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Keywords: occupational stress, federal university lecturers, job effectiveness, akwa ibom state, cross river state.

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Occupational Stress and the Job Effectiveness of Federal University Lecturers in Akwa Ibom and Cross River States, Nigeria

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I. Introduction

a) Background to the Study

Globally the 21st century work place is a dynamic, complex, fast paced highly challenging environment. Given the ever increasing global nature of the service sector, the competitiveness of the knowledge era, key players such as university academicians are constantly working under pressure. Whilst stress pressure can be a performance enhancer when moderate, when too much it can lead to negative consequences.

The functions of lecturers worldwide are: to generate ideas, human resource capacity building, and service rendering. Today's Nigerian universities play five roles in the economy. They are employers of workers, human capacity builders, research centers, community service providers and sources of business when privately owned. Every lecturer in a university is employed with three major terms of employment: to teach, to research, and to carryout community service. Therefore the three indices for measuring job effectiveness both for the institution and its lecturers are: ability to teach, ability to publish and the ability to transform society. For a worker to maximally contribute productively, whatever affects it adversely must be removed. Occupational stress has been identified as counterproductive for workers' productivity and ought therefore to be kept at the barest minimum if performance is to be maximised. Therefore management of universities must find ways of managing stress at the workplace.

Occupational stress according to Narayanan, Menon and Spector (1999) refers to pressure, tension or worries arising from problematic situations in an individual's life traceable to a job or work situation. This stress may be inbuilt in the job, that is, it may be set off by the responsibility that goes with the work, or it may be due to organisational culture or inter-personal conflicts. Ofuegbu and Nwadianni (2006) posit that Nigerian lecturers experience high level of occupational stress.

Despite the huge governmental interventions in tertiary institutions in Nigeria annually, educational problems still remain today: yearly increasing student enrolments, inadequate infrastructures, declining lecturer-student ratios, insufficiency of funds, inappropriate curricula, industrial conflicts and administrative inertia or inefficiencies.

In addition, to be globally relevant in the ranking of universities, the career progress requirements for lecturers are reviewed upwards from time to time; the incessant industrial face-offs has resulted in distortions of the normal school year of October to July and brought pressure to streamline individual university's current academic calendar in line with October to July with the attendant inability of lecturers to go on annual vacation. All these factors can generate occupational stress for lecturers which can adversely affect their job effectiveness. This study derives its relevance against this backdrop.

b) Statement of the Problem

Lecturers could experience occupational stress at different levels due to factors such as: excess work load, inadequate facilities, concerns on inter-personal relations, career progress requirements and organisational climate. This occupational stress could affect their job effectiveness in terms of teaching, publication and community service.

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Taking the agitation for payment for excess workload and given the minimum benchmark staffing policies of NUC, it is obvious that the workload of lecturers is far beyond the 2005 approved minimum academic standard for staff-student ratios. Again it is common knowledge that office space, lecture rooms and hostel accommodations are seriously inadequate in universities. Research is crucial to the career development of every lecturer. This goal NUC expects institutions to attain through their staff development programmes. Currently the situation is that most lecturers finance their staff development programmes by themselves either wholly or partly, while the stakes for promotion is hiked higher and higher regularly by management.

The constant face-off between Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the government as the major owner of these universities Nigeria or the management of individual universities has bred in organizational uncertainties. These issues all predispose lecturers to high levels of occupational stress which may affect job effectiveness. Studies such as Ekennia (2000) in Agulanna (2007) and Anyaduba (2004), focused on level, causes and management of stress. This study is an effort to fill the lacuna on the possible relationship between occupational stress and job effectiveness of federal university lecturers in Cross River and Akwa Ibom States.

c) Objective of the Study

The objective of this study was to assess how the primary factors that instigate occupational stress affect job effectiveness of university lecturers in Cross River and Akwa Ibom states.

d) Hypotheses

The following null hypothesis was tested in this study.

Ho_1: Occupational stress is not significantly related to job effectiveness of university lecturers.

II. Literature Review

a) The concept of stress

Richard (2010) posited that job stress is a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that job demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize. Stress is a multi-faceted concept (Usoro, 2014).

Kyriacou (1987) posit that teachers experience occupational stress when teachers pass through not pleasant emotions, like frustration, tension, anxiety, depression and anger emanating from teaching activities. This study views occupational stress as a phenomenon that is subjective, multi-faceted and occurs when workers' physical, emotional and attitudinal attributes are a mismatch to the job demands, constraints and/or opportunities. However Hans (2009) asserted that stress is not basically bad as it depends on how it is perceived. The stress of exciting, creative work is useful, while that of failure or poor performance is harmful. According to Nelson and Quick (2003) two major types of stress have been established; namely eustress (good stress) and distress (bad stress).

b) Elements of job effectiveness of lecturers

Sequel to the employment terms of lecturers, a lecturer's effectiveness is assessed based on: the ability to effectively impart knowledge, proficiency in research and community service. Obanya and Onocha (1984) identified some criteria for determining who is an effective teacher to include socio-economic status, personality traits, professional attitudes, experiences, teaching method and students' achievement among others. Some of these criteria when not there are identified as stressors that may make lecturers ineffective.

Research, is the major criteria used in assessing lecturers for the purpose of career growth. Research was defined by Creswell (2008), as a process of steps used to collect and analyze information to increase understanding of a topic or issue. Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (2011) defined research as "a studious inquiry or examination; especially investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, revision of accepted theories or laws in the light of new facts, or practical application of such new or revised theories or laws" (p. 451). Research could be basic, applied or developmental.

Social responsibility in the form of community service is the trio of the three main academic functions of every university lecturer. Community service could be service to various university associations, a community, state or the nation at large through forums such as public lectures, seminars, debates and national assignments like national elections supervision and monitoring of national examinations.

c) Occupational stress and job effectiveness

Husain (2010) submits that all stress-health relationship conspicuously affect the organisation and industry. This is because physical and mental sickness makes the worker not able to work. Physical and mental sickness together reduces job satisfaction, job performance and productivity levels. Tiji (2000) and Jega (2002) stated that stress and job performance are related. They further stated that where and when the stress is allowed to continue for a long time, the performance of workers is strongly affected. They stated also that performance usually drops off sharply when stress rises to high levels. Weihrich and Koontz (2005) posit that clearly not only does the individual worker suffer from occupational stress, but the organisation may also be adversely affected by the turnover or impaired decision making of its workers.

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Okwuagwu (2010) contributed that high stress level can impair performance especially when there is no motivation, no possible reward for performing the job well, or no ambition on the part of the individual, such that minimum effort will be expended by the worker. He stated further that, however, with increases in motivation, the level of stress rises along with productivity and efficiency, with the right amount of stress leading to creativity, interest, and optimal performance. Okwuagwu (2010) added that if the person becomes too achievement oriented or the job is too unrealistic and unreasonable, performance will begin to decline as too much stress will snap a person's health and mental ability. It is the view of the researcher however that the peak differs from person to person and that frequently others notice the early warning symptoms of stress before the victim. Robin and Sanghi (2005) posit that even moderate levels of stress when continued over a long term period can have a negative influence on performance, in that persistent onslaught of stress wears down a person and depletes his energy level.

Kousar, Dogar, Ghazal, and Khattak (2005) carried out a study for the assessment of stress intensity and its effects on the performance of workers in five departments of a multi-national firm. The occupational stress scale had 36 items while the job performance rating scale was one item in which the supervisor rated the worker's performance. They found out that stress levels nearly equal in the five departments. They suggested that this could be due to similarity in management of the five departments, as there was cordial working environment and social support for colleagues. And that the organisation was highly cultured. However their result showed no significant effect of stress on workers' performance.

Pelsma and Richard (1988), indicated in their study that there is a strong correlation between job satisfaction and teacher stress. Furthermore, they observed that stress level and extent of job satisfaction experienced by teachers influences teachers' job performance. Singh and Billingsley (1996) stated that extensive documentation, isolation from colleagues, dissatisfaction with parent participation, and absence of supportive administration were often listed as main causes of stress, whereas an environment that is positive usually produced satisfied teachers.

According to Kirk and Brown (2003), specific factors of the teaching profession can trigger stress. For instance primary school teachers were observed not to experience stress as often as high school teachers. Secondly the more the years of teaching experience the less the probability of stress. Kirk and Brown (2003), posit further that policy changes, language difficulties, computer illiteracy, extent accepted by students, rigid supervision, ability to manage time and equipment, workload and students performance are the major contributors to teaching stress.

III. Research Methodology

The Cross sectional survey method was adopted in this study. The stratified random sample size of 584 respondents was derived using Taro Yameni formula. A four point likert scale questionnaire was used in soliciting for information namely the Job Stress Scale (JSS) and the Job Effectiveness Questionnaire (JEQ), made up of three sections. Section A of the questionnaire requested for demographic information, Section B focused on stressors and the options were "very stressfull", "stressful", "mildly stressful" and "not stressful". Section C was on job effectiveness in terms of ability to teach, research proficiency and service to community. The options in this section were "always", "often", "sometimes" and "never". The null hypothesis for this study was stated thus:

$H_{0:}$ Occupational stress is not significantly related to job effectiveness of university lecturers.

The dependent variable is Job effectiveness while the independent variable is Occupational stress from a composite bundle of stress from: workload, facilities, interpersonal relationships, career progress requirements and organisational climate. To test the hypothesis the study utilised multiple regression.

Dewberry(2004) opinied that multiple regression is suitable for examining the relationship between many predictor variables and a continuous dependent variable measured on a Likert scale.

The formula is $Y = A + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \beta_5X_5$.

Where

Y=Job effectiveness

A= Constant

$\beta_1 - \beta_5$ = regression coefficients

X_1=workload

X_2=facilities

X_3=interpersonal relationships

X_4= career progress requirements

X_5=organisational climate

The relationship between occupational stress and job effectiveness of lecturers is captured in the model presented in Fig. 3.1.

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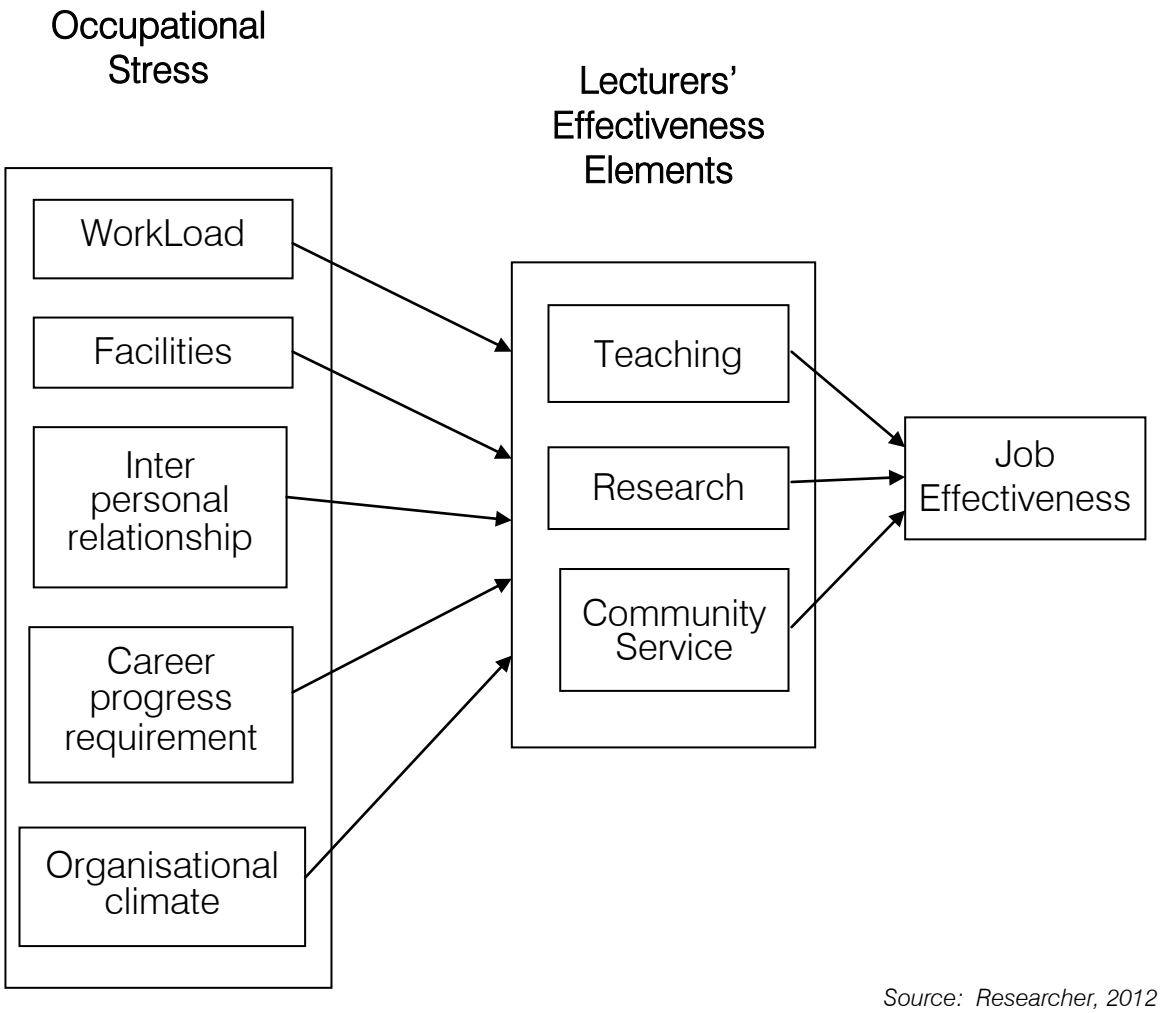

Source: Researcher, 2012

Figure 3.6: Model of lecturers' occupational stress and job effectiveness

IV. Data Analysis

The result presented in Table 4.1 shows that stress related factors like workload, facilities, interpersonal relationships, career progress requirements and organisation climate are significant joint predictors of job effectiveness ($F=26.775$; $p<.05$).

Table 4.1: Regression analysis of the joint effect of stress arising from workload, facilities, interpersonal relationship, career progress requirements and organisation climate on job effectiveness

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	20.439	.718		28.479	.000
	Workload	0.87	.050	.010	17.40*	.000
	Facilities	1.629	.141	.342	11.585*	.000
	Interpersonal	.012	.126	.003	.093	.926
	Career Progress.	1.73	.41	.006	4.22	.003
	Organisational	.337	.128	.078	2.623*	.009

**significant at .05, $R^2 = 0.80$, Adjusted $R^2 = 78$, $F = 26.775$*

Source: Researcher's computation

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The null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. The regression model also shows how individual variables contributed relatively to the prediction of job effectiveness. Since the regression weight indicates the relative contribution of each variable, the results in Table 4.19 shows that workload related stress (β_1=0.10;t=17.40); facilities (β_2=.342; t=11.585); career progress requirements (β_4=0.006; t=4.22); and organisational climate (β_5=0.78; t=2.623) were the most significant predictors followed by other non-significant factor interpersonal relationships (β_3=.003;t=.093). The coefficient of determination is R^2 = .80.This means that any variation in job effectiveness is accounted for by 80% variation in a contribution of the predictor variables (s).

$$Y = 20.439 + .87X_1 + 1.629X_2 + .012X_3 + 1.73X_4 + .337X_5$$

Where:

Y = Job effectiveness
X_1 = Workload stress
X_2 = Stress from facilities
X_3 = Stress from interpersonal relationships
X_4 = Stress from career progress requirements
X_5 = Stress from organisational climate

The results of the analysis shows that stress related factors like workload, facilities, career progress requirement and organisational climate are significant joint predictors of job effectiveness of lecturers. Since the regression weight is an indication of individual variables contribution relatively, the regression results showed that workload related stress and stress from facilities, were the most significant predictors followed by career progress requirement and organisational climate. Other non-significant factors were interpersonal relationship and funding in descending order of significance.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

From the findings of the study it was concluded that holistically, occupational stress has a significant relationship with the job effectiveness of university lecturers.

Given the result of this study these recommendations were made:

1. In order to reduce workload of individual lecturers the management of these instituitions should recruit lecturers in alignment with the National Universities Commission student- lecturer ratio.
2. Seminars and workshops that will aid in equipping lecturers to meet the demands of teaching and research should be regularly held at departmental and faculty levels.
3. Government as owner of these instituitions should adhere to collective agreements so as to avert industrial face-offs which distorts the academic calendar and puts pressure on universities to cram activities within a short space of time.
4. Infrastructural facilities such as electricity, offices, classrooms should be adequately provided.
5. Promotion requirements changes should not be abrupt and additional support provided before the implementation of such changes.
6. The annual vacation and medical checkups of lecturers should be made mandatory.

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