An Evaluation of Job Stress on Employee Performance: A Study of Lagos State University

Durowoju, Stella Toyosi, PhD Senior Lecturer

Faculty of Management Sciences, Department of Business Administration, Lagos State University, Ojo E-mail: Stelladurowoju@gmail.com

Olateju, Rihanat Olasumbo, M.Sc

Faculty of Management Sciences, Department of Business Administration, Lagos State University, Ojo E-mail: Olasumbo62@yahoo.com

Abstract: This study evaluates job stress on employee performance, a study of Lagos State University, Lagos, Nigeria. A survey research design has been adopted. The study sample includes all the staff of Lagos State University main campus. One hundred and seventy three (173) copies of questionnaires have been validated and used for the analysis. Findings have revealed that work load pressure has a significant impact on employee turnover with the variance of (0.573) and that there is a positive and significant relationship between work environment and employee satisfaction. In conclusion LASU should provide satisfactory work environment that will enhance employees' health situation at work. Work load pressure should be reduced through welfare packages and regular electricity supply. Also, management should encourage staff to participate in regular medical check-up and recommended sport activities that would assist them to keep away stress issues.

Key words: Destructive stress, Constructive stress, work load pressure, work life balance, work environment, labour turnover

JEL Classification: *M1, L2, I3*

I. Introduction

Stress can be good or injurious to human well-being. Ability to handle events normally without undue anxiety and emotional instability in the work place will determine the individual's resistance to destructive stress. Stress is a state of not letting our culture, family background, personal problems, status and positions in the office negatively affect our job satisfaction. Whatever the situation you find yourself in, you are faced with constructive stress that keeps you going as "goal getter". A good day work with a good day 'pay' may sometimes result in occasional positive stress. Employees are faced with business and economic challenges, changing customers' demands and expectations from subordinates, colleagues, seniors in the work place (Moten, 2009).

An organization relies on its employees' performance for success and it must spare

no efforts in improving their welfare. Work stress is common across occupations and has become a problem throughout the industrial world. It could have a positive or planned effect on performance, thereby providing managers with ways to manage the stress levels of their subordinates in order not to negatively affect their mental health and well-being. Job stress is a chronic disease caused by conditions in the workplace that negatively affect an individual's performance and overall wellbeing of his body and mind. Positive stress adds anticipation and excitement to life, and we all thrive under a certain amount of stress at home or in the office. The individual's goal is not to eliminate stress, but to learn how to manage it. Therefore, it is essential for both individual and organization to manage the stress to its utmost level (Karunanithy & Ponnampalam, 2013).

1. Statement of Problem

Various studies conducted to examine the relationship between job stress and job performance show that an employee could suffer from significant health problems if subjected to stress over a long period of time. Incessant strike actions in Lagos State University have made it impossible for the university authority to have predictable Academic sessions. These irreqularities in academic calendar have affected the wellness of staff because scheduled annual leaves for rest have not been observed as expected. Work load has become cumbersome because of mass resumptions of students after the strike actions thereby resulting in destructive stress.

The economic recessions affecting employability and entrepreneurship in Nigeria makes it difficult for workers to meet their financial obligations. This has resulted in taking up part-time jobs by staff in order to meet their financial expenses at the risk of their personal health. A lot of research carried out in the realm of work place stress has emphatically proven that intense or prolonged stress leads to a negative impact on one's mental and physical well-being. (Health & Safety Executive, 2010; Cooper 2011). A huge gap on job stress exists in the educational sector. Hence, the need to study the evaluation of stress on the performance of employees in Lagos State University, Ojo, Nigeria.

2. Objectives of the study

The main objective is to examine the impact of stress on employee performance.

- To evaluate whether work load pressure has an effect on employee turnover.
- To examine whether work environment has an influence on employee satisfaction.

Research Hypotheses

- Ho: Work load pressure has no impact on employee turnover.
- Ho: There is no significant relationship between Work environment and employee satisfaction.

II. Literature Review

Theoretical/ Conceptual Framework

Person-Environment Fit Theory

Person-Environment Fit theoretical model postulates that high strain will occur when there is a mismatch between an individual's needs and what they receive at work. P-E fit theory underlies several other theoretical models of stressor-strain relationships, including the cybernetic theory (Cummings & Cooper, 1979; Edwards, 2000). The theory hinges on the amount of a "stimulus" (for example, workload, work complexity, level of authority and social interaction with colleagues at work). Caplan and Harrison (1982) initiated P-E fit construction which was imitated by Edwards (1998). Lewin (1935) conceptualized the interaction between an individual and the environment (P × E) as the key to understanding people's cognitive and behavioral reactions. He said that optimal fit between a person and his/her environment is needed for effective human functioning. His theory also provided the foundation for the modern perspective of P-E fit.

1. Conservation of Resources Theory

Conservation of Resources Theory was developed by Hobfoll (2001). It examines the interaction of the person and the environment, with the degree of correspondence between demands in the environment and the individual's resources to deal with the demands focusing on people's perceptions of fit. Conflict with other people at work can drain the individual's energy, and distract them from their basic job tasks. When people receive positive feedback from their supervisor, their positive affect is increased and self-esteem enhanced, which confirms that their job performance is acceptable.

2. Conceptual Framework

Stress

Stress is defined in terms of stimulus, response, or the interaction between the two. It is a product of the transaction between the individual and the environment. (Holroyd & Lazarus, 1982). Made-

line, (1983) cited in (Karunanithy & Ponnampalam, 2013) defined stress as a state of health resulting from any circumstance that causes an individual to have a strange or violent response which is different from a normal state. It can also be referred to as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of a job fail to match the capabilities and needs of an individual.

3. Factors Influencing Job Stress

Joy and Radhakrishnan (2013) said stress could be due to factors peculiar to the job, such as poor physical working conditions, work load and time pressures. Sheena (2005) opined that work-life balance, the amount of satisfaction people derive from their work, the degree of control and autonomy people have in the work place, and the levels of commitment in the work place both from the employee to the organization and from the organization to the employee can be sources of stress in an organization. However, internal factors that can also cause stress in the work place include: personality, age, sex and education of the employees.

4. Working conditions/Work Loads pressure and Employee turnover

A lot of research studies have proved that the work performance decreases if the appropriate working conditions are not created. Bad lighting, noise, wrong temperature, lack of oxygen and insufficient or no air-conditioning create negative environmental stressors. The effects of these stressors can be cumulated over time and subsequently increase stress and thus decrease performance. The tasks with a deadline, which are part of a wellfunctioning organization, cause negative pressure and tension. The awareness of extreme urgency can influence employee performance in a negative way. Careful and consistent workers do not allow their work to be worse quality due to the time pressure, (Usman, 2014). The time-related stress has a negative impact especially on demanding mental work, particularly during creative activity, (Rubina, 2008) The time-related stress influences emotions, causes restlessness, tension and conflicts, and creates unpleasant environment which hinders problem solving, induces chaos and disorganizes work.

5. Work Environment and Employee Satisfaction

Satisfied employees can be happy in their home lives, as well as at work. A work environment is made up of organizational culture, leadership styles, hierarchies and human resources policies among others, (Usman, 2014) The degree to which employees feel personally fulfilled and content in their job roles defines how satisfied such an employee will be. The workplace greatly influences employee satisfaction, which in turn directly affects employee turnover rates. Cordial co-worker relationship has a significantly positive effect on job satisfaction (Chun-Chang, Sheng-Hsiung, & Chen-Yi, 2010). Price (2007) suggested, regarding the direct effect of job satisfaction on turnover intention that job satisfaction is the solution to turnover intention, indicating that a good working environment has a significantly positive impact on employee satisfaction.

6. Performance and Stress Management in the Work Place

Beehr & O'Driscoll (2002); Sulsky & Smith (2005) pointed that management of stress is not an easy task to overcome. For effective employee performance, the management must keep certain guidelines in mind for proper working life and wellbeing such as:

(a) Continuous Coaching, Feedback and Communication; (b) Effective Communication; (c) Discussion and evaluation of a specific job should be made known to employees; (d) Performance standards for each major responsibility must be defined and communicated to the employees mutually between managers and their subordinates; (e) Decision making must be participative and contributions of employees towards the decision making will lead to harmonious management/employees relationship.

7. Constructive/Positive Stress

Stress has its positive form even though most of the time, it is seen as negative because it leads to a lack of wellness and to health challenges. Work load and meeting deadlines are seen as part of human life because they teach one to be responsible, especially when positive rewards are at stake. When stress becomes temporary to employees as a result of happiness and job satisfaction, it is seen as constructive stress. Stress can be overcome when it is within an individual's capability and power to manage the sources of stress, especially when challenges will become opportunities later. Good interpersonal relationships help to achieve the personal goals of the individuals and organizational goals of the whole team. Social activities, interactions between the university and its community will increase the positive mood among employees and reduce stress.

8. Destructive Stress

Job stress is a general concern across all employment sectors. It is a common cause of occupational illness and related organizational outcomes such as lost work days, high employee turnover, workers compensation claims among others (Verna, Andrea, Anthony and Maureen, 2006). Destructive stress can be categorized into three types (Robbins, et al, 2008). These are physiological, psychological and behavioral symptoms. Physiological stress: according to health specialists, this kind of stress could create changes in metabolism, increase heart and breathing rates, increase blood pressure, bring on headaches and induce heart attacks. Psychological symptoms: job related stress can cause dissatisfaction, tension, anxiety, irritability, boredom and procrastination. The Behavioral symptoms include: change in productivity, communication problems, fidgeting and sleep disorder and injuries to health.

When work load is experienced over a long duration of time or becomes permanent, then stress becomes destructive. This could be as a result of undue pressure in meeting organization demand in the job, uncertainties, loss of job or status, too

much delegation of duties by superior, subordinates assigning too many responsibilities, e.g. teaching, preparation of results, unscheduled leave by colleagues that results in overload of others. When stress affects emotions and moods, it results in negative attitudes towards employees' mood, which could be immediate or overtime. Stress, therefore, becomes destructive when it negatively affects employees' emotional stability in terms of his work, peers, subordinates and other stakeholders in the organization.

9. Potential Sources of Job Stress in Lagos State University

Long, regular and unscheduled emergency meetings contribute to stress. Bad interpersonal relationships are the causes of stress that affect individuals, groups, departments, work teams and sometimes the whole organization. This may be in the form of envy, status and unplanned elevation of staff through appointment to higher levels by management at the expense of deserving workers. However, in order to curb stress on the job, basic office amenities should be provided to make the job effective, e.g. photocopy machines and papers, re-introduction of yearly leave allowance that will serve as a motivation for staff to go on annual leave. Inability to be financially competent discourages many employees from going on annual leave despite universitymanagement's insistence that annual leave should be enjoyed by all staff in order to reduce job stress.

Provision of regular electricity will reduce manual work. Despite the fact that human beings don't have the same way of solving problems, experience on the job through training and retraining of employees who have spent many years will assist in the orientation and organizational culture of the newly employed staff. Destructive stress may cause loss of productivity, absenteeism which may result in fears of loss of job, status and control in the performance of the employees. This may lead to workforce turnover whether voluntarily or mandatory which could be in form of resignation, termination, dismissal or early retirements of employees.

10. Managing Stress in Lagos State University

Stress does not happen in a day but continues to build up to a certain level when not control may become dangerous and can lead to heart disease. What triggers stress differs in each individual because of their family, social, cultural, perception to live, hostility and control of events around us, i.e locus of control. The individual must learn to implement time management techniques, increase physical exercise, exercise relaxation training and expand his/her social support network.

There must be appropriate use of realistic goal setting for individuals, redesigning jobs, increased employees involvement in decision making and effective communication in order to avoid conflict. Granting employees necessary leave such as sick leave, examination leave and establishment of corporate wellness programs will reduce job stress. Voluntary turnover is more probable among people who experience more stress. The longer you are in the organization the more stress resistance or coping strategies to managing stress you develop. Many overloaded people, with lack of relaxation, may find their work activities stressful. Less motivation and fewer tasks during the work process can create stress. Inappropriately timed work disrupts working stereotypes and causes anxiety and insecurity.

11. The relationships between Employee Turnover and Work Satisfaction with Innovation and Entrepreneurship engagement in Lagos State University

Employee turnover may be voluntary through resignation or retirement of employee from any organization. It is seen by many that the employee no longer has the need to stay and work for the organization which may involve personal reasons such as: increase in salary and other entitlements, welfare and compensation packages, job security, incompatibility with informal and formal relationships in the work group, stringent conditions of service, e.g. annual leave, sick leave, bonuses, promotions and personal development. The or-

ganization has the power to hire and sack staff if proper conditions of service are followed and due compensation paid where necessary. If there are frequencies in staff resignations whether voluntarily, termination or dismissal from work over a period of time, this is seen as high workforce turnover, employee turnover or attrition. It takes a long period before newly hired employees adjust to innovation, culture, learning, behavior, values and norms of the organization unless proper orientation is undertaken by the new employees.

Job satisfaction may not necessarily be a way of curbing employee turnover because a satisfied employee in a particular organization may decide to change to another organization. Entrepreneurs are linked with the need for achievement especially in dynamic organizations. That is why entrapreneurs exist because of their search for opportunities and networking of beneficial ideas. In LASU, students are taught vocational skills they can practice as part-time workers during their course of study in the University and be self-dependent upon graduation. As part of innovation, Lagos State Ministry of Education inaugurated "Ready Set Work" programme in 2016 for all students of tertiary institutions in Lagos State. The 2017 programme started in July and ended in October 2017. Six tertiary institutions in Lagos State participated and Lagos State University was chosen as a centre to host some of the participating students. Graduation was done on October 16, 2017 with internship placements in participating organizations for "Employability, Entrepreneurship and Teachers Track" opportunities for all students. New ideas in the world of work were taught by the facilitators. The best students in entrepreneurship development were given capitals by the state government to set up their dream businesses after graduation, while others were placed in internship with corporate organizations after graduation. Even though this employability and entrepreneurship programme was seen as very stressful during the 13 weeks period by the participants, the knowledge and support of the state government for realising the dreams of students towards entrepreneurship and nurturing ambition and innovations in them, made what earlier seemed destructive stress become constructive stress and be very rewarding.

III. Research Methods

This study has adopted survey descriptive design. It involves collecting data in order to test the two hypotheses stated and answer the fifteen research questions raised for this study. The total population of Lagos State University staff (academic and non-academic) is two thousand, four hundred and eighty four (2,484) (LASU staff statistics October, 2017). However, the study population of both Academic and Non-academic Lagos State University, main campus at Ojo, is about one thousand five hundred (1500) staff (Staff Sta-

tistics October, 2017). The sample size of 316 staff was derived out of the total population of LASU main campus, Ojo using Yamane (1967) formula of sample size determination since the population is finite. Questionnaire copies have been distributed to three hundred and sixteen (316) staff using target sampling technique. This has ensured that each member of the target population has an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample. One hundred and seventy-three copies of the questionnaire were valid and found usable for the purpose of this study. This is 55% rate of return.

The sample size determination; (i)

The formula states that:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N.(e)^2}$$

Where, n = sample size, N = population = 1500

e= maximum margin of error at 5% level of confidence is, therefore

$$n = \frac{1500}{1 + 1500.(0,05)^2} = \frac{1500}{1 + 1500.(0,0025)} = \frac{1500}{1 + 3,75} = \frac{1500}{4,75} = 316 \text{ employees}$$

This study used primary data which was collected using self-administered copies of questionnaires distributed by the Faculty of Management Sciences students (LASU) located in the main campus and the researchers to get information from Academic and Non-academic staff. A 5-point

Likert scale with structured responses was used. The instrument was validated using content validity while the co-efficient of correlation (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.74 for the test-re-test analysis was estimated. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used for testing the hypotheses.

IV. Data Analysis

Table 1. Demographic Data of Respondents

		Academic Staff	Non-Academic Staff
Sex	Male	58 (33.5%)	36 (20.8%)
	Female	31 (17.9%)	48 (27.7%)
Age	21-40 years	27 (15.6%)	39 (22.5%)
	41-50 years	31 (17.9%)	36 (20.8%)
	50 years and above	19 (11.%)	21 (12.1%)
	B.Sc/HND	0 (0%)	84 (48.6%)
Qualification:	M.Sc/MBA	21 (12.1%)	17 (9.8%)
	Ph.D	51 (29.5%)	0 (0%)

Source: field survey, 2017

Table 2. Analyses of Respondents Responses

S/N	Work environment	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecid- ed (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
1	Work conditions are unhealthy	117 (67.6%)	27 (15.6%)	19 (11%)	10 (5.8%)	-
2	Physical work environment affects employee job.	49 (28.3%)	124 (71.7%)	-	-	-
3	Participation in office politics results in stress	156 (90.2%)	17 (9.8%)	-	-	-
4	Hostile threats from co-workers is not stress prone.	-	-	-	33 (19.1%)	140 (80.9%)
5	Absence from work on sick days are discouraged	-	-	-	133 (76.9%)	40 (23.1%)
	Employee satisfaction					
6	Job responsibilities go against my better judgment.	-	-	-	141 (81.5%)	32 (18.5%)
7	Employees' additional qualification (training & development) is not compulsory.	-	-	6 (3.5%)	23 (13.3%)	144 (83.2%)
8	Physical work environment does not affect my job.	-	10 (5.8%)	33 (19.1%)	117 (67.6)	13 (7.5%)
9	Periodic medical check-up for all employees is not an issue.	-	-	16 (9.2%)	132 (76.3%)	25 (14.5%)
10	I don't have enough authority from senior colleagues to properly do my job.	-	13 (7.5%)	15(8.7%)	125 (72.3%)	20 (11.6%)
	Work load pressure					
11	I am overloaded and rushed to complete work on time	135 (78%)	21 (12.1%)	8 (4.6%)	-	9 (5.2%)
12	I am responsible to accomplish too many tasks which affect my concentration and performance.	121 (69.9%)	46 (26.6%)	6 (3.5%)	-	-
13	I am unable to complete tasks during an average day due to irregular electricity.	129 (74.6%)	44 (25.4%)	-	-	-
14	I don't make unnecessary errors when I am under pressure to do my job	48 (27.7%)	125 (72.3%)	-	-	-
15	I don't need to work extra time so as to meet my demands.	104 (60.1%)	23 (13.3%)	22 (12.7%)	-	24 (13.9%)
	Employee turnover					
16	Employee status/position in the organization is not a determinant for leaving the organization.	9 (5.2%)	164 (94.8%)	-	-	-
17	I don't allow job requirements to affect my well-being and private life.	151 (87.3%)	12 (6.9)	-	10 (5.8%)	-
18	Participatory leadership style does not lead to job commitment.	-	-	-	43 (24.9%)	130 (75.1%)
19	I don't get involved in various responsibilities in the office.	44 (25.4%)	108 (62.4%)	12 (6.9%)	9 (5.2%)	-
20	Lack of cooperation of my colleagues in finishing many tasks affects my performance.	118 (68.2%)	27 (15.6%)	-	17 (9.8%)	11 (6.4%)

Source: The Researcher field survey, (2017)

Hypotheses Testing

Out of the two hundred and twenty questionnaire copies returned from the respondents, one hundred and seventy three were found valid and used for the analysis.

Hypothesis One

Ho: Work load pressure has no impact on employee turnover.

Table 3. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.757a	.573	.547	26.13762

a. Predictors: (Constant), workload

Table 4. ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
	Regression	150.521	1	150.521	243.568	.000b
1	Residual	105.675	171	.618		
	Total	256.197	172			

a. Dependent Variable: employee turnover

b. Predictors: (Constant), workload

Table 5. Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Т	Sig.
	Model	В	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant	.657	.187		3.511	.001
	Workload	.778	.050	.767	15.607	.000

a. Dependent Variable: employee turnover

Regression analysis was used to determine the extent to which work load pressure affects employee turnover. The model summary in table 3 shows the coefficient of determination which is 0.573 (57.3%); this means that 57.3% of the variation recorded in employee turnover is accounted by work load pressure. This implies that work load pressure has a significant impact on employee turnover. It can be deduced from the result that employee turnover is affected by the work load pressure.

The (Table iv) ANOVA value F of (3.90) while the calculated F value is (243.568), at the degree of freedom of 172 shows that work load pressure has a significant impact on employee turnover in LASU, Ojo since the F value is smaller than F calculated.

The model in Table v signifies that for a unit a change in work load pressure affects employee turnover by the rate of 0.778. This implies that work load pressure needs to be reduced so as to reduce employee turnover. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. Even though there was no massive workforce turnover in the university, this may be as a result of economic recession in the country but not that staff were happy with their work load pressure.

Hypothesis Two

Ho: There is no relationship between work environment and employee satisfaction.

Table 6. Correlations

		Work environment	Employee satisfaction
	Pearson Correlation 1		.705**
Work environment	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	173	173
	Pearson Correlation	.705**	1
Employee satisfaction	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	173	173

^{**.} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation table (Table vi) shows that the coefficient of correlation (r=0.705) indicates that there is a positive and significant relationship between work environment and employee satisfaction. This relationship is significant because the p-value for the result (p-value = 0.000) is lower than the 0.05 level of significant used for the study.

Decision

Null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis accepted. This implies that there is a significant relationship between work environment and employee satisfaction. From this result it shows that if the environment of a work place is conducive, it will enhance employee satisfaction and productivity in LASU.

Discussion of Findings

From the hypotheses tested it can be deduced that work load pressure affects employee performance. This is through ineffective time management and undue pressures to meet deadlines, lack of electricity and undue job demands.

There is a significant relationship between work environment and employee satisfaction. This relates to physical work environment such as building, lighting, air conditioning, office space, furniture and equipment. Employee satisfaction relates to job responsibilities, training and development, periodic medical check-up, and responsibilities backed by delegation of authority. Employee turnover is also affected by employee status/position in the organization, job requirements with relation to well-being and private life.

The findings revealed that the staff of LASU main campus work under pressure

most times to finish their assigned tasks. This is as a result of irregular electricity, work load, pressure to meet deadlines, especially as a result of incessant strikes in the university and national strikes in Nigeria. Educational environment must be conducive in order to achieve a better performance of learners, educators and other supporting staff.

IV. Conclusions

This study suggests that a lot of stress at the work place can affect the performance of workers negatively if stress issues are not well managed. The result reveals that work load pressure and work environment have a significant impact on employee turnover and job satisfaction. To increase performance of employee, conducive and healthy work environment should be provided such as well stocked University Health Centre in case of emergency during the official hours. Regular and compulsory medical check-ups of staff should be encouraged at subsidized rate by the management so that stress that could result in heart diseases could be avoided at the initial stage of the problem.

Work load pressure must be reduced through regular dialogue and interactions of management with members of staff.

Investment by the university management on power generation such as solar power in addition to the existing power generation will enhance employee work. Recreation and relaxation facilities should be provided in each faculty so that staff can interact and share their research ideas out of office. There should be well equipped classrooms with modern and learning aids so that stress be reduced. Management should find ways of funding and re-

imbursement for research purpose, seminars and conferences attendance in order to motivate workers and reduce stress. Employees should be able to control their anger and hostility and work as a team to avoid destructive stress.

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