

INFLUENCE OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS ON ACADEMIC STAFF PRODUCTIVITY IN PUBLIC TERTIARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

BY

Faduyile, Grace Oluranti: Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, Lagos State University, Ojo, Nigeria; E-mail: ofaduyile@yahoo.com**Orunbon, Nurudeen Olalekan:** Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, Lagos State University, Ojo, Nigeria; E-mail: orunbon.nurudeeno@gmail.com**Abari, Ayodeji Olasunkanmi:** Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, Lagos State University, Ojo, Nigeria; E-mail: ayodeji.abari@gmail.com**Abstract**

People who work in helping professions that involve interacting with people—especially teachers could be more vulnerable to mental discomfort due to stress. Thus, this study examined the influence of occupational stress on academic staff productivity in public tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State. Two hypotheses (tested at 0.05 level of significance) in which correlational and descriptive research designs were adopted, its population comprised all academic staff in public tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State. The sample size was 700. Questionnaire was used to collect data after ensuring its validity and establishing their reliability using test-retest method. This is the ‘Occupational Stress Questionnaire for Teachers (OSQT) ($r = 0.94$). In addition, Records observation was used to obtain examination results from the tertiary educational institutions sampled. Analysis was carried out using inferential statistics of t-test and Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) through the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 24.0. Findings indicate that there is a significant difference in occupational stress among academic staff productivity in public tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria between cadres – professorial and non-professorial (and their equivalents) [$t_{(df = 641)} = 0.120$; $p = 0.904 > 0.05$]. In the same vein, the study found that there is no significant difference in occupational stress and productivity of academic staff of public tertiary institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria among Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of education ($F_{4, 112} = 0.694$, $p < 0.05$). It is concluded that occupational stress has a considerable influence on the lecturers’ productivity in tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State. The study therefore recommended that Management of tertiary educational institutions should increase staff numbers and improve facilities and resources as this is the most effective way to address the high workload problem. While as well upgrading teaching facilities, providing greater funding for research, increasing professional development opportunities for lecturers.

Keywords: Stress, Occupational stress, Productivity, Academic staff, Public tertiary educational institution

Introduction

Stress is a universal phenomenon that every living organism experiences. Regardless of age, gender, occupation or socioeconomic status, humans experience stress. Hans Selye, the father of the modern concept of stress in 1975, described it as the “spice of life” in which complete freedom can only be attained at death. Factors, situations or conditions that tend to cause stress are generally referred to as “stressors” (Mohajan, 2012). Stress may be physical, biological, emotional or psychological and can be found everywhere (including at home, work and in a social environment). Though stress is unavoidable, its effect can either be beneficial or harmful to an individual. Scholars have revealed that the harmful nature of stress affects two-thirds of the number of people who visit doctors (Drabick *et al.*, 2021; Walkowiak *et al.*, 2021; Zvada & Bhebhe, 2019). It has also been disclosed that seven of the top leading causes of death are directly linked to stress (Goodday & Friend, 2019; Quick & Henderson, 2016; Yazon & Ang-Manaig, 2019). Given this outlook, stress can be considered one of the most formidable health and performance threats of the 21st century. This is because no one is immune to stress (Alam *et al.*, 2018; Ashipala & Shilunga, 2020; Chowdary & Kumar, 2018) since it occurs in every occupation (Breitenbach *et al.*, 2021; Masih, 2016; Jessop, 2019).

Occupational stress, known as professional stress (Mohamed, 2018), job stress or work-related stress, is an aspect of stress that an employee or a group of workers experience in their workplace. According to Mohajan (2012), it is an issue of great concern to both employers and employees because of its effect on well-being, performance, and productivity. Robbins *et al.* (2013) define occupational stress as the adverse reaction employees experience due to extraordinary demands, opportunities and constraints at the workplace. Scholars have credenced the prevalence of occupational stress among lecturers of higher institutions in Nigeria (Tijani, 2015; Usoro & Etuk, 2016; Usoro, 2018; Zvada & Bhebhe, 2019). Job stress may arise from lecturers performing their core functions which, according to Mushemeza (2016), centre on teaching, conducting and publishing research, and community service.

In tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State, each lecturer teaches courses in various programmes like full time, part time, Sandwich, at various levels, maybe undergraduate and postgraduate. All these will have to be combined with academic works like preparing students' result, marking scripts, attending to students' personal needs and help, research activities like writing papers for publication, attending faculty meetings, departmental meetings, senate meetings, board meetings and still lecturers would want to meet up with academic expectations, All these could then leave lecturers exhausted, demoralized, and hence occupational stress.

The ultimate measure of efficiency is the capacity to deliver a good or service. In particular, productivity is a measure of the manner in which specific resources are managed to meet their specified quantities and quality goals in good time (Orunbon, 2022). Productivity is also defined as a metric that compares output to input (goods and services) (energy, materials, labour, etc., utilized to bring result, which is the output). In the education field, productivity factor is a sine qua non tool for assessing and monitoring an organisation's results (Kennedy, 2016). Productivity is a necessary means of assessing and tracking an organisation's performance, including the education sector (Edo & Nwosu, 2018).

In addition, Inatimi (2018) sees productivity as the proportion of how an enterprise turns input capital (works, materials, machinery etc.) into commodities and services (individuals, industry and countries). Productivity is the performance over and above input result; it is optimum use of existing resources in order to achieve the specified objectives. Productivity eliminates waste and generates sustainable quality by using multiple approaches, including collective transparency, collaboration, capacity building and encouragement for employees to achieve the organisation's objectives (Orunbon, 2020). The effectiveness of teachers can be calculated by teachers' success in the school system. Productivity of teachers is the number of teachers produced; here the result refers to the quality of teachers produced or produced annually (Musibau & Adigun, 2010 cited in Mohammed & Orunbon, 2020).

The work life of academic staff in Nigerian public higher educational institutions cannot be said to be easy, indeed, the staff, are in the eye of the storm. This situation, suggestively is arising from diverse factors; the pressure for improved graduate output from the public, the pressure to generate knowledge through research that will give the nation a competitive advantage in the global market, increased workload emanating from teaching and administrative responsibilities, not so suitable work environment, family expectations and the pressure to grow on the job. Expansion of facilities seems not commensurate with students' intake. Apart from the normal teaching, scoring, grading of students examinations, supervision of project work/thesis, lecturers are also expected to do research and publish for their promotion. Some of the lecturers take up part time appointments in other institutions and departments to earn extra income to meet their growing needs. Yet, there seems to be limited resources within the public educational institutions to enhance research and publication which could retard the progress of academic staff members particularly in terms of promotion. The Presumed result is job or occupational stress which could hamper productivity and the efficacy of service delivery aside other effects such as staff health. Could this be true of public tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State? Does occupational stress relate with the productivity of lecturers in public tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State?

Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study:

- Ho₁: There is no significant difference in occupational stress among academic staff in public tertiary institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria between cadres – professorial and non-professorial (and their equivalents).
- Ho₂: There is no significant difference in occupational stress and productivity of academic staff of public tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria among Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of education.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted in this study. This study conducted a survey of occupational stress and productivity among academic staff of public tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State and described the two variables of interest and also described the relationship between these variables. The population of the study consisted of all the public tertiary educational institutions in Lagos state, the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education which included University of Lagos, Lagos State University, Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, Lagos State Polytechnic, Yaba College of Technology, Federal College of Education (Technical) and Michael Otedola College of Primary Education. The population therefore consisted of all the academic staff in these institutions.

The sample was drawn from all the seven public higher institutions in the state. The population of higher educational institutions in Lagos State constituted the study sample. From each of the institutions were selected 100 academic staff who had served in the institutions for a minimum of ten years and on stratified random basis using the criteria of faculties/schools (maximum of five each), staff cadre (Professorial and non-professorial and their equivalents) and gender. The selection was done on an almost equal basis for the different categories or strata. The total sample size was however seven hundred academic staff.

Table 1: Sampled Schools

| S/N | INSTITUTIONS | NUMBER OF TEACHING STAFF SAMPLED |
|-----|---|----------------------------------|
| | Lagos State University | 100 |
| | University of Lagos | 100 |
| | Lagos State Polytechnics | 100 |
| | Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education | 100 |
| | Michael Otedola College of Education | 100 |
| | Federal Technical, Yaba | 100 |
| | Yaba College of Technology | 100 |
| | Total | 700 |

The major research instrument that was used for this study is a questionnaire. The questionnaire was responded to by the sample academic staff of the tertiary educational institutions involved in the study. The questionnaire is tagged Occupational Stress Questionnaire (OSQ). The instrument was used to elicit information from respondents regarding occupational stress and among academic staff in public tertiary institutions in Lagos State. The Section A of the questionnaire requests for information on personal matters of the respondents, while Section B will contain structured items that are patterned along the Likert-type four-point scale with the options Very True (VT), True (T), Untrue (U) and Very Untrue (VU). Record observation of students' results from 2007/2008 to 2016/2017 was used for the study to measure productivity. A Records Observation format was therefore designed to collect information on the number and percentages of classes of graduation of the students for the ten-year period, 2007/2008 to 2016/2017.

Face and content validity test was undertaken on the questionnaire by making use of the experts who reviewed the items on the questionnaire in terms of clarity and contents. On students' results, the management has validated these through moderation of results annually. The reliability of the questionnaire was determined by using the test-retest (reliability) method. The questionnaire was administered at two

different times of a two-week interval. The data collected from the two administrations were correlated using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Analysis. Records of examination results already existed in the tertiary institutions and cannot be manipulated indicating consistency of the data on productivity measurement.

The instruments were administered by the researcher, with the aid of three research assistants. The researcher and the assistants visited the sample higher institutions to seek the consent of the higher institutions' management. A formal Letter of introduction was obtained from the researcher's Department to the sampled institutions. The researcher, with his assistants, visited all the selected higher institutions to administer copies of the questionnaire to all 700 respondents. They collected the questionnaire on the same day to ensure high rate of returns of the instrument. Out of 700 copies of the questionnaire administered, 643 copies were returned and found complete and usable, resulting in an effective rate of 92.9%. The researcher with three other research assistants visited the sampled tertiary institutions to observe students' results of 2007/2008 to 2016/2017 approved by the institution Senate or Academic Board of Studies from each of the tertiary institutions Examinations and Records Department. To get students' results during the administration of the instrument also required obtaining letters of introduction from the Head of Department of Educational Management. In terms of scoring the OSQ, all positively worded items for the Likert-type of instrument were scored in this order: Very True (VT) – 4; True (T) – 3; Untrue (U) – 2 and Very Untrue (VU) – 1.

The reverse was the case for the negatively worded items.

Students' academic performance was weighted in this order:

CGPA 4.50 – 5.00 = 5

CGPA 3.50 – 4.49 = 4

CGPA 2.40 – 3.49 = 3

CGPA 1.50 – 2.39 = 2

CGPA 1.00 – 1.49 = 1

Data for the research were analyzed using inferential statistics of Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient for hypothesis 1, Regression Analysis for hypothesis 2. The hypotheses formulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 24.0 version.

Results

Ho1: There is no significant difference in occupational stress among academic staff in public tertiary institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria between cadres – professorial and non-professorial (and their equivalents).

Table 2a: Descriptive Statistics of difference in occupational stress among academic staff in public tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria between cadres – professorial and non-professorial (and their equivalents)

| | Professorial and non-professorial | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|---------|----------------|-----------------|
| Occupational stress | Professorial | 152 | 31.2500 | 4.53281 | .36766 |
| | Non-professorial | 491 | 31.1996 | 4.50361 | .20325 |
| | Total | 643 | | | |

Table 2b: Independent t-statistics of significant difference in occupational stress among academic staff in public tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria between cadres – professorial and non-professorial (and their equivalent)

| | | Independent Samples Test | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|---|-------|-------|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|---------|
| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | |
| | | F | Sig. | t | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Occupational stress | Equal variances assumed | 0.020 | 0.888 | 0.120 | 641 | 0.904 | 0.05041 | 0.41867 | -0.77172 | 0.87253 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 0.120 | 250.192 | 0.905 | 0.05041 | 0.42010 | -0.77697 | 0.87779 |

The results in Table 2b show that there is no significant difference in occupational stress among academic staff in public tertiary institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria between cadres – professorial and non-professorial (and their equivalents) [$t_{(df = 641)} = 0.120$; $p = 0.904 > 0.05$]. The mean difference is not significant at 0.05 level. The mean values indicate that, significantly, the occupational stress is not different among academic staff in public tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria between cadres – professorial and non-professorial (and their equivalents). Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in occupational stress among academic staff in public tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria between cadres – professorial and non-professorial (and their equivalents), is hereby not rejected. The implication is that occupational stress is not significantly different between professorial and non-professorial academic staff cadre in public tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in occupational stress and productivity of academic staff of public tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria among Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of education

Table 3a: Multivariate tests of significant difference in occupational stress and productivity of academic staff in public tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria among Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges

| | | Multivariate Tests ^a | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|----------|------|
| Effect | | Value | F | Hypothesis df | Error df | Sig. |
| Intercept | Pillai's Trace | .943 | 466.569 ^b | 2.000 | 56.000 | .000 |
| | Wilks' Lambda | .057 | 466.569 ^b | 2.000 | 56.000 | .000 |
| | Hotelling's Trace | 16.663 | 466.569 ^b | 2.000 | 56.000 | .000 |
| | Roy's Largest Root | 16.663 | 466.569 ^b | 2.000 | 56.000 | .000 |
| a_1(Institution type) | Pillai's Trace | .307 | 5.175 | 4.000 | 114.000 | .001 |
| | Wilks' Lambda | .694 | 5.620 ^b | 4.000 | 112.000 | .000 |
| | Hotelling's Trace | .440 | 6.054 | 4.000 | 110.000 | .000 |
| | Roy's Largest Root | .437 | 12.453 ^c | 2.000 | 57.000 | .000 |

a. Design: Intercept + a_1(Institution type)
b. Exact statistic
c. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

Table 3b: Multivariate tests of significant difference in occupational stress and productivity of academic staff in public tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria among Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges

| Tests of Between-Subjects Effects | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|----|-------------|---------|------|
| Source | Dependent Variable | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Corrected Model | Academic staff productivity | 916551.310 ^a | 2 | 458275.655 | 7.707 | .001 |
| | Occupational stress | 114.788 ^b | 2 | 57.394 | 3.535 | .036 |
| Intercept | Academic staff productivity | 1594855.082 | 1 | 1594855.082 | 26.822 | .000 |
| | Occupational stress | 14231.297 | 1 | 14231.297 | 876.581 | .000 |
| a_1(Institution type) | Academic staff productivity | 916551.310 | 2 | 458275.655 | 7.707 | .001 |
| | Occupational stress | 114.788 | 2 | 57.394 | 3.535 | .036 |
| Error | Academic staff productivity | 3389268.919 | 57 | 59460.858 | | |
| | Occupational stress | 925.395 | 57 | 16.235 | | |
| Total | Academic staff productivity | 14135750.756 | 60 | | | |
| | Occupational stress | 60135.000 | 60 | | | |
| Corrected Total | Academic staff productivity | 4305820.229 | 59 | | | |
| | Occupational stress | 1040.183 | 59 | | | |

a. R Squared = .213 (Adjusted R Squared = .185)
b. R Squared = .110 (Adjusted R Squared = .079)

The result of multivariate analysis of variance of the difference in occupational stress and productivity of academic staff of public tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria among Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of education is presented in Tables 3a and 3b. Table 3a looks into whether Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of education have differences in any of occupational stress and productivity of academic staff. Four different types of multivariate test results are shown and the most widely used is Wilks' Lambda. Thus, the result for the MANOVA is a Lambda of 0.694, with 4 and 112 degrees of freedom. That value is significant. Table 3b gives the results of the univariate tests (ANOVAs) for each of occupational stress and productivity of academic staff in public tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria among Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of education. A one-way MANOVA is calculated examining the difference in occupational stress and productivity of academic staff in public tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria among Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of education. Significant difference is found (Lambda (4, 112) = 0.694, $p < 0.05$). Occupational stress and productivity of academic staff were significantly influenced by institution type.

Discussion of Finding

Hypothesis one shows that there is no significant difference in occupational stress among academic staff in public tertiary institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria between cadres – professorial and non-professorial. Academic rank (Professorial and non-Professorial) has been found to be a key factor that mediates the experience of stress in tertiary educational institutions academics (Safaria *et al.*, 2012). Study by Dua (1994) found that individuals employed at ranks are likely to be less susceptible to the experience of stress than those employed at lower job ranks. Several reasons could account for less stress among individuals with higher job ranks than those with lower job ranks. The fact that individuals with higher job ranks have better pay packages, allowances and the possibility of delegating tedious tasks to subordinates, may justify why they might experience less stress as compared with employees with lower job ranks. Safaria *et al.*, (2012) opine that employees who feel poorly remunerated (which may be due to their job rank in the organization) were likely to be more prone to work stress. Ofoegbu & Nwadiani (2006) further opine that lecturers with more

teaching experience might have adapted to the system over time which might explain why they tend to experience less stress as compared to the younger ones who are relatively new in the system. Based on the findings of Osipow *et al.* (1985), cited in Engle (2012) results in this study showed that older academics (60 to 69 years) were less troubled by physical and psychological ill health problems. This may be because as people get older they become more experienced and more worldly-wise and consequently adopt more rational cognitive coping mechanisms than younger academics (Dua, 1994; Osipow *et al.* 1985 cited in Engle, 2012).

Hypothesis two shows that there is significant difference in occupational stress and productivity of academic staff of public tertiary institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria among Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of education. In a research conducted in Kwara State College of Education, Taiwo and Adegbite (2008) submitted that sex differences might not be related to the job stress and performance of College of Education lecturers. This might not be far from the fact that lecturers, on Colleges of Education were highly committed in areas such as research and publication, conferences and seminars attendance, apart from lecturing and supervision. But in spite of all these activities which may create insufficient time to keep abreast with current development in administrative workload and non-financial support to execute them, lecturers still struggled to perform their job effectively. The results from the analysis of hypothesis two indicated the level of job-related stress and their impact on academic staff's job productivity based on nomenclature of the institutions, via: universities, colleges of education and polytechnics. It was revealed that stress significantly impacted more on academic staff's job productivity in the universities followed by the colleges of education and polytechnics.

Conclusion

The outcomes of this research indicate that occupational stress has a considerable influence on the lecturers' productivity of tertiary educational institutions in Lagos State. It can be concluded that stressful activities contribute to academic staff productivity, enabling them to develop stress management skills. Lecturers' work overload also influences their job productivity in Lagos State tertiary educational institutions. Lecturers in Lagos State tertiary educational institutions were found to be under stress tasks. Generally, all lecturers in the state tertiary educational institutions were stressful. Stress is a phenomenon brought about by different factors in the individual. Thus, stress is individualistic and a reaction to it varies based on gender, cadre and type of institution, University, Polytechnic or College of Education.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the conclusions of this study:

1. Management of tertiary educational institutions should increase staff numbers and improve facilities and resources as this is the most effective way to address the high workload problem. While as well upgrading teaching facilities, providing greater funding for research, increasing professional development opportunities for lecturers.
2. Seminars, workshops and conferences on occupational health services, should be organized periodically for lecturers so as to improve their knowledge on occupational stress and related issues for them to be able to cope with stress.

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