

Stress Management and Employee Performance of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between Stress Management and Employee performance in Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The population includes employees of seven (7) selected Deposit Money Banks situated in Port Harcourt metropolis of Rivers State, Nigeria. The sample size was 188 using the Taro Yamen's formula. After data cleaning, only data of 168 respondents were finally used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics and Spearman's rank correlation were used for data analysis and hypothesis testing. Findings revealed that stress management has a significant relationship with employee efficiency and effectiveness. The study thus concluded that stress management bears a positive and significant influence on employee performance. We recommend that management of deposit money banks should design task and jobs in ways that would make for effectiveness and efficiency and bring about improvement in the performance of their work force and that flexible job schedules should be incorporated into human resource management strategies, policies and plan of deposit money banks to enhance easy employee performance and commitment that will increase corporate survival.

KEYWORDS: *Stress Management, Employee performance, Employee Effectiveness, Employee Efficiency*

I. INTRODUCTION

Employee performance has been described in many ways; ability to achieve targets, realize goals, attain benchmarks. Most commonly people immediately talked of job performance as what a person did at work. Different stages of job as well the complexity of a job also affected the overall performance of the jobholder. This could mean that job performance as a construct could be defined in different ways depending on the different stages and complexities of the job (June, 2011). Sarmiento and Beale, as cited in June (2011) noted job performance resulted from two elements, abilities and skills (natural or acquired) that an employee possessed, and motivation to use them in order to perform a better job.

If performance was simply defined as —all of the behaviour employee engaged in at work, the definition would be slightly misleading because at times people might be engaging themselves in work which had no relation to their job performance (e.g. making personal phone calls). More appropriate way then was as suggested by Campbell, 1990; according to which job performance was stated as a collection of behaviour employees engaged in at work, as long as that behaviour contributed to the attainment of organizational goals. It was intuitive to draw a link between behaviour and performance. Linking behaviour and performance meant, trying to predict as to what type of behaviour led to what type of performance e.g. creativity in an employee and relating it to future performance. However, the ability to attain acceptable performance levels can be hampered greatly by stress which employees face while discharging their duties.

Stress is a mental and physical condition, which affects an individual's productivity, effectiveness, personal health and quality of work. Job stress victims experienced lowered quality of work life and job satisfaction. The harmful and costly consequences of stress demonstrated the need for strategies to limit stressors within the organization. Organizations that did not adopt strategies to manage and alleviate stress found their employees looking elsewhere for better opportunities.

Stress management can be defined as interventions designed to reduce the impact of stressors in the workplace. These can have an individual focus, aimed at increasing an individual's ability to cope with stressors. The goal of stress management is to help the individual to manage the stress of everyday life. Stress management also

refers to the wide spectrum of techniques and psychotherapies aimed at controlling a person's level of stress especially chronic stress, usually for the purpose of improving everyday functioning (Baridam 2006). Stress produces numerous symptoms which vary according to persons, situations and severity. These can include physical health decline as well as depression. The process of stress management is named as one of the keys to a happy and a successful life in modern society. Although life provides numerous demands that can prove difficult to handle, stress management provides a number of ways to manage anxiety and maintain overall well Being.

The impact of stress from overwork, long hours at work and work intensification was found to have a major and often devastating effect on organizations. In developed nations like Japan, Karoshi –death by overwork –was officially recognized as a fatal illness. America, Australia and United Kingdom reported to cost of occupational stress in hundreds of billion dollars. This was the cost from compensation claims, reduced productivity, absenteeism, added health insurance and direct medical expenses from stress related illnesses (Savery and Luks, 2000).

A recent American Management Association survey of 292 member firms revealed that per capita disability claims tends to increase when positions were eliminated. The survey, which dealt with layoffs between 1990 and 1995, found that the illnesses workers sought treatment for like gastrointestinal problems, mental disorders and substance abuse, hypertension, were stress related (Rees, 1997). It was seen that the process of restructuring, downsizing and reengineering which had helped companies to become lean, had not done it without great costs. Employees were experiencing more stress and uncertainty because companies got leaner without building their —muscle. Just like going on a diet without exercising. The organization weighed less but the percentage of fat – which manifested as high stress, low morale and less than optimal productivity had actually increased(Harvey & Brown 2006).

Although much of the research on the relationship between stress and functioning focused on the negative performance effects of stress, not all stress was bad. In fact, Selye (1976) emphasized that stress was a necessary part of life and that it did not always involve negative consequences for the organism involved. In fact, at certain moderate level, stress could actually improve individual performance. There was substantial research supporting the concept of —good stress. Yerkes and Dodson (1908) were the first to —stumble upon the inverted-U relationship between stress and performance. Their work focused on the effects of stress on the learning response of rats. Using three trials with low, moderate, and high levels of stimulus, the authors found a weak but curvilinear relationship, with performance on the task, improving as the stressor stimulus reached a moderate level and decreasing as stimulus strength increased beyond this point.

A large stream of empirical research has examined the concept of employee performance using various predictor variables. Achieng, Ochieng and Owuor (2012) studied the effect of Job Redesign on Employee Performance in Commercial Banks in Kisumu, Kenya. Mildred (2016). Studied the effect of Employee Involvement on employee job performance at the Kenyan Medical Research Institute (Centre For Global Health Research) Kisumu. Also Njiru (2016) carried out a study on the Influence of Flexible Work Practices on Employee Performance in Public Sector: A Case of Ministry of Interior and Coordination Of National Government, Embu County. Ikon and Chukwu (2017) studied Employee Engagement and Performance of Selected Private Universities in Delta State, Nigeria. However, there has been relatively little empirical research report that details how firms can achieve employee performance, through stress management. Therefore, this study intends to empirically fill that gap by investigating the relationship between stress management and employee performance in deposit money banks in Port Harcourt.

This study will also be guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the relationship between Stress Management and Employee Efficiency in Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt?
- ii. What is the relationship between Stress Management and Employee Effectiveness in Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical framework

Systemic Stress: Selye's Theory

According to Karanja, (2012) the popularity of the stress concept stems largely from the work of the endocrinologist Hans Selye. In a series of animal studies he observed that a variety of stimulus events (e.g., heat, cold, toxic agents) applied intensely and long enough are capable of producing common effects, meaning not specific to either stimulus event. (Besides these nonspecific changes in the body, each stimulus produces, of course, its specific effect, heat, for example, produces vasodilatation, and cold vasoconstriction.) According to

Selye, these nonspecifically caused changes constitute the stereotypical, i.e., specific, response pattern of systemic stress. Selye (1976) defines this stress as 'a state manifested by a syndrome which consists of all the nonspecifically induced changes in a biologic system.'

This stereotypical response pattern, called the 'General Adaptation Syndrome' (GAS), proceeds in three stages. (a) The alarm reaction comprises an initial shock phase and a subsequent counter shock phase. The shock phase exhibits autonomic excitability, an increased adrenaline discharge, and gastro-intestinal ulcerations. The counter shock phase marks the initial operation of defensive processes and is characterized by increased adrenocortical activity. (b) If noxious stimulation continues, the organism enters the stage of resistance. In this stage, the symptoms of the alarm reaction disappear, which seemingly indicates the organism's adaptation to the stressor. However, while resistance to the noxious stimulation increases, resistance to other kinds of stressors decreases at the same time. (c) If the aversive stimulation persists, resistance gives way to the stage of exhaustion.

The organism's capability of adapting to the stressor is exhausted, the symptoms of stage (a) reappear, but resistance is no longer possible. Irreversible tissue damages appear, and, if the stimulation persists, the organism dies. Although Selye, fails to take into account coping mechanisms as important mediators of the stress–outcome relationship, his theory serves to explain the detriments of stress of interventions are not made in time to rescue the stressed individuals. This theory indirectly underpins the importance of stress management strategies to avoid employees reaching the irreversible stage when the stress is more advanced. With adequate intervention measures that are applied in time, employees' commitment may be restored and therefore their productivity.

III. STRESS MANAGEMENT

Folksman (1994) opines that stress management is the need of the hour, however hard we try to go beyond a stress situation; life seems to find new ways of stressing us out plaguing us with anxiety attacks. Moreover, be it anxiety, mind-body exhaustion or our erring attitudes, we tend to overlook the causes of stress, its effects and how to manage stress adequately. In such unsettling moments, we often forget that stressors, if not escapable, are fairly manageable and treatable.

Stress management refers to interventions designed to reduce the impact of stressors in the workplace. These can have an individual focus, aimed at increasing an individual's ability to cope with stressors. The goal of stress management is to help the individual to manage the stress of everyday life. According to Bruce (2003) stress management is a proven group of techniques for modifying stress, producing thoughts, relaxing away physical and emotional tension and learning how to make changes to our environment (or situation) whenever possible. Effective stress management can help us to resolve conflicts with others assertively and confidently become better problem solvers in the face of life's demands and to appreciate the helpfulness of exercise and recreation.

Selye (2011) asserts that "It all seems ominous for individuals and organization. Life is demanding, fast paced and often unpredictable but we are more adaptable than most of us realize. Stress management is effective because it teaches people skills for reversing the "stress response". Through stress management, we learn where our real control lies and how to manage stress effectively.

Newman (2009) postulates that a major component of stress management is cognitive restructuring or changing the way we think. Our beliefs are the lens through which we look at life. If the expectations we have for ourselves, others and the work do not match reality, we will experience cognitive dissonance. Stress management courses and programs also teach people about the role of exercise and diet in healthy live, how to confidently and assertively express our desires in stressful situations, ways to be better managers of our time and resources and finally making our work more meaningful and productive. Furthermore, learning about stress management is a vital step to preventing many health problems associated with it. Stress management deals with the reduction of stress and various stressors in our daily lives.

Stress Management in Organizations

Of all stress influences, the psychological ones are the most subtle and difficult to deal with because most people refuse to accept emotional distress. People are more willing to admit to physical disorders but usually will deny psychological pain. To manage organizational stress effectively therefore requires proper identification of the available sources of stress, alongside a diagnosis of the symptoms of job stress. This will help managers in tackling stress-related matters from their roots.

Robbins (2005) pointed out that from the organization's standpoint management may not be concerned, when employees experience low or, and moderate levels of stress. The reason as pointed out earlier in this study is that such levels of stress may be functional and lead to higher employee performance. But high levels of stress, or

even low levels sustained over long periods of time, can lead to reduced employee performance and, this requires action by management for improvement. While limited amount of stress may benefit an individual's performance. We do not expect employees to see it that way from the individuals stand point, even low levels of stress are likely to be perceived as undesirable. It is not likely, therefore for employees and management to have different notions of what constitutes an acceptable level of stress on the job. What management may consider as "a positive stimulus that keeps the adrenaline running" is very likely to be seen as "excessive pressure" by employees.

Moorhead and Griffin (2005) noted that stress is widespread and so potentially disruptive in organizations. People and organizations should be concerned about how to manage it more effectively.

There are many strategies that have been developed to help in management of stress in the workplace. Quick (1998) stated that some of the strategies for managing stress are for individuals and others are geared towards organization. Robbins (2005) recognized individual and organizational approaches to managing stress.

Employee Performance

A major area of concern is the definition and limitations of the term „performance“ as used in evaluation. Currently, performance measures are greatly determined by a firm's financial performance and productivity, normally within highly managerialist perspective (Guest, 1997). This approach has limitations in that it neglects employees' role and contribution in the achievement of organizational performance and also fails to take into account how employees' perceive HR practices (Guest, 1999). Rath and Conchie (2009) stated that employee performance was linked to how well an employee achieved his or her goals and objectives.

Employee Performance is the ability to achieve the set objectives within the required timelines and parameters (Yusuf, Mohammed & Kazeem, 2014). Having regards to employee performance Sundi (2013) proposed five primary criteria that could be used to measure performance, namely; work quantity, work quality, work independence, timeliness and individual relationships. Many researchers focused on the relationship linking job performance and satisfaction in the area of Organizational Psychology and found out that the employees' performance depended on employees' satisfaction (Yahaya, Yahaya, Bon, Ismail, & Noor, 2012). This indicated that great employee performance can be achieved by a high level of job satisfaction (Insan Astuti, Raharjo, & Hamid, 2013). Yahaya et al. (2012) concluded that for the employees to remain motivated as well as to boost their job satisfaction, the employers should provide a good environment.

Measures of Employee performance

Employee Effectiveness

Effectiveness is a broad concept that is difficult to measure in organizations. According to (Amah, 2014) the concept of organizational effectiveness is an elusive one that there is no single way of defining it. This may be due to the too many criteria used and the many definitions available for the concept. (Veldsman, 1982) defined organizational effectiveness as a qualification attached to an organizations resulting from the comparison from the actual state of the entity against its ideal state. He posits that an organization can either be effective or ineffective. Effective organizations are built on effective individuals who work effectively in groups Lawler, (1972). There are different variables for measuring organizational effectiveness. Maheshwari (1980) said this much when he opined that that organizational effectiveness is a multi-dimensional concept, which has no agreement as to which dimensions are significant and should be used as the basis of the analysis.

Employee Efficiency

Ogboso & Amah (2016) opines that efficiency refers to the accomplishment of goals with minimum resources or waste. It includes measures such as time minimization, cost minimization, and waste minimization. Speed and time are important resources for any organization and must be seen to seek to maximize speed and minimize time. The way an organization does this indicates how efficient and productive they are. Speed and time were the essence of time and motion studies since the day of scientific management introduced by Taylor that led to management efficiency. They are sources of competitive advantage. Doing the right thing in corporate governance terms is an important, but not a sufficient, condition for performance. And doing the wrong thing (e.g. an ineffective audit committee, or lack of independence among the executives) will make it more difficult for an organization to perform but is not a measure of success or lack of it either. The questions relating to organization efficiency are: How effective is the organization in dispatching businesses (including through organization committees in and between meetings) and following up on decisions, does the organization identify and focus on key (not just a long list of) issues and risks facing the organizations; is the organization able to take initiatives, dealing with crises and identifying emerging issues?

The conception of time here is the duration taken to accomplish a task. These honest questions are both a matter of choice. Since it is usually only after an extended period is it possible to know whether the organization has dealt with the right issues, how well it has done so, and which issues have not been addressed. Accordingly, failing to ensure succession or invest in new technology is just as much about performance as successful talent management or systems investment. Organizations can be really helpful in identifying risks that executive director alone, sometimes preoccupied with current challenges, and may not have spotted. There are two questions rather than one here because a history of dealing with key issues as they arise is not enough. The ability to take initiatives, deal with crises and identify issues that are not part of ‘normal business’ is a crucial differentiator between an efficient and a tolerable organization. For the same reason ‘meeting organization objectives’ isn’t included as a performance measure, since it runs the risk of being too inward-looking and passively taking things too much as they are.

From the foregoing point of view, we hereby hypothesized thus:

- Ho₁:** There is no significant relationship between stress management and employee efficiency in deposit money banks in Port Harcourt.
- Ho₂:** There is no significant relationship stress management and employee effectiveness in deposit money banks in Port Harcourt.

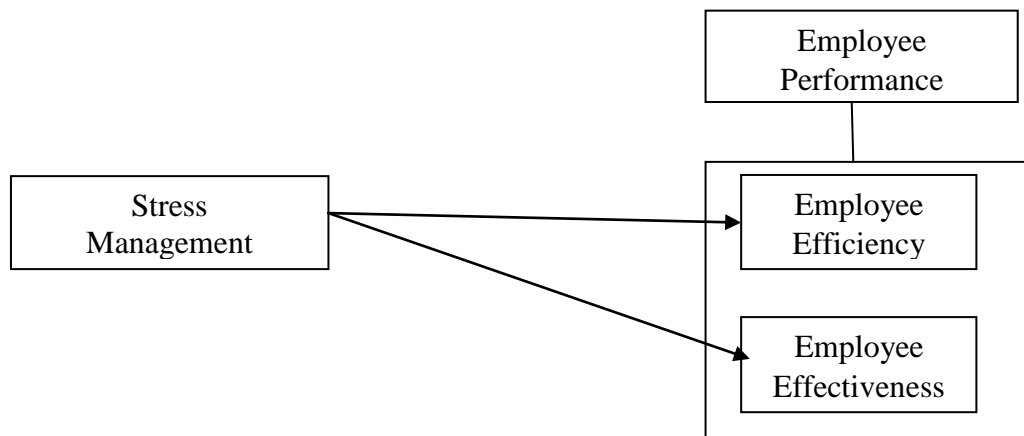


Fig.1 Operational Framework for the hypothesized relationship between stress management and employee performance.

Source: Author’s Desk Research, 2018

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study used a cross-sectional design. The population of this study covers employees of seven (7) selected Deposit Money Banks situated in Port Harcourt metropolis of Rivers State, Nigeria. These banks are: First bank, Union bank, GTB, FCMB, UBA, Diamond bank, and Sterling bank. The sampling frame for the study was 355 employees, of which a sample size of 188 was extracted using Taro Yamane’s sample size determination formula. The sampling procedure that will be used in this study is the intentional sampling technique Descriptive statistics and Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient for data analysis and hypothesis testing with the help of the SPSS version 23.

Table 1. Reliability statistics for the instruments

S/No	Dimensions/Measures of the study variable	Number of items	Number of cases	Cronbach’s Alpha
1	Stress Management	4	168	0.875
2	Employee Efficiency	4	168	0.772
3.	Employee Effectiveness	4	168	0.861

Source: Research data, 2018

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Bivariate Analysis

Secondary data analysis was carried out using the Spearman rank order correlation tool at a 95% confidence interval. Specifically, the tests cover a Ho1 hypothesis that was bivariate and declared in the null form. We have based on the statistic of Spearman Rank (rho) to carry out the analysis. The level of significance 0.05 is adopted as a criterion for the probability of accepting the null hypothesis in (p> 0.05) or rejecting the null hypothesis in

($p < 0.05$).

We will begin by presenting first a test of existing relationships.

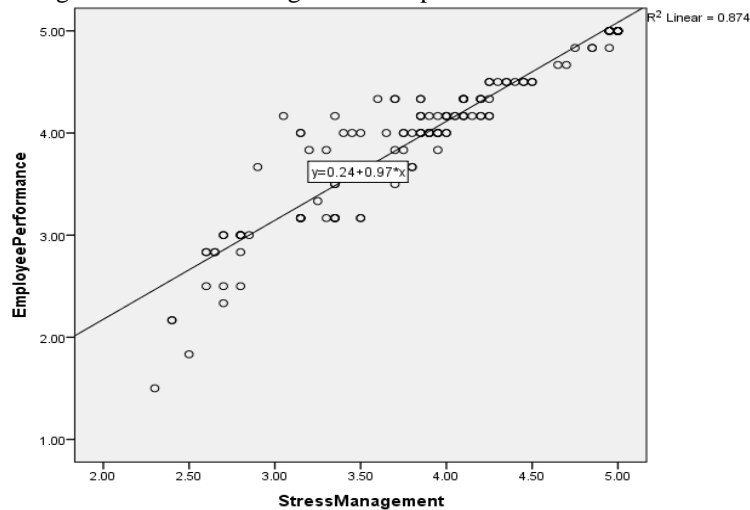


Figure 2 scatter plot relationship between Stress Management and Employee Performance

The scatter plot graph shows at R^2 linear value of (0.874) depicting a strong relationship between the two constructs. The implication is that an increase in Stress Management simultaneously brings about an increase in the level of Employee Performance. The scatter diagram has provided vivid evaluation of the closeness of the relationship among the pairs of variables through the nature of their concentration.

Table 2 Correlation Matrix Stress Management and Employee Efficiency

			Stress Management	Employee Efficiency
Spearman's rho	Stress Management	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.742**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	168	168
	Employee Efficiency	Correlation Coefficient	.742**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	168	168

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Data, 2018 (SPSS output, version 23.0)

The table above illustrates the test for the first previously postulated bivariate hypothetical statements.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between stress management and employee efficiency in deposit money banks in Port Harcourt.

The correlation coefficient (r) shows that there is a positive relationship between stress management and employee efficiency. The value 0.742 indicates a strong positive relationship at $p < 0.000 < 0.05$. The correlation coefficient represents a strong correlation indicating also a strong relationship among the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between stress management and employee efficiency in deposit money banks in Nigeria.

Table 3 Correlation Matrix Stress Management and Employee Effectiveness

			Stress Management	Employee Effectiveness
Spearman's rho	Stress Management	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.620**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	168	168
	Employee Effectiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.620**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	168	168

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Data 2018 (SPSS output, version 23.0)

The table above illustrates the test for the first previously postulated bivariate hypothetical statements.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between stress management and employee effectiveness in deposit money banks in Port Harcourt.

The correlation coefficient (r) shows that there is a positive relationship between stress management and employee effectiveness. The value 0.620 indicates a strong positive relationship at $p < 0.000 < 0.05$. The correlation coefficient represents a strong correlation indicating also a strong relationship among the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between stress management and employee effectiveness in deposit money banks in Nigeria.

VI. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results revealed a strong and positive relationship between the management of stress and employee performance of the money deposit banks in Nigeria using the Spearman Rank Order and in a 95% confidence interval. The findings of this study confirmed that there is a strong and positive relationship between stress management, efficiency and effectiveness. The finding of this research reinforces the previous studies and these studies include:

Falkenberg (1997) established a link between employee recreational activities and organizational performance. Their study was based on the premise that employee recreational activities were attractive to employees, were mechanisms for retaining employees, and were significant in reducing stress which had a negative impact on work performance and productivity. Their study showed that recreational activities had a significant positive impact on employee productivity and performance which births commitment. It showed that majority of employees who participated in recreational activities had above average performance, lower rates of absenteeism, higher commitment to work, and lower employee turnover. The findings supported the assertion that recreational activities had a positive impact on employee performance. Moreover, the study supported the need for workplace recreation programmes to improve employee performance and health needs. Similar studies by Pronk and Kottke (2009) and Kerr and Vos (1993) supported the implementation of recreational activities to improve employee well-being and reduce absenteeism. Kerr and Vos's research sought to determine whether employee recreational activities (ERAs) improved the health, performance, and well-being of employees of ING bank. The results of their study showed that ERAs reduced absenteeism rates and improved commitment.

The finding of this study corroborates what previous research has concluded on how flexible work schedule in an organization influenced employee commitment, and generally found a positive relationship between these two variables (Dex & Smith, 2002; Harris & Foster, 2005; Maxwell *et al.*, 2007). There is continuous interest from other researchers to study flexible work as it has been advocated as a means of increasing employee commitment. According to Glass & Finley (2002), their study concluded that flexible work schedule does impacts positively on employee commitment. Pierce (1980) compared employee commitment among those employees with flexible work schedule and those without flexible work schedule and found the former were more committed. Glass & Finley's (2002) review of the literature ratifies these findings, and concluded that flexible work creates favorable impacts on employee's well-being and reducing work-family conflict.

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Stress is at the centre of several challenges bedevilling employee in the work place, it cannot be eliminated hence the need to manage it to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the work force. Organization should ensure that their work environment is in order, jobs are designed to accommodate employees and policies that make for flexibility in work place should be put in place.

Based on the discussion and conclusion above, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. Management of deposit money banks should design task and jobs in ways that would make for effectiveness and efficiency and bring about improvement in the performance of their work force.
2. It is recommended that flexible job schedules should be incorporated into human resource management strategies, policies and plan of deposit money banks to enhance easy employee performance and commitment that will increase corporate survival.

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