplace collegiality.

On the third objective of the study, majority (20) of the respondents agreed that caregiving stress leads to presenteeism at work, while 5 respondents disagreed. This response was tested in table 3. The result ($\chi^2_c (9) > \chi^2_t (3.481)$) from the hypothesis indicated that caregiving stress leads to workplace presenteeism.

Discussion of Findings

The first objective of the survey was to assess the nexus between elderly caregiving stress and regular attendance to work. Data in this regard was analyzed in Table 1. Analysis showed that majority (16) of the CBOs opined that elderly caregiving stress does not reduce their regular attendance to work. However, 9 respondents said that elderly caregiving affects their regular attendance to work. Implicitly, irrespective of the demands associated with elderly caregiving, majority of the CBOs believe that the fear of losing a job which also doubles as the source of income for family upkeep and a temporary break from domestic demand makes them report to work on regular basis.

Secondly, the study examines whether elderly caregiving stress affects workplace collegiality. Data in this regard was tested in Table 2. Majority (18) of the CBOs agreed that caregiving stress affects relationship with their colleagues, while 7 respondents disagreed. Majority of the respondents opined that commercial boat driving is a strenuous job. They posited that boat owners do not show consideration to the financial demands and emotional stress they put up with at the home front. Thus, they argued that caregiving stress have a negative impact on their workplace collegiality.

Table 3 examined whether elderly caregiving stress results to presenteeism at work. Majority (20) of the CBOs revealed that the stress of elderly caregiving spills over to their work, while only 5 respondents disagreed. Implicitly, presenteeism negates workers ability to concentration on their job. When presenteesim occurs, workers may be exposed to work accidents as they are likely to make mistakes while on the job (Gilbreath & Karimi, 2012). Hence, presenteeism in the views of Bokhari, Ahmed and Hyder (2017), Aetna (2017) and Diane and Lack (2011) is a catalyst for poor performance and low productivity.

Conclusion

The study assessed the impact of elderly caregiving on job performance of commercial boat operators (CBOs) in Warri, Delta State. Findings from the survey revealed that the spillover effects of caregiving crosses over to job performance of CBOs. However, it was discovered that caregiving stress has no nexus on regular attendance to work. It could be argued that the fear of losing their job which is their source of income compels CBOs to grudgingly report daily to work.

Again, most respondents regard the boat yard as a temporary place for escaping stress and emotional strain they get from their family members. The study discovered that because boats owners may not grasp the emotional and financial burden associated with elderly caregiving, caregivers perceive boat owners as uncaring employers with no regards for employee wellbeing, but profit maximization. Based on these, the fear of losing their job to other job seekers as a result of irregular attendance to work and poor workplace collegiality leads to presenteeism. The condition of being physically present but emotionally absent at work in a demanding job such as commercial boat operation may result to on-the-job mistakes, accidents and reduced performance. Therefore, except flexible work plans such as part-time work, job sharing and customized working hours are adopted by caregivers, commercial boat operators with caregiving roles will continue to exhibit distractions which negate the healthcare of elderly and sick family members and hamper workers efficiency and productivity.

Recommendations

With regards to the findings of this research, this paper recommends that:

1. Caregivers should accept elderly caregiving as a social fact. The acceptance of new care roles will go a long way to ease the unplanned expectations and responsibilities which they find themselves in.
2. Aside from occasional interactions at the jetties which doubles as the major avenue for social interface among boat operators, caregivers and none-caregiving boat operators should create an informal after - work leisure time. This will enable caregivers to ease off stress of the home front and share ideas that can improve their work and domestic life.

3. Boat owners should make out time to interact with their employees and seek flexible work arrangements such as granting work leave, taking time off to spend with their elderly relatives, etc. These arrangements may reduce emotional strain, job stress, and rejuvenate family relationship.
4. CBOs who reside in distant locations should employ formal caregivers to augment their regular visit to their elderly family members.

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