

Perceived Work Stress, Climate Change and Job Performance Among Staffs of Higher Institution in Nigeria

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Abstract

Background: The Nigerian workforce is faced with a complex and demanding environmental condition that is characterized by economic instability, intense competition and limited resources and climate change. Understanding the relationship between workplace stress and job performance is crucial for developing effective interventions to improve employee well-being and organizational outcomes.

Objective: This study explored the impact of work stress and climate change on the job performance of Staff of higher Institution in Nigeria

Methods: This study employed the survey research design method. The research instrument was a questionnaire. A total of 95 University Staff responded to the questionnaire. The data was analysed using Descriptive Statistics and Correlation.

Results: The findings from the study revealed that 38.5% of the respondents were from South West region, 30.2% from North East and 31.3% were from the South-South Region of Nigeria. 55.2% of the respondents feel stressed at work. Work stress was not significantly correlated with Job performance in the South West ($r = -0.118$, $p > 0.05$) and North East ($r = 0.109$,

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$p > 0.05$), but was significantly correlated in the South-South Region ($r = 0.526^{**}$). Climate change significantly influenced job performance in the North East ($r = 0.500^{**}$), but had no significant influence in South West and South-South.

Conclusion: Workers in Tertiary institution are undergoing work stress, while stress may not be completely eliminated, management of tertiary institution should embrace recognized stressed management techniques to help their staff manage work stress, thereby encouraging productivity and increasing expectancy among staff of higher Institution of learning.

Keywords: Work, Stress, Climate, Job, Performance

Introduction

The Nigerian workforce is faced with a complex and demanding environmental condition, that is characterized by economic instability, intense competition and limited resources. In this context, workplace stress has become a prevalent issue, impacting not only employee well-being but also organizational productivity and performance (Aina, 2019;). According to Elnathon & Adeoye (2021), Manifestations of workplace stress in Nigeria encompass diverse forms, including workload overburden, unclear roles, inadequate resources, and interpersonal conflicts. These stressors can trigger a series of detrimental consequences, such as plummeting job satisfaction, increased absenteeism, presenteeism (physically present but mentally detached), and ultimately, diminished job performance (Ebisike, 2020).

Workplace stress stems from a complex interplay of individual, organizational, and societal factors. The individual factors includes role ambiguity, lack of control, work-life balance and financial strain; the organisational factors are high work load and tight deadlines, poor leadership, lack of resources, poor communication, interpersonal conflict and unsafe or unhealthy working conditions. The societal factors are economic instability, work-life balance (Ugwunna & Egboghon, 2022; Ogah, 2020; Elnathan and Adeoye, 2021; Aina, 2019; Ololu et al., 2022; Okeke et al., 2017; Ebisike, 2020; Iskamto, 2021). Elnathan & Adeoye (2021) were of the view that these stressors often intertwine and amplify each other, thereby creating a complex web of challenges for Nigerian employees.

Stress has also been defined based on the work area, in the corporate world, it has often been defined as the psychological and physical strain resulting from demands or pressure within the workplace (American Psychology Association, 2020). In the Healthcare sector, Centre for Medicare and Medicaid Service (2018) defined stress as emotional and physical toll experienced by medical professionals due to the demanding nature of patient care, long hours and high states. In information technology, it is characterized as the strain arising from tight deadlines, rapidly evolving technologies and the need to constantly upgrade one's skill (National Education Association, 2021). In entrepreneurship, stress is often defined as the pressure and uncertainty

associated with running a business, financial responsibilities and the need to navigate a competitive market (Kuratko et al, 2017). It is observed that in almost all these definition of stress, the word strain and pressure was a key word, given a general notion, that once an individual is strained or felling pressure, stress is imminent. In the educational cycle, stress is manifested as the emotional burden on teachers and administrators, stemming from heavy workloads, tight schedules and educational reforms (NEA, 2021).

Understanding the relationship between workplace stress and job performance is crucial for developing effective interventions to improve employee well-being and organizational outcomes. A large body of research suggests a generally negative and significant relationship between work stress and job satisfaction (Spector, 1997; Judge et al., 2001), which mean that as work stress increases, job satisfaction decreases. Ackerman & Kanigel (1999) in their study revealed that Chronic stress depletes emotional and physical resources, leaving individuals less energized and less able to find enjoyment in their work, while Melamed et al (2006) reported that stressful work environments often involve factors like heavy workload, lack of control, and poor social support, which can directly decrease satisfaction with working conditions, relationships, and the overall job experience. Kahn & Byosi, (2014) found that stress can negatively impact cognitive function and performance, leading to feelings of inadequacy and frustration, further diminishing satisfaction. It is however important to state that the relationship is not always linear as individual differences and coping mechanism can play a moderating role.

In Nigeria, previous research exploring the connection between workplace stress and job performance in Nigeria has presented inconsistent findings. Some studies reveal a substantial negative correlation, suggesting that higher stress levels correspond to poorer job performance (Iskamto, 2021; Ogah, 2020). Others report insignificant or even positive relationships, underscoring the complex and multifaceted nature of this phenomenon (Taiwo, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

Studies in Nigeria suggest that over 50% of university staff from faculty and researchers to administrators and support personnel, experience chronic stress levels and it is further compounded by limited awareness such as the lack of understanding about stress and stigma thereby preventing individuals addressing the issue proactively. Many workplaces lack effective stress management programs or resources to support employee well-being and also Underlying issues like poverty, poor infrastructure, and political instability contribute to overall stress levels and can exacerbate workplace pressure. These stressors can lead to a range of negative consequences, including decreased job satisfaction, increased absenteeism, presenteeism (being physically present but mentally disengaged), and ultimately, diminished job performance (Ebisike, 2020).

Aim and Objectives:

The aim of this study is to explore the impact of work stress and climate change on the job performance of Staff of higher Institution in Nigeria.

The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify the prevalent workplace stressors experienced by employees of Higher Institution in Nigeria
2. Explore the relationship between workplace stress and job performance among employees of Higher Institution in Nigeria
3. Explore the relationship between climate change and job performance employees of Higher Institution in Nigeria

Research Questions

The following research questions guide this study:

1. What are the common workplace stressors faced by employees of Higher Institution in Nigeria?
2. what is the relationship between workplace stress and employees job performance in Higher Institution of Learning in Nigeria?
3. what is the relationship between climate change and job performance employees of Higher Institution in Nigeri

Methodology

This study employed the survey research design method. University Staff from Three geopolitical zones were selected for the study. The research instrument was a questionnaire. A total of 95 University Staff responded to the questionnaire. The data was analysed using Descriptive Statistics and Correlation analysis. The analysis was carried out using SPSS version 25

Results

The result obtained from this study is presented in Tables and Charts. The first table presents the geopolitical distribution of respondents

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents

S/N	Geopolitical Area	N	Percentage (%)
1	North East	29	30.2%
2	South-South	30	31.3%
3	South West	37	38.5%

Table 1 shows that 30.2% of the respondents were from the North-East region of Nigeria, 31.3% are from South-South geopolitical group and the remaining 38.5% are from the South-West geopolitical group.

In assessing the stress level, Table 2 shows that an average of 55.2% of the respondents is stressed in their workplace. of these 55.2% stressed, The chart (figure 1) reveals that based on geopolitical zones, The North-East zone higher institution staffs were the most stressed (69%) followed by staffs from the South West (44%) and then the South-South (43.30%) respondents.

Table 2 also shows that 51% claimed to be overburdened with work load, out of which 56.7% are from the south west, 55.10% from the North East and 40% from the South-South as seen in Figure 1.

Table 2: General Stress Level of Respondents

	N	Percentage (%)
Stress at Work	52	55.2%
Overwhelmed by workload	49	51%
Anxious to meet deadlines	34	35.4%

Table 2 shows the general stress level of respondents. 55.2% were generally stressed at work, while 51% felt they were overwhelmed by workload. a lesser percentage of 35.4% were of the opinion that they are always anxious to meet deadline. In comparing the three geopolitical zones in Nigeria, the Figure 1 shows that respondents from North-East had the highest level of stress at work, while staff of higher institutions from South-South Nigeria are the ones that are overwhelmed by workload the most. Staffs from South-West were more anxious to meet work deadline.

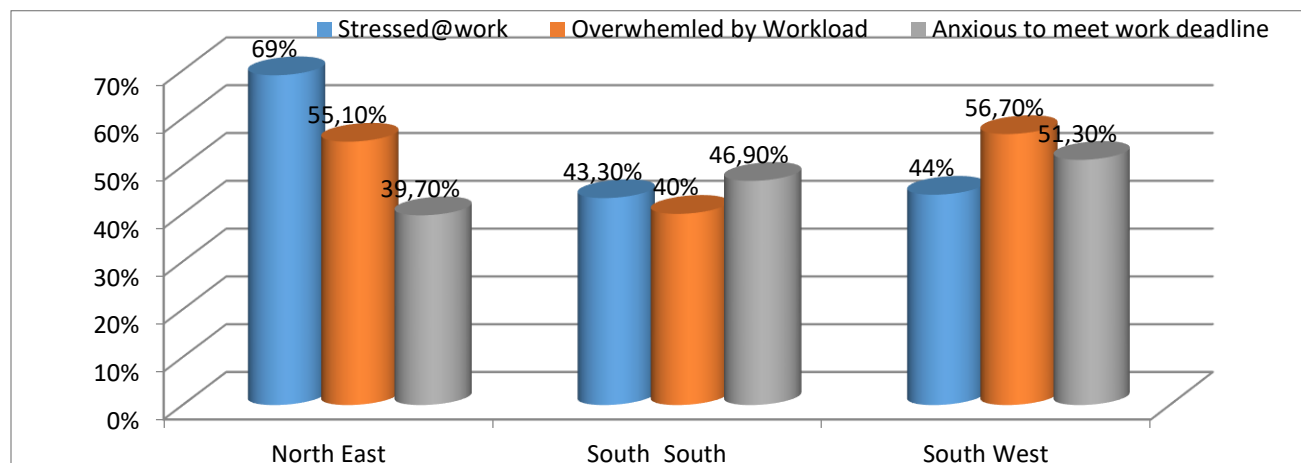


Figure 1; Stress level of Staff of Higher Institution

Answering the Research Questions

Research Question 1

What are the common workplace stressors faced by employees of Higher Institution in Nigeria?

Answer

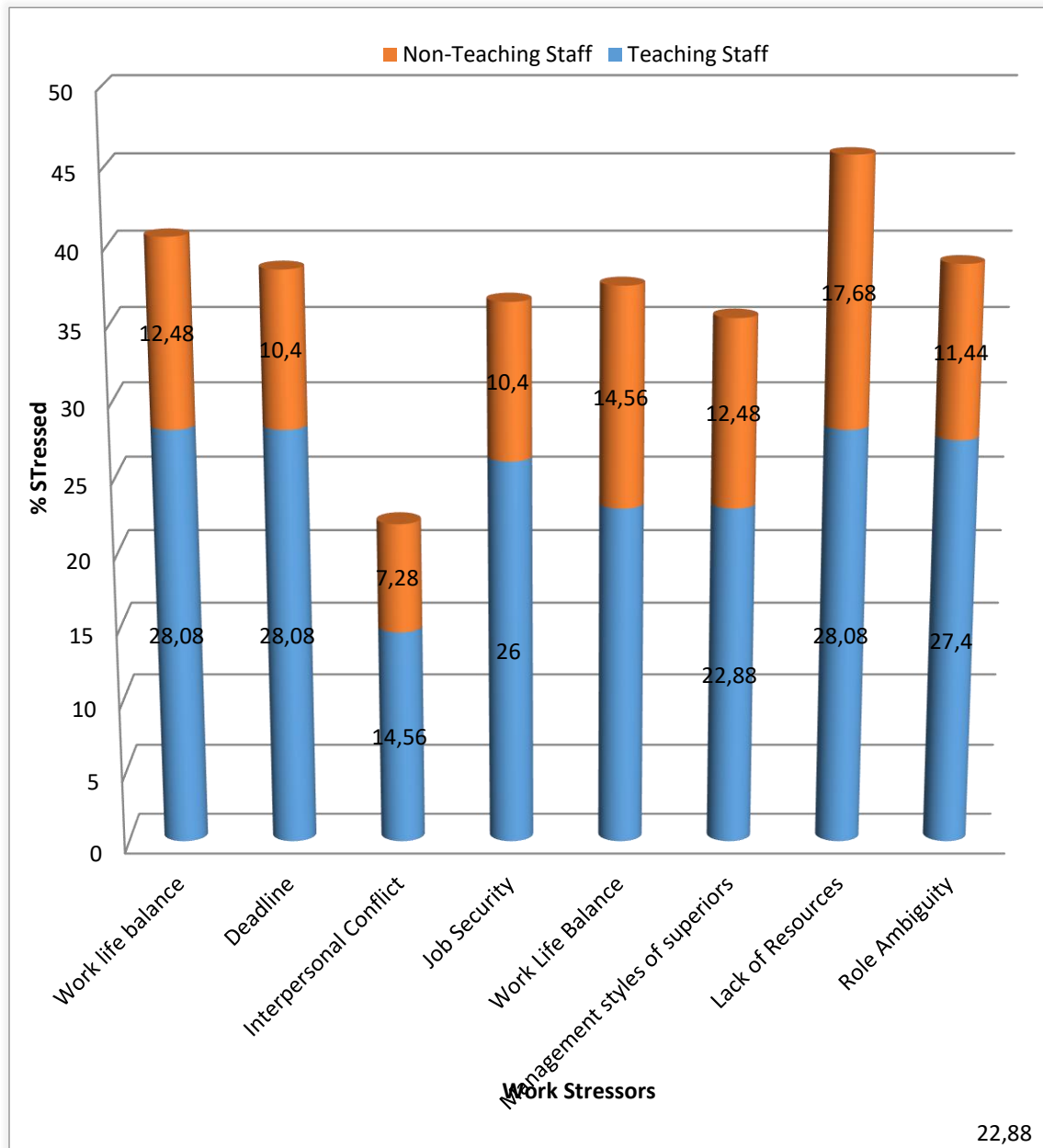
Table 3: Common workplace stressors faced by employees of Higher Institution in Nigeria

	Percentage Stressed	Sometime Stressed
Workload	40.6%	51%
Deadline	38.6%	51%
Interpersonal conflict	21.9%	43.8%
Job Security	36.5%	31.3%
Work life Balance	37.5%	44.8%
Management styles of superiors	35.5%	35.4%
Lack of resources	45.9%	45.8%
Role Ambiguity	38.6%	41.7%

Table 3 shows the common workplace stress as perceived by the respondents. The result shows that for those stressed, 40.6% was due to workload, 38.6% was due to deadlines they have to meet; 21.9% stated that interpersonal conflict was a stressor to them; 36.5% stated that job security was a stressor and 37.5% were perceived work life balance as a stressor. Management styles of superiors and lack of resources were also seen as a common workplace stressor by 35.5% and 45.9% of respondents respectively. 38.6% claims that role ambiguity is also a work place stressor. The perspective of teaching and non-teaching staff as regards workplace stressor is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2 shows that the percentage of teaching and non-teaching staff that perceived that these are common workplace stressor. For instance, while 28.08% perceived that work life balance is a common stressor among staffs of higher institutions in Nigeria, only 12.48% were of the view among the non-teaching staff. Also 27.4% of teaching staff stated that role ambiguity is a common stressor while only 11.44% of non-teaching staff reported same as a common stressor. The figure reveals that teaching reported workplace stress more than the non-teaching staff

Research Question 2 and Hypothesis 1



Research Question 2 and Hypothesis 1

What is the relationship between workplace stress and employees job performance in Higher Institution of Learning in Nigeria?

Answer

To answer the research question two, a Pearson Product Moment Correlation was conducted. The result is presented in table 4

Table 4: Relationship between Workplace Stress and Employees Job Performance

Variables	N	r- value	ρ Value	Remark
Perceived Work Stress Level/Job Performance	96	0.096	0.356	No relationship

Table 4 shows that there was no relationship between perceived work stress and Job performance ($r = 0.096$; $\rho < 0.05$) in Institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. The result was also presented based on geopolitical zone studied. The result is presented in Table 5

Table 5: Relationship between Workplace Stress and Employees Job Performance by Geopolitical zones

Regions	N	Mean Score Workplace Stress	Mean Score Job Performance	R	ρ
North East	29	2.53 ± 0.62	2.40 ± 0.56	0.109	0.443
South-South	30	2.19 ± 0.48	2.28 ± 0.49	0.526	0.003
South West	36	2.67 ± 0.67	2.23 ± 0.54	-0.118	0.494

Work stress was not significantly correlated with Job performance in the South West ($r = -0.118$, $\rho > 0.05$) and North East ($r = 0.109$, $\rho > 0.05$), but was significantly correlated in the South-South Region ($r = 0.526$; $\rho < 0.05$). South-South was the only region that workplace stress was significantly related to their job performance.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between climate change and job performance employees of Higher Institution in Nigeria

Answer

In answering the research question two, a PPMC was carried and the result is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Relationship between Climate Change and Employees Job Performance by Geopolitical zones

Regions	N	R	p
North East	29	0.500	0.006
South-South	30	0.124	0.515
South West	36	-0.151	0.379

Climate change significantly influenced job performance in the North East ($r = 0.500^{**}$), but had no significant influence in South West and South-South.

Discussion

This study revealed particularly revealed that work overload and role ambiguity was particular a stressor for teaching staff of higher institution. Similarly, the study of Aiyedun, Aiyedun, & Ogunode, (2021) reported a same. They noted that staff, particularly lecturers, often face excessive workloads due to understaffing, large student populations, and a "publish or perish" culture. This is compounded by a lack of clarity in roles, which can lead to role conflict and burnout.

The First Finding of this study is an intriguing one, the finding reveals no relationship between no significant relationship between workplace stress and job performance among staffs of Nigerian higher institutions. This result challenged the common assumption that existed in Literature as numerous studies stressed that stress is a direct negative predictor of job performance (Ugoji & Isele, 2020). This finding of this study did not to refute that common assumption, but rather presents an opportunity to explore the complex nature of stress-performance relationship. Some possible explanation to this finding could be as describe by the Yerkes-Dodson Law which implies that the relationship between stress and performance is often non-linear, thus, it is possible that the stress experienced by the respondents in this study was not a debilitating force, but a motivating one (Ugoji & Isele, 2020). it could also be that Staff may be utilizing effective strategies such as time management, prioritization, and engaging in relaxation with family to manage their stress (Saleem, Jamil, & Khalid, 2017) as the Nigerian academic staff have long operated in a challenging environment and may have developed robust coping mechanisms to navigate stress. Also, if staff are highly satisfied with their jobs, perhaps due to a passion for teaching or research, or if they are intrinsically motivated by the desire for career advancement, this could be a more powerful driver of performance than the negative effect of stress (Usoro, 2018). This finding therefore highlights that the academic work environment in Nigeria is highly complex, where the relationship between stress and performance is not a simple cause-and-effect. Instead, it is a dynamic interaction mediated by a combination of individual resilience, effective coping strategies, and other institutional or personal factors.

The second finding of this study revealed that Climate change significantly influenced job performance in the North East, but had no significant influence in South West and South-South,

Nigeria. This finding presents a crucial insight into the regionally heterogeneous impacts of climate change in Nigeria. The finding of a significant relationship between climate change and job performance in the North-East is strongly supported by the study of Adewuyi & Olofin, (2018). Their study highlights the region's acute vulnerability and noted that North-East's economy is predominantly agrarian, with a large population dependent on rain-fed agriculture, livestock, and fishing. Climate change therefore manifests in this region through prolonged droughts, desertification, and the shrinking of water bodies like Lake Chad (Adewuyi & Olofin, 2018). This environmental stress directly impairs job performance for the majority of the workforce not only staffs of higher institution. . For instance, Oyekale, (2015) stated that poor rainfall and extreme heat lead to crop failures and reduced yields, directly impacting a farmer's "job performance" and income . Beyond agriculture, the climate crisis in the North-East is a major driver of conflict and insecurity. Competition over scarce resources has exacerbated tensions between farmers and herders, contributing to the ongoing security challenges (Fasona et al., 2011). This instability leads to mass displacement, the destruction of infrastructure, and a general breakdown of economic activities, making it nearly impossible for individuals across all sectors to maintain consistent job performance. As noted by Onuoha (2018), insecurity is a significant impediment to economic activity and human capital development in the region.

The lack of a significant relationship in the South-West and South-South regions can be attributed to their more diversified economies and different climate challenges. These findings do not suggest that climate change is absent, but rather that its impact on job performance is less direct and is mediated by a different set of factors. Ogunjemite (2010) stated that the economies of the South-West and South-South are less reliant on primary agriculture. The South-West, home to Lagos, is a hub for Nigeria's service sector, while the South-South is dominated by the oil and gas industry. The job performance of an academic staff is largely insulated from the direct, day-to-day effects of climate variability. While climate-related events may cause temporary disruptions, their effects are often not a sustained drag on productivity in the same way as they are in the North-East's agricultural sector. The primary climate threats in these southern regions are rising sea levels, coastal erosion, and frequent flooding, rather than drought and desertification (Okpala & Chukwura, 2018), thus their impact on individual job performance may not be consistently measurable through a direct correlation.

CONCLUSION

Workers in Tertiary institution are undergoing work stress, while stress may not be completely eliminated, management of tertiary institution should embraces recognized stressed management techniques to help their staff manage work stress, thereby encouraging productivity and increasing expectancy among staff of higher Institution of learning. Based on the findings of

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the study it is therefore concluded that the academic work environment in Nigeria is very complex, where the relationship between stress and performance is not a simple cause-and-effect. Instead, it is a dynamic interaction mediated by a combination of individual resilience, effective coping strategies, and other institutional or personal factors. Also the significant relationship found in the North-East underscores the urgent and direct threat that climate change poses to the livelihoods and economic stability of a highly vulnerable, agriculture-dependent population; while the lack of a significant relationship in the South-West and South-South does not negate the presence of climate change but instead highlights how factors like economic diversification and a different set of climate-related challenges can mediate its impact on individual job performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made.

1. Management of Institutions of higher learning should prioritize employee wellbeing and support systems, clarify roles and improve work environment
2. The government should develop Region-Specific climate policies for the nation as ‘one size fit all approach is inadequate in Nigeria.

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