

**WORKPLACE STRESS AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE; A CASE STUDY OF GIG LOGISTICS EXPRESS IN PORT HARCOURT.**

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**ABSTRACT**

This work explores the link between workplace stress and employee performance GIG Logistics Express, Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Stressors differ in levels. Moderate amount of stress could serve as a source of motivation, however, chronic or excessive amount of stress impedes productivity, and impacts negatively on employee health and performance. For any organization to achieve its essence, it must have acquired the right calibre of talents with the right skill-set, and managed them properly. A mixed-method approach of primary data sources were adopted through questionnaires and interviews to examine the implications of stressors on employee performance. The findings concerning the effect of stress on employees revealed that majority of the employees are consistently on medications for different sorts of illnesses. Critical observations also revealed that many reported cases of absenteeism, inconsistency, inability to deliver on set goals were stress related. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended amongst others, that conducive working environment, job redesign, work-life balance, employee-friendly leadership, equity in remuneration, promotion should be provided for the employees in order to reduce work-stress and enhance performance. In conclusion, it is clear endemic organizational challenge of decrease in performance because of work related stress and lack of enforcement of stress management standards.

***Key words: Workplace stress, Stressors, Employee Performance.***

**INTRODUCTION**

Going by the highly competitive nature of every modern business environment or workplace, high employee performance has remained the core of the expectations of management for competitive advantage, and major determinant of productivity. The increasing demands in workplaces due to expansion has injected significant amount of diverse stressors that affect employee well-being, efficiency and productivity.

The World Health Organization (2020), classified workplace stress as a significant concern, emphasizing that rigorous measures to ensure safety and well-being could reduce employees' psychological distress and maintain work performance.

Akintunde-adeyi, et,al (2023) stated that stress has a significant impact on employee performance. The outcome also showed a substantial correlation between employees' performance and personal stress management strategies. This suggests that personal stress management strategies should be encouraged because they are linked to workers' productivity.

"Although stress includes both good and bad aspects it's not necessarily bad. Stress ends up in decreasing employee overall performance, high error rate and poor quality of labor, high staff turnover, and absenteeism because of health problems like anxiety, work life imbalance, depression, and other styles of ailments like frequent headache; obesity and cardiac arrests. Work stress is the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that don't seem to be matched to their knowledge, talents and which challenge their ability to cope". Bharvi Shah (2023).

Michac (1997) specified causes of stress as follows: poor time management, unclear job descriptions, feelings of inadequacy and insecurity, inability to get things done, lack of proper communication, bad personal relationships, quality and complexity of tasks. He further outlined poor training in the company, machine break downs, non-established performance standards, lack of

planning and motivation, change, poor atmosphere and environment, inadequate communication at many levels, non-identification with company goals as reasons for low employee performance. Accordingly, Dean (2002) saw stress-related illnesses as the leading cause for low performance levels in the workplace. Immense pressure at work has led to stress, which made it the number one factor causing illness.

### **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

Workplace stress has posed a serious challenge to not just employee is performance, but employee well-being. Workplace stress has received significant attention and contained other logistics companies like DHL, however, GIG logistics finds it difficult and near impossible to manage the phenomenon. The study seeks to address reasons for workplace stress persisting GIG logistics unchecked, thereby affecting employee well-being and performance.

### **OBJECTIVE OF STUDY**

The objective of this study is to explore the relationship between workplace stress, and its impacts on employee performance. This understanding would not only strengthen effective strategies in human resource management in organizations, but also aide teaching and learning of industrial relations and human resource management in work organizations.

### **HYPOTHESIS**

1. The more the workplace stress, the less employee performance in GIG Logistics.
2. The lesser the workplace stress, the higher the employee performance, efficiency and productivity.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **CONCEPT OF WORKPLACE STRESS**

What constitutes a stressor to one, may differ from what does for another. To some, debts, marriage, family, work etc., may be their stressor, while to others, idleness, singlehood, and even money, so, the context differs.

Workplace stress has been defined as the psychological response to job demands that exceed an individual's adaptive capacity, (lazarus & flokman, 1984).

Common stress include workload pressure, role ambiguity, interpersonal conflict, and lack of autonomy, (cooper et'al, 2001).

Many organizations structure work in a manner that compel employees to work for long hours for profit making, but fail to put mechanisms in place to checkmate well-being of the humans that makes it possible.

Ebhote O., Friday O., Odiwo W.O., Godwin O., Dabor A.O. (2022), Workplace stress is the destructive component and emotional reaction. It occurs when the exigencies of a job do contest the competences, needed resources, or the workers' needs in the organization. However, unattended job stress can result in failing health and possible injury

Dr. A. Akinkunmi, in a paper titled, Stress; The Many Faces Of A Silent Killer; presented during the 2025 annual conference of the Chartered Institute Of Personnel Management Of Nigeria (CIPM), Rivers State Branch, discussed stress to be the consequences of the individual's failure, physically, psychologically or both to respond appropriately to a physical or psychological threat, whether real or imagined.

Stressors identified in the workplace are often linked to situations or elements that have overtime become a culture, and now part of the everyday organizational life, which arms the stressors with the capacity to threaten employee well-being, and impact negatively on performance or low output. Unfortunately, some stressors are part of management policies, either intentionally or ignorantly, especially in organizations where qualified professionals are not consulted or allowed to make inputs where decisions concerning employees are reached.

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), "Workplace stress is a harmful physical and emotional response to an imbalance between perceived job demands, and the perceived resources and abilities of the individual to cope"

Workplace stress is the product of the interaction on daily basis between the work environment, job content, job design, organizational conditions, and worker capabilities to execute the work at that time.

### **EMPIRICAL LITERATURE**

Amehojo, Ayuba and, Choji (2024) investigated how stress impacts employees' performance and also x-ray whether there is any relationship between stress and performance. To achieve this, the study looked at the meaning of stress generally, various causes of stress, and occupational stress, particularly among the staff of the West Africa Examination Council, Kaduna Zonal Office. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary source of data was questionnaire administered to the respondents. The secondary data was sourced from textbooks, reports of past works, journals, and materials from the internet. Lazarus' interactional theory was adopted to analyze the work. From the collected and analyzed data, the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between the primary sources of stress for employees at the West African Examination Council Zonal Office in Kaduna and their work efficiency and effectiveness and workplace stress have a significant impact on the overall job performance of employees at the West African Examination Council Zonal Office in Kaduna. The study recommended that WAEC should develop and offer specific programs addressing identified stressors, such as high workload and role ambiguity to help employees manage their stress more effectively also WAEC should improve job descriptions and provide regular feedback to ensure employees have clear expectations and adequate support, reducing role ambiguity and its impact on efficiency.

Odita (2023) examined stress management strategies and employee performance in manufacturing firms in Edo State. This study employed the correlational research design and covered all the manufacturing firms in Edo State but five of them were randomly picked for the study and their employees totaled into 1,663, which served as the study's population, out of which 301 employees were sampled using Taro Yamane's formula. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire. Both descriptive and Pearson's and Spearman's rank correlation statistics were employed to analyze the study's data and hypotheses. The analysis revealed that employees in manufacturing firms receive maximum workplace social support and this helps them deal with stressful work situations; and they have high coping competence in handling stress. Also, it was revealed that time management was the most adopted stress management strategy among workers in manufacturing firms and they practice it to a high extent. In addition, it was discovered that mind-body strategy of time management is adopted by the employees, although, not to a very high extent when compared with their adoption of other stress management techniques. Based on the findings, the study recommended that the management of manufacturing firms should sensitize their employees in understanding the benefits of mind-body interventions such as massage, yoga, etc. and how to make good use of them for reducing stress levels.

Ochuko and Kamorudeen (2022) carried out a study to determine the dimensions of stress management vis a vis (physical responses, psychological responses, and behavioral responses on employees' performance). With the help of a designed and validated questionnaire, the study used a survey research design. The population of this study is employees of Purechem Industries Limited. The acquired data were examined using a linear regression model and SPSS. The study's results showed a significant association between the characteristics of stress management and employees' performance, with a correlation value of (0.940, 0.815 and 0.940 respectively). The study concluded that employees' performance is significantly impacted by stress management. To have effective and efficient employee performance, it is advised that organizations make sure their work environment (physical, psychological, and behavioral) accommodates employees and has regulations that ensure flexibility in the workplace.

Yashoda (2022) studied the causes of stress on the hotel and restaurant employees in Surkhet valley. The study focused on the techniques of stress management and its impact on employee performance. Descriptive research design was applied in this research and primary data was collected through the questionnaire, which includes interviews, mail questionnaire, telephone interview and Google Form. There were 150 respondents. Among them, 83 were from hotel and 67 were from restaurants. The study revealed that there is an inverse relationship between stress and employee performance. To overcome such stress majority of the respondents listens music. The study concluded that unhealthy working environment was the primary causes of the stress in hotel and restaurant industry with the primary objective of understanding the level and relationship between stress and performance of Commercial bank PLC employees in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. The study also tried to identify the impact of Job related stress, Organizational related stress, and Individual related stress on performance. The employed descriptive analysis, correlation technique and regression technique. Descriptive analysis is applied to find out the level of stress and correlation coefficient is useful for finding out the relationship between variables. Regression analysis is applied to test the impact of stress on performance. The study revealed that there is a negative relationship between stress and performance. It is concluded that stress is having an impact on Commercial bank PLC employees' performance, at the same time the influence of organizational related stress is higher than job related and individual related stress.

### **EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE**

"This refers to how well and individual executes tasks related to their job role", (Campbell, 1990). Performance is not just limited to task execution, it also involves unhindered innovation, efficiency, engagement and satisfaction.

In the view of Kihara and Mugambi, (2018), employee performance focuses directly on employee productivity by assessing the number of units of acceptable quality produced by an employee, within a specific time period. The success of business or an organization depends on employees' performance.

Assibey-Ankrah, (2021) opined that employee performance is an action what employees do in carrying out the work done by the company. Performance in carrying out its functions is not independent, but always relates to employee job satisfaction and the level of reward given, and influenced by individual skills, abilities, and traits

### **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORKPLACE STRESS AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE**

There is a link or relationship between workplace stress and employee performance. The findings of this study has revealed so, and they shall be discussed extensively.

## FACTORS INFLUENCING WORKPLACE STRESS

In the workplace, there are several factors identified as stressor, some of which are discussed below.

- a. **Job Design/Organization:** The way a job is designed and scheduled could turn out to be a stressor. This includes long working hours without shifts, role conflicts, monotony, unrealistic demands and expectations. All these make employees overwhelmed.
- b. **Work Environment:** The environment where work is done speaks a lot. Poor lightings and visibility, unnecessary internal competition, ambiguous goal communications, untidiness, lack of adequate space, lack of clean drinking and washing water, convenience etc are stressors and affect employee performance.
- c. **Workload:** In the course of saving cost and maximizing profit, organizations deliberately get understaffed, leaving her employees overworked on daily basis. This does not only impede performance, it lowers employee well-being.
- d. **Control:** Excessive control in the workplace retards innovation, lack of full participation in decisions affecting one's job is a stressor.
- e. **Relationship and Recognition:** Lack of synergy and collaboration among teams, lack of recognition for high performance or reward for excellence, perceived inequality.
- f. **Career Growth/Promotion:** Emotional and psychological stress comes as a result of lack of a clear career growth and promotion. Some organizations rather than promote qualified internal staff to management cadre, prefers hiring externally. This affects the morale of the employees with several years of loyalty, as it indicate a lack of future.
- g. **Leadership:** To an employee, a line manager is perceived as the organization itself. A toxic and irrational line manager is a natural stressor. I personally have witnessed subordinates celebrate the redeployment of their manager, rather than miss him.
- h. **Work-Life Balance:** This involves conflicting demands between work and personal life. Employees need time-off for families, friends, and other personal activities. Work should be structured in a manner that reflects a balance. Some organizations work Mondays through Sundays. This is a major stressor.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

The study adopts a descriptive research design which helped to describe the characteristics of the phenomenon under investigation. The descriptive research design has numerous advantages including the fact that it suitable for topics where little or no data currently exists. It also provides a clear picture of what is happening in a situation without manipulating variables.

## POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The target population consists of employees in GIG Logistics, Portharcourt. A stratified random sampling technique was used to determine participants across different roles and departments. The final sample included 50 respondents

## METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION/ANALYSIS

Two methods of data collection were adopted. The structured questionnaire and interview with 11 center managers to gain first-hand insights.

Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed using thematic content analysis which helped the study to track reoccurring patterns with a measure of the prevalence.

### **QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS**

Statistics from the filled and returned questionnaires showed that 40 out of 50 questionnaires reported high stress. This represents 80% of the total respondents.

### **QUALITATIVE FINDINGS**

Themes emerging from the interview includes the following:

- Lack/delayed supply of work materials are stressors.
- Pay disparity and inequity among managers and other staff performing same role is another major stressor.
- Long working hours, ambiguous communications, poor work-life balance is a major stressor.
- Michac ,1997 agrees with this finding when he noted inadequate communication as a factor that lowers performance.
- Lack of managerial responsibility, alienation etc, proves to be stressors impeding employee performance.

These findings aligns with Manjunatha & Renukamurthy, (2017). "Work stress arises from stressors in the workplace. These stressors are 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 increased stress".

Orji and Makubu, (2020), noted lack of performance feedback, inadequate career development, workplace violence, sexual harassment and inequality in remuneration and incentives as some of the causes of the increase in stress among employees. While organizations in developed economies are devising stress coping mechanisms and management strategies to curb the situation and are becoming more aware of the effects of work-related stress, the same cannot be said about the organizations in developing countries like Nigeria.

These results shows that chronic workplace stress is a major predictor of employee low performance, and impacts negatively on output.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study confirms significant negative relationship between workplace stress and employee performance. While some stress may enhance focus temporarily, prolonged exposure to stressors diminishes effectiveness, motivation, and overall output. Organizations must recognize stress as a critical factor influencing performance. Management should create and implement proactive stress management techniques and measures to mitigate the effects of workplace stress on employees.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings, the study recommended the following:

- Implement stress management programs such as mindfulness training, wellness initiatives, and time management workshops.
- Redesign work roles to reduce ambiguity and excessive workload, and allow flexibility.
- Promote supportive leadership and encourage regular employee feedback mechanisms
- Encourage work-life balance through flexible work schedules and mental health days.

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