

Stress Prevention Practices and Employees 'Efficiency of Federal Universities in South East

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Abstract: *The study analyzed the stress prevention practices and employees' efficiency of federal universities in South East. The objective of the study is to; Determine the effect of career development on employees' efficiency of federal universities in South East. Investigate the effect of job autonomy on employees' efficiency of federal universities in South East. Cross sectional Survey research design was used in carrying out the study. Ikeagwu (1997) opined that studies of this nature will use survey method to look for information on facts, attitudes, practices and opinions of the respondents. The area of study consists of the five States in the South-East geo political zone of Nigeria: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states. The study was directed at the federal Universities in each of the states. To that effect specific areas are as follows AEUA, UNN, UNIZIK, FUTO, MOU. The researcher chose to use only the federal universities because of the proximity of data and vital information. The data were obtained from two sources namely: primary and secondary sources. The population for the study comprised the non-teaching staffs which are 7488. The sample size of 1439 was determined by using the Borg & Gall formular of (1973). The instrument that was used in data collection was the questionnaire. Statistics such as frequency tables and percentages was used in the analysis of demographic characteristics while research hypotheses were tested using regression. The finding of the study shows that; Career development has significant effect on employee' efficiency of federal Universities in South-East Nigeria. Job autonomy has significant effect on employee' output of federal Universities in South- East Nigeria. The researcher put forward a recommendation towards finding the best workload allocation model to ensure that employee work and life is well balanced. University staff should at least take leave twice a year to ease their stress and stay in the job.*

Keywords; *Stress prevention, career development, job autonomy, employees' efficiency*

INTRODUCTION

Most organizations with the aim of attaining higher productivity end up saddling employees with overload of work in order to meet deadline and this might have psychological and physical effects on the employees which may result in something contrary to what these organizations want to achieve Work stress arises from stressors at the workplace. These are the demanding and unreasonable situations associated with the organization itself. They include high levels of organizational politics, demanding organizational cultures and poor leadership styles which can create friction; heighten dysfunctional competition between individuals and increase stress. Stress management is a wide extreme of creative requirement of techniques and psychotherapies adopted to control an individual's numerous physical and mental distresses with the aim of and for the purpose of enhancing everyday functioning.

Stress can lead to reduced productivity and efficiency among employees. High levels of stress can impair concentration, decision-making abilities, and overall work performance, resulting in decreased output and quality of work. Excessive stress can lead to increased absenteeism as employees may take more sick leaves or time off to cope with stress-related physical or mental health issues. Additionally, it can contribute to employee turnover as individuals seek less stressful work environments, resulting in higher recruitment and training costs for the organization. Chronic stress can negatively impact employee morale and job satisfaction. When employees face excessive stress levels, their overall job happiness and motivation tend to decrease, leading to a decrease in engagement, commitment, and loyalty towards the organization. High levels of stress can contribute to various health issues, both mental and physical. Stress-related conditions may include anxiety, depression, insomnia, high blood pressure, cardiovascular problems, and burnout. These health issues can not only affect employee well-being, but also increase healthcare costs for the organization. In highly stressful environments, communication and collaboration among team members may suffer. Stress may lead to increased conflict, decreased cooperation, and breakdowns in effective interpersonal relationships, hindering effective teamwork and hindering progress on projects or tasks. Stress can inhibit creativity and innovative thinking within an organization. When employees are under significant pressure, their ability to generate new ideas, think outside the box, and problem-solve creatively may be hindered, potentially limiting the organization's ability to adapt and thrive. A workplace with high levels of stress can contribute to a negative organizational culture, characterized by low morale, high turnover, and decreased employee satisfaction. This can create a toxic work environment, impacting employee well-being and hindering collaboration and productivity. Stress-related problems can result in increased costs for the organization. These costs may include healthcare expenses, recruitment and training costs, decreased productivity, and potential legal implications if stress-related issues lead to workplace accidents or lawsuits. Addressing and managing stress within an organization is crucial for promoting a healthy and productive work environment. Female academics face diverse challenges relating to work and personal lives. Thus, the stress level tends to increase for those female academics who adopt domestic roles in addition to their official workload. The manner in which individuals handle the effects of stress will determine how efficiently the stressful situations are managed and resolved. Given this background, the current study seeks to understand the implications of stress prevention practices and employees' efficiency of federal universities in South East

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to examine the stress prevention practices and employees' efficiency of federal universities in South East. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. Determine the effect of career development on employees' efficiency of federal universities in South East
- ii. Investigate the effect of job autonomy on employees' efficiency of federal universities in South East

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the objectives of the study and strengthen the analysis:

Ho₄: Career development has no significant effect on employees' efficiency of federal universities in South East

Ho₅: Job autonomy has no significant effect on employees' efficiency of federal universities in South East

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework

Han Selye Systemic Stress Theory: Noone (2017) citing Han Selye (1956) stated that Han Selye was the first investigator to use the term "Stress" to describe the problems associated with homeostasis. Han Selye (1956) noted that stress response of the organism represented a common set of generalized physiological responses that were experienced by all organisms exposed to a variety of environmental challenges like temperature change or exposure to noise. He classified the level of stress into three: Alarm reaction, Resistance and Exhaustion. Noone (2017) asserted that Han Selye (1956) findings on the effect of stress on rats and other animals by exposing them to harmful stimuli presented similar series of reactions, which was grouped into three stages viz: alarm; resistance and exhaustion. These universal responses to stressors were then described as the GENERAL ADAPTATION SYNDROME or GAS MODEL.

- Alarm is the first stage: When the threat or stressor is identified or realized, adrenalin will be produced in order to bring the fight-flight response. As a result, the body's physiological system drops below optimal functioning. Noone (2017) added that there is also some activation of the HPA (The hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis) axis, producing cortisol.

- The Resistance stage: Siang and Yip (2018) stated that is where the body has to decide to fight or flight" and that the body tries to add resources to help it cope through maximum adaption and hopefully, successfully return to equilibrium for the individual. As the body attempts to balance itself, the physiological compensatory systems begin working at the peak capacity to RESIST the challenges the entire system was confronted with. Selye (1965) noted that this eventually raises the body's resistance to stress; above homeostatic levels where the body tries to adapt to the strains or demands of the environment. So its resources are gradually used up or depleted. Selye (1956) concluded that if the body's defense mechanism does not work, or fails to cope, it will lead to the third stage which is exhaustion.

- The third and final stage in GAS MODEL is Exhaustion. Okuweh (2009) noted that at this stage, all the body's resources are eventually depleted and the body is unable to maintain normal function. During this stage, the initial autonomic nervous system symptoms likes sweating, raised heartbeat etc. may reappear. Okuweh (2009) added that if this stage is extended, long term damage may result as the capacity of the adrenal gland and the immune system is exhausted and functions is impaired resulting into various illnesses like ulcers, depression, diabetics trouble with digestive system, cardiovascular issues, alongside with other mental illnesses. The Hans Selve's theory showing the various stages or set of generalized physiological responses also relates to this present study as it offers the opportunity to clearly see some of the stages of stress,

stimulus reaction pattern, common effects and consequences. This theory also is used here to help select variables for this research.

Empirical Review

Ajayi, (2019) examined the impact of job related stress on employee performance and job satisfaction. A sample of 150 employees from the Nigerian Bank industry of Nigeria was used for this survey. Components of job stress namely: Lack of administrative support; excessive work load and work demand; problematic customer relations; coworker's relationship; family & work life balance and associated job risks were examined in this study. The objective of the study is to explore the stress related problems of bankers and examine the relationship between stress and performance and the impact of stress on employee performance. The results show that all these factors of stress cause great stress in Nigerian bankers and negatively impacts their performance. The findings of this study support the findings of a similar study on banking sector of Pakistan conducted by Usman Basher and Muhammad Ismail which showed that job stress significantly reduce the performance of an individual. Job stress is considered rising and has become challenge for the employer and because high level stress is results in low productivity, increased absenteeism and collection to other employee problems like alcoholism, drug abuse, hypertension and host of cardiovascular problems (Meneze 2005). Personality factors have shown inclination towards stress, anxiety, and other occupational health outcomes in different areas of medicine, and these factors may contribute to feelings of job dissatisfaction and stress (Michie and Williams 2003). Thus it was recommended that employer should proactively minimize stress by providing adequate administrative support to employees; Optimize work load, effectively manage customer expectations, minimize relationship and role conflict, deploy adequate reward system and provide adequate training and counseling to employees in order to improve their job performance and job satisfaction.

Abraham and Viswasom (2018) observed the baseline stress level of first year medical students and to assess the effect of counseling and mentoring programme on these stress levels. An experimental study (pre and post- test without control) was conducted during November to December 2015 amongst the first year medical students of the Travancore Medical College, Kollam, Kerala, India. Ninety-eight first year medical students were divided into 10 batches and were assigned to a teaching faculty of the basic specialties (mentor). Personal interaction and counseling was conducted by the teaching faculty with technical assistance from the psychiatry department. General stress relieving techniques were taught to students through two counseling programmes in four batches, each within a gap of one month. Standardized peer reviewed, pre validated stress assessing questionnaires (pre-test and post-test) were administered to the students who consented and attended all sessions. It was identified that around 74 out of 98 (75.5%) of the students were experiencing stress at the beginning of the study and this reduced to 69 out of 98 (70.4%) after implementation of the programme in a time period of one month. This shows that counseling programmes were effective in reducing both baseline stress and academic stress amongst first year medical students. Assessment of stress and conduct of stress management programmes are necessary for

improving the academic performance and Quality Of Life (QOL) of medical students. Stress relieving techniques should also be practiced to reduce stress in medical education.

Tabatabae, et al (2011) examines general health, stress associated to the work and job satisfaction of hormozgan cement factory employees in Iran. They found out that general health and job satisfaction of employees were higher than average ($\alpha = 0/01$) but their job stress was lower than average ($\alpha = 0/01$). It also reveals improvement of job stress, thereby suggesting trainings and models for the improvement of employees stress.

Akah (2013) studies stressors and job performance of health workers in the public sector of Calabar metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria. The result shows that interpersonal conflict and poor skill acquisition did not significantly influence job performance while job insecurity, remuneration and non-participation in decision-making were found to significantly influence job performance of health workers in the public sector.

Mansor, et al (2013) examines the impact of job stress on employee job satisfaction; a study on telecommunication sector of Pakistan. The study reveals that stress is negatively related to employee's job satisfaction because lower job satisfaction were found to experience more stress in the form of workload, role conflict and physical environment compared to those with higher job satisfaction.

Yusoff (2013) carried out a study on job stress, performance and emotional intelligence in academia. The study sampled out 65 faculty members from two universities in Pakistan including one public and other private sector university. Data was collected using questionnaire, and was analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. It was found that a negative relationship exist between job stress and performance, whereas a strong positive was found between emotional intelligence and job performance. The finding revealed that the faculty members in the higher education institution of Pakistan should focus not only on identifying the job stress factors but should also try to manage their emotional competence by working in a conducive atmosphere. In this way they can deal with problems of job stress and boost up their performance.

Tahir (2017) investigated the effectiveness of teaching stress on academic performance of college teachers in Pakistan, the study sample out 106 college teachers of public and private sector selected through stratified sampling technique. The test of regression analysis t-test, one way ANOVA and two ways ANOV were applied. The study revealed that intrinsic and extrinsic variables have positive effect on academic performance of college teachers. The study also showed that significant difference was found between academic performance of teachers of public and private colleges.

METHODOLOGY

Cross sectional Survey research design was used in carrying out the study. Ikeagwu (1997) opined that studies of this nature will use survey method to look for information on facts, attitudes, practices and opinions of the respondents. The area of study consists of the five States in the South-East geo political zone of Nigeria: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states. The study was directed at the federal Universities in each of the states. To that effect specific areas are as follows AEUA, UNN, UNIZIK, FUTO, MOU. The researcher chose to use only the federal universities because of the proximity of data and vital information. The data were obtained from two sources namely: primary and secondary sources. The population for the study comprised the non-teaching staffs which are 7488. The sample size of 1439 was determined by using the Borg & Gall formular of (1973).The instrument that was used in data collection was the questionnaire. Statistics such as frequency tables and percentages was used in the analysis of demographic characteristics while research hypotheses were tested using regression. The research hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance, regression result was used. The analysis was carried out with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23

PRESENTATION ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Correlation Analysis Test

Career Development and Employee Efficiency

Correlations

		EPE	CARD
EPE	Pearson Correlation	1	.503**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	2026.320	630.622
	Covariance	1.434	.446
	N	1414	1414
CARD	Pearson Correlation	.503**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	630.622	2133.025
	Covariance	.446	1.509
	N	1414	1415

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

As presented in Table 4.5.4 above there was a positive relationship between career development and employee' Efficiency ($r=0.503$; $p<0.05$). This suggests that career development positively affects employee' efficiency in federal owned universities in South-East. This implies that the issue of the interrelation between career development and employee' Efficiency is brought out clearly in this study.

Job Autonomy and Employee' Efficiency Correlations

		EPE	JOBA
EPE	Pearson Correlation	1	.439**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	2026.320	357.853
	Covariance	1.434	.253
	N	1414	1414
JOBA	Pearson Correlation	.439**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	357.853	3256.353
	Covariance	.253	2.303
	N	1414	1415

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

As presented in Table 4.5.5 above there was a positive relationship between Job Autonomy and Employee' Efficiency ($r=0.439$; $p<0.05$). This suggests that Job Autonomy positively affect Employee' Efficiency in south east federal universities. This implies that the issue of the interrelation between job autonomy and employee' efficiency

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression result was employed to test the effect of independent or explanatory variables on the dependent variables. The result of the multiple regression analysis is presented in the tables below.

Summary of the regression result

The result of the multiple regressions formulated in chapter three is presented in the tables below.

Model Summary^b

Model	R	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
				R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.358 ^a	.128	1.11892	.128	103.750	2	1411	.000	1.761

a. Predictors: (Constant), JOBA, CARD

b. Dependent Variable: EPE

Table above shows that R^2 which measures the strength of the effect of independent variable on the dependent variable have the value of 12%. This implies that 12% of the variation in stress management is explained by variations in career development and Job autonomy. This was supported by adjusted r^2 of 12%. in order to check for autocorrelation in the model, durbin-watson statistics was employed. durbin-watson statistics of 1.7 in table showed that the variables in the model are not auto correlated and that the model is reliable for predications

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	259.785	2	129.893	65.569	.000 ^b
	Residual	1766.535	1411	1.252		
	Total	2026.320	1413			

a. Dependent Variable: EPE

b. Predictors: (Constant), JOBA, CARD

The f-statistics value of 65.569 with f-statistics probability of 0.000 shows that the independent variables has significant effect on dependent variables such as career development and Job autonomy can collectively explain the variations in profitability.

4.5.5 Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
1	(Constant)	2.886	.077		37.243	.000	2.734	3.038
	CARD	.261	.023	.322	11.402	.000	.305	.216
	JOBA	.097	.041	.067	2.373	.018	.176	.017

a. Dependent Variable: EPE

A'priori Criteria: This is determined by the existing business theories; it also indicates the signs and magnitude of the business parameter under review. In the table above, we found out that career development has a positive sign given its value as 0.261, this implies that a unit increase in career development increases the Employee efficiency by 26%, this conforms to the a' priori expectation. Job autonomy has a positive sign given its value as 0.097; this implies that a unit increase in job autonomy increases the Employee efficiency by 97%, this conforms to a' priori expectation. However, career development variable has regression t-value of 11.402 with a probability value of .000. This implies that career development has a positive and significant effect on Employee efficiency. Job autonomy has a regression t-test of 2.373 with a probability value of 0.000 implying that Job autonomy variable has positive and significant effect on Employee efficiency.

Test of Hypotheses

Here, the hypotheses formulated in chapter one were tested using t-statistics and significance value of the individual variables in the regression result. The essence of this is to ascertain the significance of the effect of individual independent or explanatory variables on the dependent variables.

Hypothesis One

Ho₄: Career development has no significant effect on employee' efficiency of federal Universities in South-East Nigeria

Career development has a $\beta=0.261$, t-statistics of 11.402 and a probability value of .000 which is statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypotheses and conclude that Career development has significant effect on employee' efficiency of federal Universities in South-East Nigeria Career development and employee' output: The study found that Career development variables have significant effect on employee' output in Nigeria. This suggests that Career development is factors to determine the level of in employee' output Nigeria. The findings further imply that when the management enhances the Career of the staff the workers will perfume well and as well increase their output. The present study support extant literatures which Fauziah, Mariatin, and Zahreni, (2018) studied the relationship and effect of Career development on employee' output in Nigeria. This is based on the fact that an increase in Career development increase in employee' output Nigeria. This finding agrees with the findings of Diamond and Rajan (2005) that advances the existence of a positive relationship between Career development and employee' output.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₅: Job autonomy has no significant effect on employee' output of federal Universities in South- East Nigeria

Job autonomy has a b=0.097, t-statistics of 2.373 and a probability value of .000 which is statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis and conclude that Job autonomy has significant effect on productivity in South East Universities. Job autonomy and employee' output: The study found that job autonomy variables have significant effect on employee' output in Nigeria. This suggests that Job autonomy is factors to determine the level of in employee' output Nigeria. The findings further implies that when the management enhance the Job autonomy of the staff the workers will have sense of responsibility and carried out their job diligently.. The present study support extant literatures which Asokk, Allampradhu, Bhati., and Vanishree (2021) studied the relationship and effect of Job autonomy on employee' output in Nigeria. This is based on the fact that an increase in Job autonomy increases in employee' output Nigeria.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS;

This study focused on analyzing the impact of stress management within organizations and its effects on employees productivity which was surveyed using a questionnaire. And the data collected were analyzed and the solutions and recommendations suggested by the employees were enlisted. Based on the findings, it was discovered that stress really affects employees in all aspects of their lives especially in their work place, and the effect on employees directly affects the organization as a whole. However, the research revealed that the organizations do not have stress management facilities, policies or strategies in place. The researcher put forward a recommendation towards finding the best workload allocation model to ensure that employee work and life is well balanced. University staff should at least take leave twice a year to easy their stress

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