EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF WORK STRESS ON ORGANIZATIONS' PRODUCTIVITY: A SURVEY OF SELECTED COMMERCIAL BANKS IN WARRI, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed at examining effective management of work stress on organizations productivity. Five commercial banks in Warri metropolis, Delta State were chosen for this study and questionnaire was administered on 75 respondents. The major research instruments were questionnaire and personal interview, while the data collected were tabulated and analyzed using simple percentage and frequency counts. The results indicated among others that there is significant relationship between effective management of work stress, organisation performance and employees job satisfaction. To this end, the study recommended enrichment and enlargement of jobs by management, improved communication, adequate staff welfare, participatory decision-making, good working climate, proper selection and placement among others for effective management of stress in the work place.

Keywords: Effective Management, Work Stress, Organizations.

INTRODUCTION

One of the major adverse influences of job satisfaction, work performance and productivity, absenteeism and labour turnover is the incidence of stress at the work place. Stress is a complex and dynamic concept. It is a source of tension and frustration and can arise through a number of interrelated influences on behaviour, including the individual, group, organizational and environmental factors. According to Akpovi (2000), any situation that is seen as burdensome, threatening, ambiguous or boring is likely to induce stress. This is the type of situation that would normally strike the individual as deserving immediate attention or concern and is viewed as unfortunate or annoying. There tends to be the feeling that the situation should not exist, but because of it, the person feels disappointed or annoyed and eventually is prone to anxiety, depression, anger, hostility, inadequacy and low frustration tolerance.

The causes of stress are complex. Stress is a very personal experience as is the response of each individual to it and belief about how best to cope with its causes and effects. The results of unrelieved stress on the individual and on business are worrisome. The result may be increased industrial accident rates, sickness, absence, inefficiency, damaged relationships with clients and colleagues, increase in labour turnover rate, early retirement on medical grounds and even premature death. The cost of stress is high. It is devastating to the individual and damaging on

the business at times when their is need to control business costs and ensure an effective and healthy work force. It is everyones interest to tackle the taboo on talking about emotional problems because it is this which inhibits individuals from seeking help.

Akpovi (2000) states that stress is a situation in which one becomes exhausted and is unable to meet the expected standard despite some efforts and pressures. Aswathappa (2004) defines stress as an individual reaction to a disturbing factor in the environment. On a formal definition, stress is defined as an adaptive response to an external situation that results in physical, psychological and/or behavioural deviations for organizational participants. Ahuja (2003) sees stress as the body's physical, mental and chemical reactions to circumstances that frighten, excite, confuse, endanger or irritate you. If controlled, the stress is a friend that strengthens us for the next encounter.

Sharma (2003) opines that stress is any interference that disturbs a person's health, mental and physical well being. It occurs when the body is required to perform beyond its normal range of capabilities. Subba-Rao (2003) observes that stress is associated with constraints and demands. The former prevents an individual from doing what he or she desires. The later refers to the loss of capability desires. Without stress, life could never be. Tension and relaxation form the natural rhythms of living.

According to Akpovi (2000), there are three types of stress. These are:

The Ordinary Tensions of Daily Life: These are tensions that arise between incompatible needs or goals of the person, and those that arise when a need is unmet or an effort is frustrated, which calls for further efforts, a change of tactics or readjustment of goal.

Development Crisis: This type of stress arises when the patient must take a decisive step forward, one that involves altering his habits and his views of himself in relation to others. Erickson (1995) has written on these developmental crises and the challenges they bring. He pointed out that a client who fails to take the necessary step whole heartedly will retain trace of the earlier orientation, which will tinge his later personality with immaturity, leaving him vulnerable to stress in perfectly outgrown stage.

Life Crisis: The third type of stress arises from events that give unique shape to individual life - illness, separation, changes in structure of the family (birth of a baby), departure of a parent or older sibling or in its pattern of living (on moving to a new home, or when mother starts work, for instance). These events not only make demand on the client whatever the stage of development for adaptation to unfamiliar situation and altered routines, they also tend to affect members of the family so that the whole pattern of personal interaction to which he is accustomed is changed.

Sharma (2003) listed the three major sources of stress to include:

The Home or Family: It is quite evident that the individual experience, a lot of pressures within the family or home. The head of the family, the father or the bread

winner is constantly under pressure to provide for the family and when his income is insufficient to provide for the family, he will no doubt be under pressure and this will affect his physical and mental balance. Likewise, the mother is responsible for bearing and rearing children. For this to be achieved effectively depends largely on her physical health and her financial capabilities. When these are inadequate the end results is stress. Thus, the inability of both husband and wife to cope with the family's responsibilities can cause stress. Furthermore, if there is no cordial relationship between husband and wife, or there is no favourable relationship between husband and wife or there is no favourable atmosphere within the family, it can bring about stress on both husband and wife or even the entire family (Robins, 1991).

The Work Place: Major sources of stress are traceable to the place of work. Source of stress at the work place include factors intrinsic to the job, the role of the individual within the organization, interpersonal relationship, organizational structure and climate. Every job at one time or another has factors that can be sources of stress to the individual. Specifically, a person is likely to experience stress if he has too much or too little work. If the work involves meeting too many deadlines or making too many decisions, stress is likely to occur. In addition, harsh physical conditions in the work place, keeping long hours, frequent career charges, as well as monetary expenses as a result of limitations are likely to cause stress. Security is another task demand that can cause stress in an organization. Someone in relatively secure job is not likely to worry unduly about losing that position. On the other hand, if job security is threatened, stress can increase drastically (Gareth et al, 2003).

The Community: This is the last of three major sources of stress. In a nutshell, it is the environment where one finds oneness. Stressful conditions in the environment include: noise hazard, exposure to bad weather, poor residence, neighbours, insecurity and others. All these affect a person's psychological status which invariably leads to stress. According to Akpovi (2002), signs and symptoms of stress vary according to the intensity and duration of the factors causing it. Pressures within the capabilities of the individual are beneficial while those beyond his potentials are stressful and tend to make him sick. Pressures within the capabilities of the individual may be noticed through symptoms such as high pulse rate, greatness, looseness of bowels, fatigue and frequent irresponsibility. If however, the pressure continues for a long time, the potential of the body will be exceeded and then stress will occur. Others include sleeplessness, depressed mood, migraine, excessive smoking/drinking, forgetfulness, absenteeism, anxiety, frustration, headache, to mention a few.

Aswathappa (2004) observes that stress can have serious consequences for both health and work force performance. In terms of health, the current belief among many medical practitioners is that 50 to 70 percent of all physical illness are related to stress (Ahuja, 2003). The link between stress and heart disease is well known according to Subba-Rao (2003). High levels of stress are also associated with diabetes, ulcers, high blood pressure, etc (Sharma, 2003). Stress can cause depression, irritation,

anxiety, fatigue, lowered self esteem and reduced job satisfaction. It is said that moderate levels of stress stimulate the body and increase its ability to react, individuals then perform better (Ahuja, 2003), but too much stress places unattainable demands or constraints on a person, which result in lower performance. The aim of this study is therefore to examine the impact of effective management of work stress on organizations' productivity. Accordingly, the study aims at addressing the following research questions.

i.   Does effective management of stress in the work place have significant relationship with employees' performance in an organization?

ii.   Does effective management of stress in the work place have significant relationship with employee job satisfaction in an organization?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopted a survey design using five selected commercial banks in Warri, Delta State namely, Diamond Bank, Spring Bank, Wema Bank, Zenith Bank and Unity Bank with a view to identifying possible causes and impact of work stress on these organizations. The study population is the commercial banks in Delta State. Research questionnaire was designed and administered to 75 respondents randomly selected from the five commercial banks in Warri, Delta State, Nigeria. Supplemently, oral interview was used for qualitative data generation for the study. The methods of data analysis include tables, simple percentage and frequency counts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Commercial banks studied with number of respondents

Banks	No. of Respondents
Diamond Bank	10
Spring Bank	20
Wema Bank	17
Zenith Bank	14
Unity Bank Plc	15
Total	75

Source: Research Data, 2011

H_o1:   Effective management of stress in the work place has no significant relationship with employees' performance in the organizations under study.

Table 2: Effective Management of stress in the work place impact employees' performance significantly in the organizations

Responses	Frequency of Occurrence	Percentage
Yes	72	96
No	3	4
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2011

A look on table 2 shows that ninety-six percent of the respondents are of the view that effective management of stress in the work place has significant relationship with employees performance in the organizations, while insignificant percentage of the respondents are of the view that effective management of stress in the work place has no significant relationship with employees performance. Based on the opinion of majority of the respondents, we accept the view that effective management of stress in the work place has significant relationship with employees' performance in the organizations.

H_o2: Effective management of stress in the work place has no significant relationship with employees' job satisfaction and organizations productivity.

Table 3: Management of stress in the work place significantly affect employees' job satisfaction and increases organizations productivity.

Responses	Frequency of Occurrence	Percentage
Yes	73	97.33
No	2	2.67
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2011

Table 3 shows that approximately ninety-seven percent of the respondents agreed that effective management of stress in the work place has significant relationship with employees' job satisfaction and increase organisations productivity. Based on these, it was observed that effective management of stress in the work place has significant relationship with employees' job satisfaction and increase organisations productivity. But excessively high stress can overload and breakdown a person's physical and mental systems. Performance can suffer as people experience illness brought on by very intense stress and/or react to high stress through absenteeism, turnover, errors, and dissatisfaction and reduced performance. With regard to satisfaction, it is obvious to state that people who experience stress find jobs dissatisfying. Even though low moderate stress has positive impact on performance, stress always has negative impact on satisfaction.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this study was to examine the impact of effective management of work stress on organizations productivity. In the light of the findings, effective management of stress in the work place has significant relationship with employees' performance in the organization. Work stress if effectively managed can increase effort, stimulate creativity and encourage diligence in ones work thereby increasing organisations' productivity. The following recommendations are proffered for effective management of work stress in organizations.

Job Redesign: Job redesign involves enriching jobs either by improving job content factors such as responsibility, recognition and opportunities for achievement, advancement, growth, etc or by improving core job characteristics such as skill variety,

task identity, autonomy and feedback. Enriched tasks will eliminate the stress found in more routine and structured jobs.

Improved Communication: Increased communication with employees reduces uncertainty of lessening role ambiguity and role conflict.

Participatory Decision Making: Role stress is detrimental to a large extent because employees feel uncertain about goals, expectations, how they will be evaluated and the like. By giving these employees a voice in those decisions that directly affect their job performance, management can increase employee control and reduce the role stress. Managers should therefore consider increasing employee participation indecision making.

Selection and Placement: Certain jobs are more stressful than others. Individuals too differ in their response to stress situation. Individuals with little experience or an external locus of control, tend to be more stress-prone. Selection and placement decisions should take these facts into consideration. Obviously, while management should not restrict hiring to only experienced individuals with an internal locus, such individuals may adapt better to high stress jobs and perform those jobs more effectively.

Personal Wellness: Personal wellness is a term used to describe the pursuant of one's physical and mental potential through a personal health promotion programme. A supervisor can impact personal wellness of his subordinates through positive example, encouragement, and by practicing the basic concepts and techniques of human resources management. When the manager is successful in creating a healthy work climate and environment, everyone should benefit from the increased capacity of people to handle successfully the change and stress that inevitably accompany their lives at work.

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