



An Evaluation of the Causes of Stress Among the Management Staff of Federal College of Education, (Technical) Umunze, Anambra State

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Abstract

This study evaluated the causes of stress among management staff of federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State. A descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted in the study. The sample consisted of 150 respondents who occupied various administrative positions in the College. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used for the study. A self-designed Questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The validity of the instrument was established by giving the instrument to experts in the Department of Educational Management and Test and Measurement, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin-City, Edo State, while the reliability of the instrument was ensured through test-retest method. The reliability coefficient of 0.79 was obtained for the instrument which was considered high enough for reliability. Data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, means, percentages and t-test analysis. The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts and percentage scores. The finding revealed that, some of the perceived causes of stress among the management staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State, Nigeria are, the non-conducive working environment, improper planning and time management, increased work load/long working hours, responsibilities for other people and inability to meet deadlines and that self-induced stressor was the predominant among the management staff. The finding also revealed there was

no significant difference in the expression of male and female management staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State, Nigeria on causes of stress. Based on the findings, it was recommended that, in order to reduce stress among the management staff, they should not place too much emphasis on the need to achieve, they should manage their time properly and should not spend more than necessary hours in their places of work.

Keywords: Causes of Stress, Management Staff.

Introduction

Stress is said to now becoming a serious global health issue. An individual living with high levels of stress is putting his entire well-being at risk. Stress can be described as a psychological and physiological response to events that upset man's personal balance in some ways. There are differences in stress definition and this to extent due to individual or group perceptions and orientations. Mudhu (2015) described stress as the body's way of rising to a challenge and preparing to meet tough situation with focus, strength, stamina and heightened alertness. Stress can also be said to a demand of physical, mental energy or distress caused by physical or mental energy. It implies reactions of the body to forces of a deleterious nature. Obi and Obi (2007) defined stress as the "Wear and Tear" of our experience as we adjust to our continually changing environment, it has physical and emotional effects on us and can create positive or negative feelings. It does not matter if it is "good" or a "bad" change. For instance with the death of a loved one, the birth of a new relation, we experience stress as we adjust our lives. Therefore, in adjusting to different circumstances, stress helps or hinders us depending on how we react to it. In another way, Olanipekun (2005) asserted that, stress is the reaction of man's body to forces of deleterious nature, infections and various abnormal states that tend to disturb normal physiological equilibrium and the resting force set up in a body as a result of an externally applied force.

According to Cole (2016), stress is the adverse psychological and physical reactions that occur in an individual as a result of their being unable to cope with the demands being made on them. It is an individual's adaptive response to a situation that is perceived as challenging or threatening to the person's wellbeing. In the opinion of Barkey (2014), pressure comes on all individuals but the inability to deal with it, is what manifests as stress. Stress is therefore a reaction to a situation that can have a positive or negative effect. It is the individual's perception of the situation that determines whether the pressure is a challenge or a threat (Khan & Khan, 2015). Latha (2017) observed that stress is a dynamic conduction which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, demand, or resource related to what the individual desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important. It can be seen as the inability of an individual to cope with his or her environment particularly the responses the body makes while striving to maintain equilibrium and deal with the demands of life (Mwangi, 2014). It can be observed as a situation in which environment or internal demands tax or exceed the adaptive responses of the individual.

Stress can either be positive or negative, depending on one's interpretations. Stress can be positive (eustress) which is associated with achievement and exhilaration which stimulates an individual to better performance. On the other hand, distress is the negative stress associated with loss of security,

helplessness, disappointment and desperation which results in feelings of distrust, rejection, anger and depression (Mudhu, 2015). Stress, however is typically discussed in a negative context, it also has a positive value (Rita, 2006). The causes of stress are numerous. Stress could be linked to outside factors such as the state of the world, the environment in which one lives or works or ones family. Causes of stress depend on the nature of and differ from individual to individual. A situation that is stressful to one may be neutral or even enjoyable to someone else. Obi and Obi (2007) maintained that the uniqueness of human beings in responding to pressure is not solely due to what happens to them but also the way they think and interpret what happens. In other words, people react differently to stressful situations.

For the purpose of this study, the causes of stress can be grouped into five categories namely, self-induced stressors, organizational stressors, domestic stressors, macro-environmental stressors and miscellaneous stressors. According to Ellen, Gill, Melinda and Lisa (2007), self-induced stressors are stressors created by individuals through their actions. The authors further maintained that, some executive or management staff through their perception of life, expectations and value systems, belief systems impose excessive demands and unrealistic high standards on themselves, thereby creating and exposing themselves to endogenous stressors. Improper time management as a stressor is seen by Obi and Obi (2007) as stress over load created by work overload. This stressor is experienced by a worker who has many things to accomplish in little time or when a set of performance standards are very high that the worker cannot satisfactorily complete them no matter the time at his disposal. The worker can interpret these events as stressful stimuli. On organizational stressors, Yusuf, Afolabi and Adigun (2018) described organizational stressors as those stress-induced factors peculiar to people in different organizations. He further maintained that some very hard working and qualified executive or management staffs are left out of promotions and appointments in their organizations as a result of federal character, quota system, tribalism, nepotism, statism and ethnicism.

Over promotion in a place of work could also lead to stress. Adigun (2015) posited that over promotion is a way of promoting people above their level of competence. Perhaps over promotion could be as a result of tribalism, nepotism or statism, which often than normal exposes the promoted individual to intense stress. The over promoted individual may try all sorts of gimmicks to mark his/her incompetence. Barkey (2014) noted that, some people are just not comfortable moving into higher socio-economic brackets where they have to dress differently in ways unfamiliar to them. Some of course, see themselves as incapable of learning new things and are afraid of making fools of themselves. Such people live in anxiety and tend to be too sensitive to comments which they deem related to their organizational performance. Adigun (2015) described domestic stressors as those induced factors related to home which affect a person or executive on his job. It is evident that home and the office exist in a dynamic reciprocal relationship. Problems at home may be inadvertently transferred to the office while organizational stress can be brought home from work. This is in accordance with the principles of the transferability of stress. The home could be a source of happiness and joy while on the other hand, it could be a “war front and an earthly hell”, charged with stressors of all configurations and dimensions. No family in the world exists without some elements of friction, pain, turbulence and difficulty. Obi and Obi (2007) opined that no marriage is free of conflicts and that at one time or the other, most marriages turn around behaviours and education of children. For instance interference in family affairs by mother-in-law, father-in-law

and sister-in-law may generate large doses of stress in many families.

All other stressors are macro-environmental and miscellaneous in nature. Some notable ones are poor economy, politics and corruption in the country; others are daily frustration and irritation from subordinates, examination malpractices, drug abuse, cult activities and religious riot. For instance religions riots are creating another portfolio of palpable stress for people in Nigeria, People have been killed, maimed and mutilated during religious riots and business premises have been destroyed, burnt, or looted during religious riots. According to Akinmayowa (2014), many of the problems being experienced in Nigerian society and possibly higher institutions are forces of poor management tacts, politics of tenure, Public relation pressure and dysfunctional administrative or management staff. According to a study carried out by Anyanwu, Ifeyinwa and Enyi (2015) on a demographic study of work related stress among librarians and information professionals in the University of Ibadan Library, Nigeria. The study surveyed among others, work environment, personal factors, home-work interface, professional/academic demands, job satisfaction, management problem and coping strategy of the respondents to determine causes of stress and management/support systems available to the library staffs. The study revealed that there was no significant difference between male and female staff about their perception on the issue of work-place stress though more males than females expressed job dissatisfaction as a result of stress; females opined that librarianship was stressful because of motherhood and female roles especially at home. Other stress factors include ergonomic problem, pain in the neck due to carriage of books, poor incentives and bullying/use of harsh and abusive language from users as well as exclusion from decision making. Because of the potential negative consequences of stress on management staff, it is necessary to evaluate causes of stress among the management staff in Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

Considering the fact that the school management staff has a lot of responsibilities and expectations loaded on them, this therefore leaves no doubt that the school management staff can easily get stressed as a result of the performance of the functions expected of them in that capacity. It has been observed that, management staff in Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State go through a number of daily routines as schedules of activities. Several of these activities can be said to be quite tasking if not out rightly demanding and extremely stressful. This in effect can bring about the much referred to occupational stress. This study is therefore concerned with identifying the causes of stress among management staff in Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to find out the causes of stress among the management staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. find out the causes of stress among the management staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State.
2. determine the predominant stressor among the management staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the causes of stress among the management staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Anambra State?
2. What are the predominant stressor among the management staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State?

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis as formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female management staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State, Nigeria on causes of stress.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of all the management staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State, Nigeria. The management staff is of 3 categories, they include the top, middle and low levels. The top level management comprises Provost, Deputy Provost, Registrar, Bursar, Librarian, Director of Works and Principal Medical Officer. The middle level management staff consists of the Deans of Schools and they are the executors of the policies made for the college while Heads of Department are the low level management staff whose statutory roles are executors in nature. The sample for the study was 150 respondents consisting 7 top level officers, 7 Deans of schools and 34 heads of departments who were purposively selected because of their statutory roles. Moreover, 102 principal lecturers and above were purposively selected for the study, and these were made up of 3 principal lecturers from each department. They were included in study due to their involvement in the decision making process at the academic Board, the highest decision making body on academic matters in the College. A self-designed questionnaire titled "Stress among Management Staff of College of Education Questionnaire (SMSCOEQ) was used to collect data used for this study. The questionnaire comprised 3 sections "A", "B" and "C". Section A consisted of some items which seek information about the (designation or status) bio-data of the respondents (i.e. designation/status, and position held). Section B consisted of 26 items which sought information on the causes of stress among management staff. While Section C consisted of 5 items on the predominant stressors among the management staff. The instrument was validated by five (5) experts in the areas of Physical Education, Educational Management, tests and measurement both within University of Benin, Benin-City, Edo state, Nigeria. The statistical tools used to analyze the data were frequency counts, and parentage scores.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the causes of stress among the management staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State?

Table 1: Causes of Stress among Management Staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State, Nigeria

S/N	ITEMS	FREQUENCY (F)		PERSENTAGE (%)	
		AGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE
1.	Non-conductive working environment	149	1	99	1
2.	Improper planning and time management	143	7	95	5
3.	Increased work load/ long working hours	140	10	93	7
4.	Responsibilities for other people	135	15	90	10
5.	Inability to meet deadlines	131	19	87	13

Table 1 revealed the causes of stress among management staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State, Nigeria. Prominent among the perceived causes are the non-conductive working environment (99%) improper planning and time management (95%); increased work load/long working hours (93%); responsibilities for other people (90%) and inability to meet deadlines (87%).

Research Question 2: What are the predominant stressor among the management staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State?

Table 2: Predominant Stressor among Management Staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State, Nigeria

S/N	ITEMS	FREQUENCY (F)		PERSENTAGE (%)	
		AGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE
1.	Self-induced stressor	126	24	83	17
2.	Organizational stressor	87	63	57	43
3.	Domestic stressor	48	102	31	69
4.	Micro-environment stressor	115	35	75	25
5.	Miscellaneous stressor	96	54	63	37

Table 2 shows the predominant stressor among the management staff Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State, Nigeria. As it appeared in table 2, on item 1, 126 (83%) of the respondents agreed that self-included stressor is predominant while 24 (17%) of them disagreed. On item 2, 87 (57%) of the subjects agreed that organizational stressor is the predominant while 63 (43%) of them disagreed. Also, on item 3, 48 (31%) of the respondents agreed that domestic stressor, is the predominant stressor while 102 (69%) of them disagreed. As revealed on item 4, 115 (75%) of the respondents revealed that macro-environmental stressor is the predominant stressor, while 35 (25%) of them disagreed and bound with these, on item 5, 96 (63%) of the respondent, agreed that miscellaneous stressor is the predominant stressor while 54 (34%) of them

disagreed. One can therefore infer from the table that in order of ranking, self-induced stressor is the predominant stressor among the stressors affecting the respondents in the College.

Test of Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the mean rating of Male and Female management staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State, Nigeria.

Table 3: T-test Analysis of difference between the mean ratings of Male and Female Management Staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State, Nigeria

Group	N	Mean	Std. D	df	t-cal.	t-tab.	Remarks
Male	59	3.06	0.91	148	0.65	1.96	Accepted
Female	91	3.11	0.72				

P > 0.05 (Not Significant)

The result of analysis presented in Table 3 revealed that t-cal of (0.65) was less than t-tab (1.96) at 148 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. This led to non-rejection of the hypothesis; hence there is no significance difference in the expression of male and female management staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State, Nigeria on causes of stress.

Discussion of Findings

This finding revealed that, some of the perceived causes of stress among the management staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State, Nigeria are, the non-conducive working environment, improper planning and time management, increased work load/ long working hours, responsibilities for other people and inability to meet deadlines. These are very critical factors to the success any given institution. The finding is in agreement with the finding of Anyanwu, Ifeyinwa and Enyi (2015) who found that poor working environment is a source of occupational stress and the problem of implementing the curriculum planned by non-experts causes stress in Nigeria educational institutions. Also, improper time management might not be unconnected with pressures and deadlines of getting one or two academic work done in this area of study. The finding of this study is in line with the result of Obi and Obi (2007) who found that improper time management is an organizational stress or which often than not causes psychological, emotional burdens and occupational syndrome such as apathy, anxiety, depression and other job related diseases. Also, on the responsibilities for others as one of the major causes of stress among the management staff in the College, corroborated Adigun's (2015) finding. The author maintained that responsibilities for others may hinders an individual at work to achieve a given task. This may be as a result of queries given to their subordinates, motivation or make other decisions about them. The implication of this is that, the management staff found in this position, experience emotional strains. People who are in organizational positions to motivate other people, reward or punish them or other decisions about them, experience high levels of stress than people working in other sections of the organization. These people in charge of other people are more likely to show overt symptoms of stress such as ulcers or hypertension, than their counterparts in finance or supply.

The study also revealed that the predominant stressor in the area of study is self-induced. This might not be unconnected with the perception of life, the expectations, the value and belief systems of the management staff Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State, Nigeria which impose excessive demands, unrealistic and unprincipled high standards on themselves, thereby creating their own unique and endogenous stressors. This implies that the management staff in the College like any other people in an organization, want everything out in life and insist on achieving them in a very short time span. They are the perfectionist who set idealistic rules and regulations that are impossible to attain. This action usually leads to low productivity in an organization. When subordinates actions are at variance with that of super ordinate being (management staff) in the College. This findings of Adigun (2015) and Rita (2006) corroborated the find of the study. They jointly found that executives through their perception of life, their expectations, expect the entire world to revolve around their set rules, regulations and standards, which lead to stress when not achieved. The finding also revealed there was no significant difference in the expression of male and female management staff of Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State, Nigeria on causes of stress.

Conclusion

The management staff in the Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State, Nigeria revealed some incidence of stress as a result of the various stressors confronting them. They are mostly affected by self-induced stressors which have direct bearing on their personal life which often than not could lead to low productivity and ineffectiveness on the job.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The management staff should not place too much emphasis on the need to achieve, they should manage their time properly.
2. They should not spend more than necessary hours in their places of work.

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