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## AN OVERVIEW OF THE EFFECTS OF JOB STRESS ON EMPLOYEES PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIA TERTIARY HOSPITALS

### Abstract

*This research work was carried out to appraise Job stress and performance of employee in an organization. One of the organizational outcomes that are affected by occupational stress is performance. Employees' performance can be viewed as an activity in which an individual is able to accomplish the task assigned to his/her successfully, subject to the normal constraints of reasonable utilization of the available resources.*

*The focus of this study is to appraise the cause of stress, the effect on employee performance, how workers identify those stress factors and react to the factors.*

*The data of study was collected through the use of Primary and Secondary sources by administering questionnaires, personal interviews and information was extracted from relevant journals and statistical bulletins.*

*The descriptive method was used to analyze the data with aid of frequency and percentage for the research objectives.*

*From the findings it was discovered that work overload, career development and work/family conflict are considered to likely cause a disruptive effect on performance of workers. The study reveals that workers performance were affected by the following factors; tiredness, worry, unhappiness, weakness, headache, and anger.*

*Based on the findings of this study, the study concluded that job stress has significant effect on employees' performance.*

**Keywords:** *Performance of employees, job stress, Nigeria.*

**JEL Classification:** I15, J21, J29

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## ПРЕГЛЕД ЕФЕКТА РАДНОГ СТРЕСА КОЈИ УТИЧЕ НА УЧИНАК ЗАПОСЛЕНИХ У НИГЕРИЈСКИМ ТЕРЦИЈАЛНИМ БОЛНИЦАМА

### Апстракт

*Ово истраживање је спроведено на основу процене стреса и учинака рада запосленог у организацији. Једна од организационих исхода је да су радници погођени стресом на раду који свакако утиче на њихов учинак. Учинак запослених може се посматрати као активност у којој је појединац у стању да оствари задатак додељен њему / њој успешно, под нормалним ограничењем уз разумно коришћење расположивих ресурса.*

*Фокус ове студије је да се процени узрок стреса, утицаја на учинак запослених, како радници идентификују факторе стреса и како реагују на те факторе.*

*Подаци истраживања су прикупљени кроз коришћење примарних и секундарних извора давањем упитника, интервјуа и личних информација које су преузете из релевантних часописа и статистичких билтена.*

*Дескриптивни метод је коришћен за анализу података уз помоћ учесталости и процентиима за циљеве истраживања.*

*У истраживању је откривено да рад радника представља преоптерећење, утиче на развој каријере и рад / породични сукоб се сматрају да вероватно изазвају реметилачки ефекат на учинак радника. Студија открива да су учинци радника под утицајем следећих фактора: умор, забринутост, туга, слабост, главобоља и бес.*

*На основу налаза овог истраживања, студија је закључила да стресна послу има значајан утицај на учинак запослених.*

**Кључне речи:** *Учинак запошљених, стрес на послу, Нигерија.*

### Introduction

Occupational stress is commonly acknowledged to be a critical issue for managers of organizations as occupational stressors tend to contribute to organizational inefficiency, employees are under a great deal of stress related to a variety of occupational stressors. Occupational stressors contribute to organizational inefficiency, high staff turnover, absenteeism due to sickness, decreased quality, and quantity of practice, increased costs of health care, and decreased job satisfaction. One of the organizational outcomes that were affected by occupational stress is performance. Job stress is a mental and physical condition, which affects an individual's productivity, effectiveness, personal health and quality of work. Job stress victims experience lowered quality of work life and performance. The harmful and costly consequences of stress demonstrate the need for strategies to limit stressors within the organization. Organization that does not adopt strategies to alleviate stress may find their employees looking elsewhere for better opportunities. The impact of stress from overwork, long hours at work and work intensification has had major and often devastating effect on organizations of developed nations (Reese 1995).

The process of restructuring, downsizing and re-engineering have helped companies to become lean, but not without great costs. Employees are experiencing more

stress and uncertainty because companies got leaner without building their ‘muscle’. Just like going on a diet without exercising. The organization weigh less but the percentage of fat which manifests as high stress, low morale, and less optimal productivity has actually increased. Some organizations have even become anorexic. They are too lean, but because they think they are fat, they continue to “diet”.

A study by North Western National Life Insurance Co. concluded that job stress is generally a consequence of two ingredients: a high level of job demands and little control over one’s work. Many of today’s workers are finding their jobs more stressful than they were simply because they are working too many hours. The study concluded that “where employees are empowered, where they have more control over how they perform their work reduces the risk of stress and burnout considerably”(Froiland, 1993).

This work was supported by Umiker (1992) which showed that “...individuals who feel that they are in control of their jobs and their future are better able to handle stress. Also that these empowered workers become more productive out of being in control” (Umiker, 1992). A study conducted by Bushe (1996), reported increased productivity and efficiencies from being empowered, measured by reported increased customer performance and innovation. Further, stress was reduced when a person did not have to report to someone daily any longer. By empowering employees, they took upon themselves control over their work giving them a higher sense of accomplishment, this was found regardless of occupational grouping.

### **1.1 Statement of the problem**

Every organisation puts up structures, resources and places such as in the hands of a manager with a view to set a structure to earn profit. Structures like the organisational chart, Organogram, Management by Objectives; Unity of command/unity of loyalty to mention a few is put up. Resources include human, material, financial information technology and all others within the organisation that are set up in such a way to achieve maximum profit with minimum costs and conflicts. In an atmosphere devoid of stress, there is none without some percentage of stress to the employee.

Stress could generate from factors that are internal or external to the organisation or total. Even when the organisation tries to create an atmosphere of industrial peace and harmony so that production can go with minimum conflict, there seems to be no organisation which is completely free of stress.

Stress in the workplace has been noted to usually have adverse consequences on socio-economic and cultural development in a growing economy like that of Nigeria, this cannot afford to continue as it could ruin the industrial and organisation life thus affecting the growth of the country. Hence this study examined what causes stress within an organisation, and the corresponding effects on employee’s performance.

### **1.2 Objectives of the study**

The general objective of the study is to determine the effects of stress on employees’ performance using Seventh-day Adventist Hospital, Ile-ife, Osun State of Nigeria as a case study. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Determine what constitutes stress at work?
2. Examine the effects of employees’ job stress on performance.
3. Examine how workers cope with stress factors at work.

## Review of related literature

Job stress in organizations is widespread. More than half of all Nigerian workers feel the pressure of job related stress. Extensive research shows that excessive job stress can adversely affect the emotional and physical health of workers.

### 2.1 Concept of job stress

Arnold and Feldman (2000) define stress as “the reactions of individuals to new or threatening factors in their work environment”. Since our work environments often contain new situations, this definition suggests that stress is inevitable. This definition also highlights the fact that reactions to stressful situations are individualized and can result in emotional, perceptual, behavioural and physiological changes.

McGrath (1976) proposed a definition based on the conditions necessary for stress. So there is a potential for stress when an environmental situation is perceived as presenting a demand that threatens to exceed the person’s capabilities and resources for meeting it, under conditions where he expects a substantial differential in the rewards and costs from meeting the demand versus not meeting it. McGrath’s definition implies that the degree of stress is correlated with a person’s perceived inability to deal with an environmental demand. This would lead to the conclusion that a person’s level of stress depends on their self perceived abilities and self confidence. Stress is correlated with a person’s fear of failure.

According to (Rose 2003) employees have tendency towards high level of stress regarding time, working for longer hours which reduces employees urge for performing better. Management support helps in reducing or increases stress in employees (Stamper & Johlke, 2003), apparent organizational assistance, management support work as a cushion which acts positively in decreasing work related stress in employees. There are a lot of reasons causing stress work, family conflicts, work over load are the reasons indentified by (Stamper & Johlke, 2003) that if the organization or management does not appreciates its employees for their hard work or contribution toward the organization creates stress and apparently creates intention to leave.

Semmer (1984) and Leitner, Volpert, Greiner, Weber, and Hennes (1987) proposed a taxonomy of stressors based on action theory, this taxonomy clusters stressors on the basis of how they disturb the regulation of goal-oriented action. Specifically, this taxonomy differentiates between regulation obstacles, regulation uncertainty, and overtaxing regulations. Regulation obstacles such as interruptions or organizational constraints make action regulation more difficult if not impossible for the employees.

Stress in organizations affects both the individual and the organization (e.g., increased turnover rates). Individuals can be affected at the physiological, affective, and behavioral levels, and in their leisure time and family life. Stressors affect individuals and organizations within different time frames, stress reactions can occur immediately (short-term reactions) and or may take longer time to develop (long-term reactions). With respect to physiological responses, stress has an effect on the cardiac system. For example, individuals in so-called high-strain jobs (i.e., job with high demands and low job control, Karasek, 1979) show higher blood pressure than individuals in other types of jobs (Schwartz, Pickering, & Landsbergis, 1996).

Also heart rate increases in stress situations (Frankenhaeuser & Johansson, 1976). Moreover, experiencing stressful work situation is associated with increased levels of cholesterol and other metabolic and homeostatic risk factors for cardiovascular disease (Vrijkotte, van Doornen, & de Geus, 1999).

The experience of stress is associated with affective reactions. In the short-term, mood disturbances can occur (Zohar, 1999). Such affective reactions seem to result mainly from specific aversive events and stressful achievement settings (Pekrun & Frese, 1992; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). In the long run, well-being and mental health can suffer. There is evidence from longitudinal studies that stressful work situations are associated with an increased level of depressive symptoms (Schonfeld, 1992), psychosomatic complaints (Frese, 1985; Parkes, Menham, & Rabenau, (1994) and other distress symptoms (Leitner, 1993).

Ivancevich & Donnelly (1975) studied the link between anxiety stress with satisfaction and performance of employees, that lower anxiety stress improves performance of employee's which he studied in different managerial level of an organization. (Beehr, Jex, Stacy & Murray, 2000) found the relationship between occupational stressors and the performance of employees of an organization as well as how it can affect the employees psychologically.

Jamal, (1984) studied an association between job stress and performance between managers and blue-collar employees. Stress on job can be stated as the outcome of an individual due to the working environment from which he feels unsecured.

## 2.2 Theoretical frame work for analysis.

These are the theories that support job stress, below are different school of thoughts that postulated several theories on job stress with concentration on those models that have been influential in past theorizing and empirical research.

**The Transactional Stress Model;** One the most prominent models which on stress process is the transactional model by Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984. Lazarus and Folkman define psychological stress as “a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being”. Thus, Lazarus and Folkman assume that cognitive appraisals play a crucial role in the stress process. Appraisal processes refer to an individual's categorization and evaluation of an encounter with respect to this individual's well-being.

Specifically, primary and secondary appraisal can be differentiated. By primary appraisal, encounters are categorized as irrelevant, benign-positive or stressful. Stress appraisals comprise harm/loss, threat, and challenge. By secondary appraisals, individuals evaluate what can be done in the face of the stressful encounter, they tax their coping options. On the basis of primary and secondary appraisals, individuals start their coping processes which can stimulate reappraisal processes.

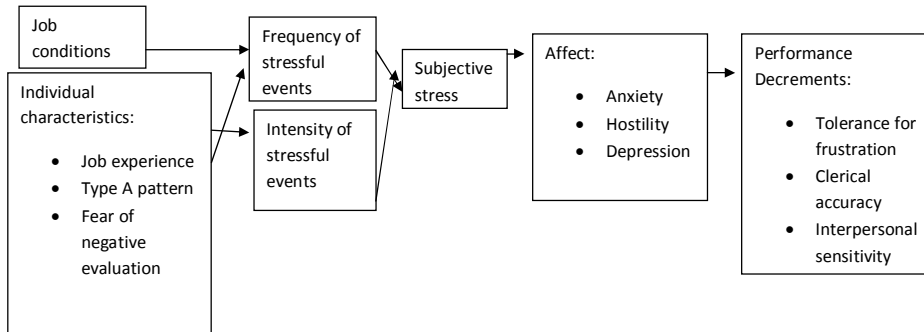
To arrive at a better understanding of the stress process and how it develops over time, Lazarus (1991) suggested putting more emphasis on an intra-individual analysis of the stress phenomenon, for example by studying the same persons in different contexts over time. A few studies followed such an approach (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986), the majority of empirical studies in the area of organizational stress however, did not adopt such a process perspective but treated stressful situations and individuals' reactions to them as stable. Moreover, it has been questioned whether a focus on individual processes offers much to the understanding of workplace stress (Brief & George, 1995).

Crucial components in Carver and Scheier's model are an input function, a reference value, a comparator, and an output function. The input function refers to perceptions of one's own state or of situational features in the environment. The reference value comprises the individual's desires, values, or goals. The comparator compares the

input function with the reference value. The output function refers to behavior which is activated when a discrepancy between the input function and the reference value is detected.

### 2.3 Conceptual model

Figure 1.Prel



Preliminary model of the causes of occupational stress and its consequences for job Design by: Stephan J. Motowidlo, et al 1986.

This model presumes that:

(a) Subjective stress leads to affective states such as anxiety, hostility, depression and to decrements in aspects of job performance, and

(b) Stress is caused by specific events that occur at work. The more frequent and the more intensely stressful the events are for an individual, the greater the level of subjective stress.

Job conditions partly determine the frequency with which these events occur. Individual characteristics such as job experience, Type A behavior pattern and fear of negative evaluation also determine their frequency as well as the intensity of their stressfulness for individuals. The model presumes also that subjective stress generates anxiety, hostility, and depression which, in turn, affect components of performance such as tolerance for frustration, clerical accuracy, interpersonal sensitivity, and altruism.

### 2.4 The effects of stress in a job

Research in organizational behaviour has shown that an individual could suffer from significant health complications - backaches, headaches, gastrointestinal disturbances, anxiety and depression amongst others - if subjected to stress over a long time. Behavioural changes in the form of excessive tobacco smoking and alcohol consumption, nervous disorders, heart diseases, diabetes, obesity etc are also related to stress. Job dissatisfaction is known to lead to job stress, which in turn reduces the productivity (Madeline, 1983).

#### Varying Degrees of Stress

People in some work places experience more stress vis-a-vis others, particularly those in occupations where workers are required to display emotions like nursing, social work and teaching (Travers and Cooper, 1993, Cooper et al., 1999, Kahn, 1993, Young and Cooper, 1999). An extreme form of this stress has been categorized as ‘burnout’, a stage when a person starts treating his clients as objects (depersonalization), evaluates himself negatively and feels emotionally exhausted (Sheena et al, 2005)

Stress is a part and parcel of life and cannot be avoided. However, if used in a gainful way, stress can lead to beneficial outcomes too (Selve, 1973). Research and studies should be directed towards understanding the impact of stress on positive health, growth and well being as proposed by the positive psychology movement (Seligman & Csikszentmihaiyi, 2000). If aptly managed, stress can energize, stimulate and induce growth and productivity in one’s profession. One can accomplish new objectives and there can be positive personal changes (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Further studies and research are required to identify the processes involved in the development of positive and negative emotions (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004).

### **The Impact of Stress on Performance**

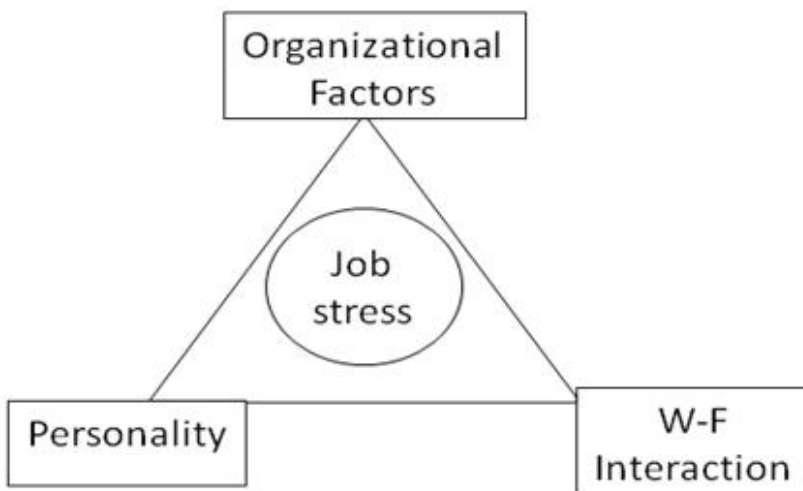
Various studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between job stress and job performance. Job performance can be viewed as an activity in which an individual is able to accomplish the task assigned to him/her successfully, subject to the normal constraints of reasonable utilization of the available resources. At a conceptual level, four types of relationships were proposed to exist between the measures of job stress and job performance (Jamal, 2007). One is a negative linear relationship, when productivity decreases with stress (distress). Productivity can also increase as a consequence of stress, thereby implying a positive linear relationship between the two. Thirdly, there could be a U-shaped or a curvilinear relationship wherein, mild stress could increase the productivity initially up to a peak and then it declines as the person descends into a state of distress. Alternately, there need not be any quantifiable relationship between the two.

### **Factors that result in job stress**

Job stress could be as a result of a number of factors, which can be broadly classified into:

1. External factors relating to organisation and work-family conflicts, and
2. Internal factors. External factors are well described by Cooper and Marshall’s five sources of stress.

*Figure 2* The factors inducing job stress





**Organisational factors:** According to Cooper & Marshall, stress could be due to factors intrinsic to the job, such as poor physical working conditions, work overload or time pressures. Often, one's role in the organization and the ambiguity associated with the job resulting from inadequate information concerning expectations, authority and responsibilities to perform one's role as well as the conflict that arises from the demands placed on the individual by superiors, peers and subordinates could also result in stress. A third factor is the impact of status incongruence, lack of job security and thwarted ambition on one's career progression. Rayner and Hoel (1997) theorized that relationships at work with bosses and colleagues, including bullying in the workplace could result in a lot of stress. At an organizational level, the structure and climate, including the degree of involvement in decision making and participation in office politics could result in a stressful climate.

Stress could be due to factors intrinsic to the job, such as poor physical working conditions, work overload or time pressures.

Additional sources of stress documented in the ASSET model include the impact a person's working life has on their life outside of work (work-life balance), the amount of satisfaction people derive from their work, the degree of control and autonomy people have in the work place, and the levels of commitment in the work place both from the employee to the organisation and from the organisation to the employee (Sheena 2005).

**Work family interaction:** The rise of families in which both partners are earning and increasing female participation in the sphere of employment has transformed the ways in which couples manage work and family responsibilities. Work and family integration can result in both negative (i.e., work-family conflict) and positive interactions (i.e., work-family enrichment). Work-family conflict and work-family enrichment can occur in either direction - “work-to-family or family-to-work”. Work demands, family demands and work flexibility are recognized to be important determinants of the work-family interaction (Luo Lu et al, 2008).

**Personality:** Besides external factors, there are internal factors too that can cause stress, like the age of the individual, sex, education and a personality that is deemed Type A or inherently stressful. Type A individuals are competitive, hostile, impatient and hard driving.

Ganster and Schaubroeck (1991) and Kahn and Byosiere (1992) summarized the findings of studies on Type A behavior pattern.

## 2.5 Symptoms of stress

Selye (1946) was first to describe the phases that the body goes through in response to a threat. The general adaptation syndrome model states that the body passes through three stages.

The first stage is an **alarm reaction**; the body prepares for a potential emergency. Digestion slows down, the heart beats faster, blood vessels dilate, blood pressure rises and breathing becomes rapid and deep. All bodily systems work together to provide maximum energy for fight or flight.

The second stage is **resistance**; if the stress continues, the body builds up a tolerance to its effects. The body becomes habituated to the effect of the stressor; however, the body's adaptive energies are being used as a shield against the stressor.

The third stage is **exhaustion**; when the body's adaptive energies are depleted, the symptoms of the alarm reaction reappear, and the stress manifests itself as an illness, such as ulcers, heart ailments and high blood pressure. During the first or second stages, the removal of the stressor will eliminate the symptoms.

## 2.6 Causes of stress

Stressors can be divided into those that arise from within an individual (internal) and those that are attributable to the environment (external). Internal conflicts, non-specific fears, fears of inadequacy, and guilt feelings are examples of stressors that do not depend on the environment.

Internal sources of stress can arise from an individual's perception of an environment threat, even if no such danger actually exists. Environmental stressors are external conditions beyond an individual's control. Bhagat(1983) has reported that work performance can be seriously impaired by external stressors. There are many aspects of organizational life that can become external stressors, this include issues of structure, management's use of authority, monotony, a lack of opportunity for advancement, excessive responsibilities, ambiguous demands, value conflicts, and unrealistic workloads. A person's non working life (e.g family, friends, health, and financial situations) can also contain stressors that negatively impact job performance. Thus, emotionally induced stress arises from one's imagination.

Time stress is always created by a real or imaginary deadline. Anticipatory stress is created when a person perceives that an upcoming event will be unpleasant. Situational stress can occur when a person is in an unpleasant situation and they worry about what will happen next. Encounter stress is created by contact with other people (both pleasant and unpleasant),

Adverse working conditions, such as excessive noise, extreme temperatures, or overcrowding can be a source of job-related stress (McGrath, 1978). Reitz, 1987 reports that workers on “swing shifts” experience more stress than other workers. Orth-Gomer (1986) concludes that when three shifts are used to provide around-the-clock production, major disturbances in people may be unavoidable. One source of environmental stress ignored in the organizational literature is non-natural electromagnetic radiation. Becker (1990) reports that the two most prominent effects of electromagnetic radiations are stress and cancers. Modern offices are filled with electronic devices that produce high levels of radiation; these include computers, video, monitors, fluorescent lights, and clocks, copying machines, faxes, electric pencil sharpeners and a host of other electronic devices. Human sensitivity to electromagnetic field is well documented and the design of future office equipment will most likely involve a consideration of emitted radiation.

Personal factors are often a source of stress. These include career related concerns, such as job security and advancement, as well as financial and family concerns. Holmes and Rahe(1967) constructed a scale of forty-three life events, and rated them according to the amount of stress they produce. The most notable feature of their instrument is that many positive life changes (i.e. marriage, Christmas, vacations, etc) are substantial sources of stress. Generally stress appears to be a result of any change in one's daily routine.

Lawless(1991) identified the most common causes of workers stress: Too much rigidity in how to do a job, Substantial cut in employee benefits, a merger, acquisition or change of ownership, requiring frequent overtime and reducing the size of the work force.

Over 40% of the work force experience one or more stress related illness as a result of these five stressors. Single or divorced employees, union employees, women and hourly workers reported greater stress levels and a likely hood of burning out. In a follow-up study, (Lawless, 1992) found similar result except there is no significant difference between married and unmarried workers. However, single women with children were more likely to burn out than married women with children, “Single parenthood compounds

the stress women face in juggling work and child care responsibilities especially when over-time hours are required”

## 2.7 Managing stress

Managers of organization have a dual perspective of stress, they need to be aware of their own stress levels as well as those of their subordinates, most of the literature focuses on ways of reducing stress, and however, a more appropriate approach might be to examine ways of optimizing stress. French, Kast and Rosenzweig (1985), stated that the challenge is to minimize the stress and maintain a balance. They pointed out that the conditions of organizational life create a series of paradoxes that demonstrate the need for balance and equilibrium.

The role of management becomes one of maintaining an appropriate level of stress by providing an optimal environment and; by doing a good job in areas such as performance planning, role analysis, work redesign/job enrichment, continuing feedback, ecological considerations and interpersonal skills training.

There are essentially three strategies for dealing with stress in organizations (Jick and Payne, 1980): Treat the symptoms, change the person and remove the cause of the stress.

When the person is already suffering from the effects of stress, the first priority is to treat the symptoms, this include both the identification of those suffering from excessive stress as well as providing health care and psychological counselling services. The second approach is to help individuals build stress management skills to make them less vulnerable to its effects. Examples would be teaching employees’ time management and relaxation techniques or suggesting change to one’s diet or exercise. The third approach is to eliminate or reduce the environmental situation that is creating the stress; this would involve reducing environmental stressors such as noise and pollution, or modifying production schedules and workloads.

Many modern organizations view the management of stress as a personal matter. An effort to monitor employee stress levels would be considered an invasion of privacy. However, Lawless (1991) found that nine out of ten employees felt that it was the employer’s responsibility to reduce worker stress and provide a health plan that covers stress illness. She emphasized that “employees have no doubt that stress related illnesses and disability should be taken seriously. Employees expect substantive action by their employer and hold employer financially responsible for the consequences of job stress”.

Managers can take active steps to minimize undesirable stress in themselves and their subordinates. Williams and Huber (1986) suggested five managerial actions that can be used to reduce stress in workers;

- I. Clarifying task assignments, responsibility, authority, and criteria for performance evaluation.
- II. Introducing consideration for people into one’s leadership style.
- III. Delegating more effectively and increasing individual autonomy where the situation warrants it.
- IV. Clarifying goals and decision criteria.
- V. Setting and enforcing policies for mandatory vacations and reasonable working hours.

Establishing one’s priorities (i.e. value clarification) is an important step in the reduction of stress. The demands of many managerial positions cause the neglect of other areas of one’s life such as family, friends, recreation, and religion. This neglect creates stress, which in turn affects job performance and health. Value clarification is linked to

time management, since we generally allocate our time according to our priorities. By setting personal priorities, managers and subordinates can reduce this source of stress.

### Research methodology

The study on effect of job stress on employee performance is carried out in Seventh Day Adventist Hospital, Ile-ife, Osun state, Nigeria and is intended to explore and justify the various causes of stress factors in the organization, the effects of stress on its employees performance, how its workers identify these stress factors and react to them since it has been noted that stress have adverse consequences on the socio-economic and cultural development of most organizations the study explored descriptive survey, data were gathered through the use of questionnaires, personal interviews and library search

A comprehensive and stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure that every member of the work force has equal chance of being represented in the sample size, for proper and accurate research work; 65 respondents were interviewed out of the population of 78 potential respondents. The sample was taken as the random representative of the totality of the population and the questionnaire administered to the actual respondents.

The data collection instrument employed in this study was an 18- item questionnaire. The questionnaire contained closed ended questions and has 6 sections, the questionnaires are designed in such a way that all the elements of the variables of interest to be measured are included and designed to generate sufficient information needed to address the objectives of the study.

The two types of variables used in this study are the independent and dependent variables. The independent variable for this study is Job stress while the dependent variable is employee performance. Productivity ratio was used as the construct for measuring performance.

### 3. Data Analysis Technique

Descriptive statistics was utilized to analyze the data obtained with a view to achieving the objective of the study. The data in the questionnaire were coded and used to carry out various statistical analyses. In order for the research to be useful, a descriptive approach of data analysis was applied. The researchers has decided to use descriptive statistical technique to test the reliability of variables of interest.

#### Findings, results and discussion.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Educational status

EDUCATIONAL STATUS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Diploma	12	18.5
H.N.D	20	30.8
M.B.B.S/B.SC	33	50.8
Total	65	100

Source:Field Survey,2014

From table 1, 12(18.5%) of the respondents had Health Technology Education, 20(30.8%) have Higher National Diploma, while the bulk of the respondents had University Education. The findings reveal that most of the workers have University Degree.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents as to what constitutes stress at work

Variables	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Workload is a cause of stress	43(66.2)	14(21.5)	0(0)	5(7.7)	3(4.6)
Career development is a cause of stress	48(73.8)	11(16.9)	1(1.5)	5(7.7)	0(0)
Work/Family conflict is a cause of stress	51(78.5)	7(10.8)	2(3.1)	4(6.2)	1(1.5)
<b>Total</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>4</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2014

In table 2, a high majority (95.0%) of the respondents were of the opinion that career development is the major cause of stress, while only 7.7 per cent had a negative view of the concept. Furthermore, it was revealed in the study as perceived by 89.0% of the respondents that family conflict should be considered as a strong stressor at work, while 88.0% of the respondents were of the perception that work load contributed to work-stress. It is a clear indication that various factors cause work-stress

Table 3. The effects of job stress on employees' performance.

Variables	No Extent (%)	Very Low Extent (%)	Low Extent (%)	High Extent (%)	Very High Extent (%)
1)Effect of stress on performance	2 (3.1)	3 (4.6)	5 (7.7)	25 (38.5)	30 (46.2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>30</b>
Variable	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2)Inability to perform a given task efficiently as a result of stress	23 (35.4)	21 (32.3)	1 (1.6)	8 (12.3)	12 (18.5)
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>

Source: Field Survey,2014

In Table 3 above,, 2(3.1%) of the respondents reported no extent, 3(4.6%) reported very low extent, 5(7.7%) low extent, 25(38.5%) high extent and 30(46.2%) reported very high extent.

From the same table, 23(35.4%) reported strongly agreed, 21(32.3%) agreed, 1(1.6%) was undecided, 8(12.3%) disagreed and 12(18.5%) was reported strongly agreed.

The result shows that there is potential for poor performance when work conditions are perceived as presenting a demand that threatens to exceed the person's capabilities.

Further more on the same table 39(60%) respondents attributed to repetitive work(i.e. doing the same thing every time), 44(67.7%) affirmed it to keen supervision of their job, 46(70.8%) through lack of communication between superiors and subordinates(co-workers), 37(56.9%) agreed that stress comes as a result of under loaded i.e. little or no work to do and 5(7%) affirmed it to uncomfortable work conditions and exposure to danger on the job(physical Environment).

The results show that every human being experiences various degrees of stress and with various reasons. With all the pressures in organizational setting, it is not surprising that stress has become a real problem.

Table 4: Experience of illness as Effect of stress on the employees

Have you experienced some illness as a result of your work stress	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	37	56.9
No	28	43.1
Total	65	100

Source: Field Survey, 2014

From the table4 above, 37(56.9%) of the respondents have experienced one form of illness or the other. These people agree that the illness experienced emanated from work process.

Some of the illnesses cited are headaches, body pain, malaria, feverish conditions, dizziness, tiredness etc. 28(43.1%) of the respondents agreed that they have not experienced illness, 70.7% of the respondents mentioned headaches as their regular illness, 15.2% named body pains while 14.15% named feverish conditions as their regular illness.

Table 5 Coping Strategies of Employees on job stress.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Flexible Work Schedule	22	33.8
Break Period	10	15.4
Off days	11	16.9
Leave Days	15	23.1
Organizational Communication	5	7.7
No Response	2	3.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 5 shows that 2(33.8%) of the employees agreed to Flexible work Schedule,10(15.4%) affirmed Break period, 11(16.9%) agreed to off days, 15(23.1%) emphasized Leave while 5(7.7%) did not respond at all. It can be inferred that flexible work schedule and leave have been adopted as a relieving mechanism for workers.

When respondents were further asked how they cope with stress, majority of the respondents (52%) agreed they take some days off to rest, 8% mentioned absence from work, 12% of the respondents affirmed engaging in exercise.

## Conclusion and recommendations

### 4.1 Conclusion

From the research findings, we concluded that Work overload, Career development and Work/family conflict are considered to likely cause a disruptive effect on performance of workers. They are also seen as more problematic compared to the other causes of stress.

The study reveals that workers through tiredness, worry, unhappiness, weakness, headache, anger to mention a few identified these stress factors, they also react to these stress factors by absenting themselves from work, taking off days, watching movies, sleeping, drinking and smoking, further more the presence of work stress evoked illness on workers.

A substantial amount of respondents 56.9percent confessed that they have experienced illness in the course of their duty. Though Clinics were made available to attend to these problems caused by stress, it was evident that most workers will prefer a stress free working environment to a palliative treatment they will receive in these clinics.

### 4.2 Recommendations

From the research analysis, findings and conclusions, the made; following recommendations were:

- a. The workload of workers should be reduced to a more reasonable level. The hospital should employ more workers to help lift too much workload of the workers.  
Workers of the hospital who are developing their career should be encouraged to do so, this could be done by granting them leave or reducing their workload so they could have more time for career development
- b. Workers should try as much as possible to strike a balance between their office work and family responsibilities; none should be taken with levity
- c. The workers position and status should be put into consideration and adequate incentives and benefits should be made available.
- d. Organizational policies should be instituted that will make communication amongst the rank files liberalized and made easier.
- e. There should be wide consultation on issues before taking any decision. Workers should be given freedom to express their minds on issues affecting them. This will facilitate a sense of belonging among the workers.
- f. Efforts made by government to revamp the economy should be intensified. If this is achieved, workers will have job opportunities and the condition of service will be enhanced.
- g. Workers should ensure self protection against stress. They should ensure means to fight back these stress factors. They should be able to detect the signal of stress factors and possible causes within the environment.
- h. Workers should endeavour to attend mental health seminars and adopt stress reducing measures like relaxation, sleep, rest (leave seeking), balanced diet, exercises that help the heart and lungs, dangers of alcohol abuse and ability to let go.
- i. Workers should set priorities. Most effective workers achieve their objectives at early hours of the day, those who fail to plan and set priorities often face stress situations at the end of the day. Long range plans and goals are also important.

- j. Traits like being aggressive, highly competitive, hard driving, ambitious and being optimistic make the workers the primary subject of stress. What is needed exactly when such is discovered is for the workers to undertake counselling from organizational psychologist and supervisors.

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