LAFIA JOURNAL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
Volume 2, Number 1, 2022.
https://lalibjournals.org/index.php/LJLIS
ISSN: Print - 2814-0702, Online - 2814-0710
LJLIS

STRESS MANAGEMENT FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY AMONG ACADEMIC STAFF OF COLLEGE OF EDUCATION BILLIRI GOMBE STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study investigate stress management for effective service delivery among academic staff of College of Education Billiri Gombe state Nigeria. Study was guided by four objectives with four corresponding research questions. The researcher adopted survey research design. Instrument for data collection was the questionnaire and data generated was analyzed using frequency table and mean. The population of the study is 110, using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) determination table of sample size, 86 was therefore sample and selected for the study. Out of the 86 respondent and 40 were completed and returned found to be useful. From the analyses it was deduced that staff experience stress at work, also it was reveal that physical working environment, meeting deadlines, decision making and transportation to work are some of the causes of stress at work. The analysis also reveal that the negative effect caused by stress at work include low productivity, reduced job satisfaction, inability to concentrate on the job among others. It was also observed from the analysis that most respondents agree that being punctual at work, avoiding deadlines, avoiding fatigue, and having enough rest after work are some of the ways to manage stress at work. From the response it was observed that favorable working environment, seminars on stress management, employment of more staff among others are ways the institution can assist its staff in preventing or coping with stress at work.

Keywords: *stress, management, academic staff, service delivery.*

Introduction

Life in the 21st century is indefinitely far more complex than it has ever been. Regardless of one's status, level of qualification s or how privilege a person is, one is challenged sometime by frustration, change or conflict. Workers in Nigeria are been faced with many stress factors to cope with or managed. Many interactions

between individuals and the environment produce stress. It is normally said that life is full of stress, that the ordinary daily activities of daily life which should naturally be a routine, sometimes becomes very difficult in carry out the way one does normally (Adebiji, 2011). Academic staff in Universities, Colleges of Education and other high institutions face very busy and highly unpredictable work days with many individuals and group competing for their time. Sometimes, a stressful experience can be strong enough, or last long enough, to result in direct physical consequences that are harmful to good health. There is no way to avoid stress but avoiding it may be necessary. The amount of stress one faces is not nearly as important as how he deals with it. If one can learn to treat stress in the right way he can defuse it. Coping does not come naturally, it must be learned and honed like any other skill.

According to Shehu, Kalu & Ailaku (2018) in their article title "Stress management practices and job performance of library staff in Liz Otti Library,Babcock University IIishan Remo Ogun State, Nigeria" what is stressful for one personnel may not be a problem for the other personnel in the same organization. Although the importance of individual differences cannot be ignored, scientific evidence suggests that certain working conditions are stressful to most people. Such evidence argues for a greater emphasis on working conditions as the key source of job stress, and for job redesign as a primary prevention strategy.

Kupersmith (2009) believe that stress is a response to change in the environment as perceived by the individual. According to him, moderate stress can be beneficial and stimulating but severe and prolonged stress can have harmful physiology and psychological effects.

Stress is mental, physical or emotional strain or tension or it is a situation or factor that can cause this (Wikipedia 2009).The interference of the home front with work place demands sometimes constitutes stress to academic staff especially where the staff concerned is not able to manage both effectively. Aldwin (2001) averred that stress gives rise to responses such as rapid heart rates, greater alertness and the capacity for bursts of energy.

Stress is part of human life and every living organism undergoes series of stress as a result of daily life activity. Stress at work is one of the major psychosocial risk at work. Work related stress is a problem and is of great concerned to employees, employers, psychologist and counselors (Joseph, 2013). The aspiration of all the organizational managers including managers of high institutions is the extraction of employee loyalty and commitment that would culminate in greater productivity. For this they motivate their workers/staff trying to get their mind, as well as win their hearts and souls. Yet wittingly or unwittingly, these workers get

tensed up and anxiety-ridden. They begin to lose direction and the potency to act well, here stress sets in.

Bamber (2011) observed that occupational stress results in loss of huge amounts of money through employee's absence from work as a result of sickness, low staff morale, poor time keeping, decrease in productivity, increased industrial conflicts, replacement costs etc. The effects of such stress include headaches, irritation in the eyes and susceptibility to viral infections.

Kio Jo et al. (2015) and Lemu, (2007) enumerated the following as steps involved in stress management.

1. **Healthy living**: Get enough sleep, eat a balanced diet, and exercise regularly. Learn to relax, deep breathe is a natural relevant. Eat regularly, take a full launch hour break, take lot of water less sugar, and practice simple relaxation exercises. Take a brisk walk, run, play tennis or dance to stimulate blood flow.
2. **Self-Awareness**: recognize the signs of stress within you. Identify what thoughts, feelings, and behaviors you exhibit when under stress. Get to know your body; so that you can recognize the first signs of stress.
3. **Coping strategies**: Learn effective relaxation techniques, think positively, priorities and set limits and develop sense of humor. Learn to accept things and people. Learn to smile and laugh and to balance work and recreation.
4. **Support**: share your concerns with emphatic family members, co-workers, and friends if necessary, seek professional counseling create and use support network, from members of a reliable and caring work, family or social group, everyone needs someone to trust and with whom stress producing situations can be discussed in department without fear or rejection.
5. **Job satisfaction**: Know what type of work and environment you enjoy and seek to find it. Take one thing at a time.

Stress has been a prevalent and very costly problem in the workplace. In the academic environment stress has greatly ravaged human services and has also eaten deep into the fabric of effective service delivery. This has resulted in poor service delivery occasioned by poor health, absence from duty, inadequate assessment criteria, etc. with its toll on teaching and learning. Therefore stress is the way an individual respond to condition that scarce, threaten anger, bewilder or excite them.

Equally, Ajala(2011) posits that, an organization plays a major role especially in strengthening these relationship i.e. by creating an atmosphere of trust between the management and workers, between worker and workers settling rifts, counselling, human relation training, and social support services.

Statement of the Problem

Human beings lives are at the mercy of deadlines because of modern technology. Present day stress is not a unique problem because human kind has suffered stress since the dawn of human evolution. An academic staff impact knowledge to student and carryout research in his/her field and at the same time carryout certain administrative duties. The work of academic staff are supposed to be supported by administrative staff but not in all cases. Academic staff do both the academic and administrative duties and in doing that stress comes in. They need to manage the stress including developing healthy responses to their students and colleagues, establishing boundaries in their work place, learning how to relax and talk to someone when one does not understand issues at work place among others. It is stress is not managed it may affect the academic staff work productivity, research work and other aspects of their lives. Is in view of this that the researcher intend to carry out this study in order to investigate how the academic staff of college of education Billiri manage their stress at work for effective service delivery.

Objectives of the Study

The general objectives of the study is to investigate the management of stress among academic staff of college of education Billiri. Specific objectives are to:

1. Identify cause of stress at work/job
2. Identify the negative effect of stress
3. Ascertain ways that stress can be managed
4. Find out ways the institution is doing to assist them in preventing or coping with their stress

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions

1. What are the causes of stress in your work/job?
2. What are the negative effects of stress?
3. How do you manage stress at work/job
4. In what ways have your institution assisted you in preventing or coping with stress

Methodology

Survey research technique was used to carry out this study. Questions was designed to solicit information from academic staff of college of education Billiri Gombe State on stress management for effective service delivery. The questionnaire contains 20 items.

The population of the study is 110, using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) determination table of sample size, 86 was therefore sample and selected for the study. Out of the 86 respondent, 40 questionnaire were returned and found to be useful. The questionnaire was administer to the respondent through the help of a research assistant. Collected questionnaire were presented in frequency tables and analyzed using mean values. The likert scale measurement was used, the criterion mean value of 2.5 was used as the minimum scale of positive.

Result
Question 1
Causes of stress in your work place

ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	DECISION
Transportation to work	14	12	10	4	2.9	Agree
Physical working environment	14	16	8	2	3.0	Agree
Meeting deadlines	10	15	11	4	2.7	Agree
Decision making	12	22	4	2	3.1	Agree
Repetition of work	12	16	10	2	2.9	Agree

SA: strongly agree, A: agree, D: disagree, SD: strongly disagree

From the analysis above shows the responses on causes of stress at work place. The five causes put forward by the researcher were accepted by the respondents as they yielded mean values above the criterion mean of 2.5 and above

Question 2:
Negative effect caused by stress at work

ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	DECISION
Low productivity	14	16	8	2	3.0	Agree
Inability to concentrate on the job	16	14	7	3	3.0	Agree
Increase absenteeism	8	16	14	2	2.7	Agree
Feeling tired	14	16	8	2	3.0	Agree
Reduce job satisfaction	12	16	10	2	2.9	Agree

The data presented in the table above reveals the negative effect cause by stress at work. The response of the respondents indicate that they agree with the researcher on the item presented as the negative effect cause by stress at work. All the item have a mean of above 2.5 and above which was set by the researcher.

Question 3:
How do you manage stress at work?

ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	DECISION
Avoid fatigue	16	18	4	2	3.2	Agree
Be punctual at work	16	21	2	1	3.3	Agree
Participate in exercise/take a walk	15	18	7	0	3.2	Agree
Avoid deadline work	18	16	4	2	3.2	Agree
Have enough rest after work	15	16	7	2	3.1	Agree

From the above data gather on how to manage stress at work, the respondents accepted the item listed by the researcher as how to manage stress at work as the mean value indicated on the table above.

Question 4:
What has you institution been doing to assist you in preventing or coping with stress?

ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	DECISION
Seminar on stress management	15	10	7	8	2.8	Agree
Employment of more staff	14	10	12	4	2.8	Agree
Favorable working environment	14	16	8	2	3.0	Agree
Provision of adequate resources	12	14	12	2	2.9	Agree
Meeting to ascertain staff problems	16	8	12	4	2.9	Agree

Table 4 above shows the responses on how the institution can do to assist its staff in preventing or coping with stress. From the analysis the five item put forward by the researcher were accepted, as they yielded mean value above the criterion mean of 2.5

Discussion on Findings

From the analysis the respondents also agree that physical working environment is one of the causes of stress at work, meeting deadlines and, repetition of work. Also it was revealed from the analysis that low productivity, feeling tired and reduce job satisfaction are some negative effect of stress at work. This affirmed with Bamber (2011) which observed that occupation stress results in loss of huge amount of money through employee's absence from work, low staff morale, decrease in productivity etc. it was also gathered that the respondents agree that ways of to manage stress is to avoid fatigue, be punctual at work, avoid deadlines, have a enough rest among others which agree with Kio jo (2015) and Lemu (2007) which enumerate enough sleep, eat balanced diet and exercise

regularly as steps involves in stress management. The data also revealed that one of the ways to prevent or cope stress at work are: seminar on stress management should be organize, favorable working environment will help in coping with stress at work, provision of adequate resources and holding meetings with staff to ascertain their problems. The above ways to cope with stress at work is in line with Ajala (2011) who ascertain that creating an atmosphere of trust between the management and workers, between worker and workers settling rifts and human relation training.

Summary

Stress is all-time concern issue in work place, stress from work resulting from pressure of academic work, unhealthy life style and so many factors. Though stress can be beneficial for academic growth but increase magnitude can be harmful for physiological, psychological and social aspect. Coping with demand from students, and family and the situation in the country and working environment are not helping issues. Recognizing the importance of stress –free work environment cannot be over emphasized especially in an academic environment. Managing stress is a very important aspect that academic institutions need to put into consideration for its staff as it will be bring about good productivity on the part of its staff and at the same time job satisfaction.

Conclusion

Conclusively, Stress in the workplace is a growing problem, with extensive costs to individual's organizations and society. It has been a prevalent and very costly problem in the workplace. In the academic environment stress has greatly ravaged human services and has also eaten deep into the fabric of effective service delivery. This has resulted in poor service delivery occasioned by poor health, absence from duty, inadequate assessment criteria, etc with its toll on teaching and learning.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendation emerge:

1. The institution should organize seminar and workshop on stress management for the academic staff of the institution.
2. More staff should be recruited in doing so the workload on the staff will be reduced
3. The institution should create a favorable working environment for its academic staff
4. Adequate resources should be put in place.

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