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WORKPLACE STRESS AND PERFORMANCE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF UYO, NIGERIA

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SUMMARY

This study examined the extent to which there exist workplace stress in the University of Uyo and the level of correlation between work place stress and performance by staff of the university. Using a sample of 50 academic staff and 100 non academic staff randomly selected from the 12 faculties of the University of Uyo and two instruments entitled "Workplace Stress Measurement Questionnaire" (WPSMQ) and "Job Performance Assessment Performa" (JPAP), data were collected on academic staff and non-academic staff's psychological and behavioural stress and job performance. The study employed Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient to test formulated hypotheses. Findings of the study showed that academic staff experienced excess stress in academic activities as a result of work load while the non-academic staff also experienced stress in administrative

and clerical responsibilities as a result of shortage of staff in the institution. Also job performance was negatively affected by the excess work stress. Among the recommendations made by the study was the need for periodic body exercise for the staff in order to reduce in effect of stress on the staff and secondly, introduction courses for academic and non-academic staff on stress management and employment of more staff to reduce the excessive work load of the staff.

INTRODUCTION

The University of Uyo is one of the principal institutions in the area of information and knowledge acquisition in Nigeria. This makes it imperative for the university to excel especially if the quest for information and knowledge must be achieved. The strength of every organization including the University of Uyo lies primarily in her workforce. All forms of work and organizational procedures are potential causes of stress simply because other people's needs and wishes impinge on one another (Alabi, Murlala and Lawal, 2012). Adedipe (1993) asserts that stress is part of the normal fabric of human existence; it is essential just as eating and breathing. According to Efang and James (2014), stress is also a set of conditions involving intervention of a person and environment which presents a person with a demand or a constraint and an opportunity for behavior. The issue of work places stress has progressively gained attention of scholars probably because of its relevance to employees and organizational problems particularly in higher institutions of learning. Efang et al (2014) also observed that stress can be seen as environmental events or forces that threaten the well being of an individual in the

society. This has resulted in the disruption of the emotional stability of the well-being of an individual that induces a state of disorganization in personality and behavior.

Statement of the Problem

The strength of any organization largely depends on her workforce but work load related stress can affect the effectiveness of such organizational workforce (Usoro and Etuk, 2016). Presently, the academic and non-academic staff of the University of Uyo are experiencing excessive work load which has resulted in the decreasing number of academic staff who are carrying out research work in a year. The non-academic staff have also witnessed poor turn over as a way of venting out work load stress and all these have engendered declined productivity among staff of the university. The issues relating to excess work load can generate occupational Stress for workers and this will certainly affect performance in any organization. It is in the light of this that the study examined the extent to which there exists workplace stress and the level of correlation between workplace stress and performance in the University of Uyo.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study was to examine the extent to which workplace stress exist in the University of Uyo. The Subsidiary objectives of the study include:

- (i) To assess the relationship between workplace stress and performance of academic and Non-academic staff the University of Uyo.
- (ii) To examine the relationship between effective stress management techniques and performance

of academic and Non-academic staff the University of Uyo.

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between workplace stress and performance of academic and non-academic staff in the University of Uyo.
2. There is no significant relationship between effective stress management techniques and performance of academic and non-academic staff in the University of Uyo.

CONCEPTUAL ISSUES: WORKPLACE STRESS AND PERFORMANCE

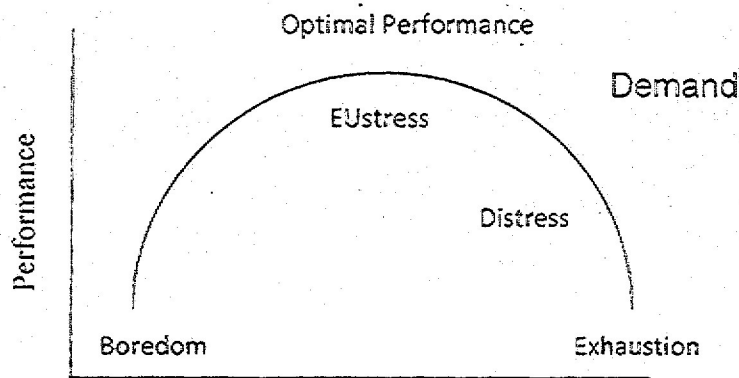
So many scholars have attempted to define stress as well as examining its possible influence on work performance by the employees. Ojiako (2001) asserted that stress is the bodily changes that can take place when the external pressure in an individual reaches an intolerable pitch causing weakened job performance and ill health. Kreiner (2001) also observed that stress is a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint or demand related to what he or she desires for which the outcome is perceived to be both certain and uncertain. Work stress according to Alabi, Murlala and Lawal (2012) is the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of the workers. Sometimes the concept is often confused with challenges but they are not same according to the scholars. While challenges energize psychologically and

physically and motivate workers to learn new skills and master the job, work stress can lead to poor health and even injury.

Maslach and Jackson (1996) as cited in Alabi, et al (2012) opined that lecturers that face large number of students with academic problems are likely to experience stress in their job. They asserted that one visible aspect of work stress is the increased feeling of emotional exhaustion and tiredness by workers. Egwunyenga and Egbule (1994) found that University senior staff (both academic and non-academic) showed high stress symptoms in performing their duties and that the commonest symptoms of stress among this category of staff include restlessness, anxiety, frustration, occasional headache, dizziness and physical pains. The study concluded that the complexity and challenges of modern tertiary institutions with respect to teaching, research, administration as well as interaction with various interest groups within the educational system are associated with stress. The conclusion of this study holds true of the complexities and the challenges in the University of Uyo with respect to lecturing and carrying out of research work by lecturers and the administrative staff of the University as well as the interactions among the different interactants in the University. Academic staff job performance can be seen as an index of effectiveness of the lecturers. This refers to relationship between the characteristics of teaching and its effects on educational outcome in classroom teaching. The non-academic staff effectiveness which is an index of performance also refers to the relationship between the positive tendencies of the staff and their

effects on administrative output in the department or unit where the staff works.

According to Usoro and Etuk (2016) the sources and causes of work related stress are hydra headed, interwoven and over lapping and therefore it is the view that there is need to know these causes and their effects on job performance if stress is to be managed or prevented in individuals and organizations. The three potential categories of sources of stress according to Robins (1998) are environmental, organizational and individual. Onoh (2009) viewed stress from work over load and may involve unusual long hours of work, loss of sleep and relaxation. According to Mc Quillan (2008) as reported by Usoro and Etuk (2016), initially pressures from demands on a person will yield an increase in performance up to a point. After the optimal point of performance however, additional demand pressures will bring a decline in that person's performance. This performance demand relationship is illustrated by Mc Quillan (2008) as captured by Usoro and Etuk (2016) as illustrated below:



Source: Mc Quillan (2008) as in Usoro & Etuk (2016)

Figure 1. Human performance curve
The figure paints a typical picture of the experience by both academic and non-academic staff of the University of Uyo.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study for the purpose of suitability adopted the job demand theory of Karasek and Theorell (1990) as its theoretical framework. This theory proposed that work situation be classified in terms of the balance they offer between the demands on the worker and level of control the worker can exert over those demands, as a way to gain insight into the connections between type of occupation and health. They argued that stress emanates from work demands effects jointly with effects of environmental stress moderators. Karasek and Theorell considered it stressful the extent to which the worker being confronted with work demands has freedom to make decision or to have control over. Job demand theory views environmental factors as the trigger, but it does not strictly proffer that personal factors are not important according to Karasek and Theorell, 1990. In this theory, workers in highly strenuous jobs (such as services based job like academic and non academic or lecturing and administrative) experience the highest level of stress.

The theorists argued further that despite popular suggestions high status workers do not belong to the high strain group because high status workers could moderate demands of high levels. They postulated that productivity will increase when jobs combine high control and high demands. This theory is significant in understanding this study because it indicates that there

exists a relationship between workers' performance and workplace stress. The theory is also suitable for service based work such as provided by the University of Uyo.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey research design. The study area was the University of Uyo, Nigeria. The population of the study consists of the academic and non academic staff of the University of Uyo. The population figure of academic and non-academic staff was derived from the pay roll of the institution as at the time of the survey and the breakdown for each union is illustrated in Table 3.1. A questionnaire entitled Workplace Stress Measurement Questionnaire (WPSMQ) and Job Performance Assessment Performance (JPAP) were used for data collection. These instruments were subjected to face and content validity while a test-retest method was used to determine their reliability through a pilot study involving 15 academic staff and 10 non-academic staff of the University. 50 academic staff and 100 non-academic staff were randomly selected from the twelve (12) faculties of the University of Uyo.

Table 3.1: Population of academic and non-academic staff of University of Uyo.

S/n	Unions	Population
1	Academic staff	1344
	Non-academic staff:	
2	Senior	1351
	Junior	1185
	Total	3880

Source: University of Uyo Registry, 2016

From table 3.1 it can be seen that at the time of the survey, a total of one thousand three hundred and forty four (1344), lecturers were employees of the University of Uyo. Also, a total of two thousand five hundred and thirty six (2530) employees were non-academic staff of the University of Uyo. The non-academic staff according to the table comprised of one thousand three hundred and fifty one (1351) senior staff and one thousand one hundred and eighty five (1185) junior staff. The total population of both academic and non-academic staff for University of Uyo was three thousand eight hundred and eighty (3880).

Result and Discussion

The following results were obtained after both the administration and analysis on the data on the study, using frequency counts for the demographic data and Pearson's Product-Moment Co-relation Co-efficient Statistic for other data collected.

Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by number of Academic Staff hours of Work per week.

Hours of Work per Week	Frequency	Percentage
4-6 hours	10	20
7-10 hours	30	60
Above 10 hours	10	40
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Results in table 4.1 revealed that the academic staff experienced excess workload in their lecturing activities. This is because at least 40 academic staff out of 50 sampled by this study affirmed 7 to 10 hours and above

working hours per week by academic staff. The situation as it were may prevent academic staff from engaging in other academic activities such as research, publications, conference and seminar attendance. This is a situation that can also slow down the rate of promotion for academic staff and eventually lead to diversion of attention and frustration due to stagnation in status and can negatively influence the level of job performance by the academic staff.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents by number of non-academic staff hours of work per week

Hours of Work per Week	Frequency	Percentage
Below 40 hours	40	27
40 hours and above	110	73
Total	150	100

Source: Field survey, 2016

Results in table 4.2 reveal that non-academic staff experience excess workload in administrative duties. This is because at least 110 non-academic staff out of 150 sampled affirmed that non-academic staff work for between 40 hours and above in a week. This situation also has evoked work stress on the workers as they cannot engage in other activities outside of their work schedule. As work demand increases, they experienced excess work stress and this resulted in fatigue, anxiety and depression and high blood pressure which may occur sequentially or concurrently. The worker's performance exhaustion phase will be very low.

Testing of Hypotheses

H_{o1} : There is no significant relationship between workplace stress and performance of academic and non-academic staff in the University of Uyo.

Table 4.3 Responses on the significant Correlation between Work place stress and Performance of academic and non-academic staff in the University of Uyo.

Level of workplace stress	Yes(x)	No (y)	Total
Boredom	35	35	70
Eustress	30	20	50
Distress	20	10	30
Exhaustion	30	20	50
Total	115	85	200

Source: Field survey, 2016

Table 4.3 shows that out of the two hundred (200) staff sampled, some staff were at different levels of stress as a result of working in the University of Uyo. From the table, thirty five (35) out of seventy (70) staff representing 50% who were at the level of boredom agreed that there is a significant correlation between workplace stress and performance of academic and non-academic staff in the University of Uyo; while thirty five (35) staff representing 50% also responded negatively. Thirty (30) staff out of fifty (50) who were at the level of eustress, representing 60% also agreed that there was a significant correlation between workplace stress and performance of academic and non-academic staff in University of Uyo, while twenty (20) responded in

the negative. Twenty (20) out of thirty (30) who were distressed, representing 67% agreed that there was a significant correlation between workplace stress and performance of academic and non-academic staff in the University of Uyo, while ten (10) staff said that there was no significant correlation between the variables. The table also shows that thirty (30) staff out of fifty (50) who were at the level of exhaustion, representing 60% accepted that there is a significant correlation between workplace stress and performance of academic and non-academic staff in the University of Uyo, while twenty (20) staff responded in the negative.

Table 4.4: Workplace stress and Performance of Academic and non-Academic Staff in University of Uyo.

X	X ²	Y	Y ²	Xy
35	1225	35	1225	1225
30	900	20	600	600
20	400	10	200	200
30	900	20	600	600
115	3425	85	2125	2625

Source: Field Survey, 2016

The calculated test of significance of (y) value = 5.052

Degree of freedom (d/f) = 2

Level of significance = 0.05

Table value under 2 d/f at 0.05 = 2.92

Decision

Ho₁: Rejected

Take 4.4 shows that the calculated Pearson value of 5.052 is greater than the table value of 2.92. For this reason the operational hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between work place stress and performance of academic and non-academic staff in the University of Uyo was therefore rejected.

This finding implies that there exists some forms of workplace stress in the University of Uyo as suffered by academic and non-academic staff in the University which also could affect performance. This findings corroborate the findings of Melgosa (2004) which maintained that at a certain stage of stress which is characterized by fatigue, anxiety and depression could cause the productivity of the worker to be low and Taiwo (2005) Nelson and Quick (2003) who also maintained that stress conditions such as low self-esteem, emotional tension, fear and frustration that could result from high sense of expectation in areas of research and publication which are the main criteria for promotion in the case of academic staff could hinder academic staff's level of performance.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between effective stress management techniques and performance of academic and non-academic staff in the University of Uyo.

Table 4.5: Responses on the Significant Correlation between Effective Stress Management Techniques and Performance of Academic and non-Academic Staff in University of Uyo.

Effective Management Technique	Stress Yes	No	Total
Regular bodily exercise	25	20	45

Attending management courses	stress	20	15	35
Accepting things you cannot change		15	10	25
Employing more workers		35	25	60
Engaging in social activities		20	15	35
Total		115	85	200

Source: Field survey, 2016

Table 4.5 reveals that twenty five (25) staff out of two hundred, representing 12.5% agreed that there was a significant correlation between regular bodily exercise and performance of academic and non-academic staff in the University of Uyo, while twenty (20) staff representing 10% responded in the negative. From the table too, twenty (20) staff out of two hundred (200) representing 10% agreed that there was a significant correlation between attending stress management courses and performance of academic and non-academic staff in the University of Uyo, while fifteen (15) staff representing 7.5% responded in the negative. Thirty five (35) staff out of two hundred (200) staff representing 17.5% accepted that there was a significant correlation between employing more workers and performance of academic and non-academic staff in the University of Uyo, while twenty five (25) staff representing 12.5% said that there was no significant correlation between the variables. Fifteen (15) staff out of two hundred (200) staff representing 7.5% agreed that accepting things you cannot change in the course of your work was an effective stress management technique that can improve performance of academic and non-academic staff in the University of Uyo, while ten (10) representing 5% responded in the negative.

The table also revealed that two (20) staff out of two hundred staff representing 10% agreed that engaging in social activities was an effective stress management technique that can improve performance of academic and non-academic staff in the University of Uyo, while fifteen (15) staff representing 7.5% said there was no significant correlation between the variables.

Table 4.6: Effective stress Management Techniques and Performance of Academic and non-Academic Staff in University of Uyo.

X	X ²	Y	Y ²	Xy	
25	625	20	400	500	
20	400	15	225	300	
15	225	10	100	150	
35	1225	25	625	875	
20	400	15	225	300	
Total	115	2875	85	1575	2125

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 4.6 shows that the number of pairs of scores (n) for variable x and y was 5 while the sum of the products of the paired scores (xy) was 2125. The sum of the scores on x variable was 115 and the sum of the scores on y variable was 85, whereas the sum of squares on x variable was 2875 and the sum of squares on y variable was 1575. The analysis on this table was used to calculate the test of significance of @ value which was 9.8 at the level of significance of 0.05 and degree of freedom of 3.

The calculated test of significance of (y) value= 9.8
 Degree of freedom: (d/f) = 3

Level of Significance	=	0.05
Table value under 3 d/f at 0.05	=	3.18

Decision

H_0 : Rejectes;

Table 4.6 shows that the calculated Pearson's (χ) value of 9.8 is greater than the table value of 3.18. For this reason, the operational hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between effective stress management techniques and performance of academic and non-academic staff in University of Uyo was therefore rejected. This finding implies that there is a significant relationship between effective stress management techniques and performance of academic and non-academic staff of the University of Uyo. What the study affirmed is part of the reason that the management of the University has approved a monthly jogging exercise for all the staff in order to improve their capacity for work. Such effective stress management techniques according to the study include, regular bodily exercise, attending stress management courses, accepting, what you cannot change, employing more staff to work in the University and engaging in social activities. The finding conforms with those of Leka, Griffiths and Cox (2004) and Millward (2005) who submitted that since distressed workers have experienced high stress level and are not able to fulfill job demand as distress rather make them to decrease quality of work life, there is need therefore to strike the proper balance if job performance is not to be compromised or the health of the worker sacrificed.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it however concluded that there exists workplace stress in the University of Uyo. Workplace stress also influences job performance of academic and non-academic staff in the University of Uyo, while effective stress management techniques such as regular bodily exercise, attending stress management courses, accepting what you cannot change, employing of more staff and engaging in social activities also influence job performance of the staff.

Recommendations

The study made the following recommendations based on its findings:

- i. The University management needs to step up the intensity of the monthly jogging exercise for the staff to include other recreational activities and relaxation events.
- ii. The management should also organize stress management courses periodically for both academic and non-academic staff in the University of Uyo.
- iii. The staff need to examine their attitude to life and probably developing an attitude of accepting what they feel they cannot change in the course of their work.
- iv. Work load was found to be one of the sources of stress and under this circumstance, government through the University management, should employ more staff in order to reduce the work load of academic and non-academic staff in the University.

- v. The academic and non-academic staff of University should engage themselves in social activities such as reaching out to colleagues at work, having coffee or launch with friends and joining a club as these will go a long way in reducing the level of stress they can experience at workplace.
- vi. The University management should ensure that an acceptable student-lecturer ratio is strictly adhered to so as to reduce the workload of academic staff.
- vii. Government should give priority attention to the welfare of its workers in the University by ensuring prompt payment of staff salaries including other entitlements that are due to them.

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