

Perceived Influence of Work-Related Stress and Human Resource Management Practices on Lecturers' job Productivity in Universities in Kwara State

Olayiwola Gafar Olorisade

Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria.

Olayiwola.olorisade@kwasu.edu.ng

Eyitayo Bamidele Amupitan

Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria.

bammyd505@gmail.com

Umar Hussein Umar

Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria.

umar0164@gmail.com

Abstract

Work-Related stress is a condition in the workplace that negatively affects an individual's performance and overall well-being of their body and mind. This study examined the Perceived Influence of Work-Related Stress and Human Resource Management Practices on Lecturers Job Productivity in Universities in Kwara State. The objective was to determine the influence of work-related stress and human resource management practices on lecturers' job productivity. To facilitate the conduct of the study, two specific purposes, and two research questions were raised; while two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study employed descriptive survey design. The population of the study consisted of 2,494 lecturers in all the nine universities in Kwara State and proportionate sampling technique was used to select the sample. The sample for the study comprised 333 teachers selected using the Research advisor. A 20-item questionnaire titled "Work-related Stress, Human Resource Management Practices and Lecturers' Job Productivity Questionnaire (WSHRMPLJPQ) with reliability coefficient 0.91. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while t-test was used for the hypotheses at 0.05 of level significance. The findings of the study revealed that work-related Stress and human resource management practices influenced Lecturers Job Productivity (Workload Stress ($t = 1.820$; $df = 314$; $P > 0.05$), Remuneration ($t = 1.199$; $df = 314$; $P = 0.05$). Findings also showed that teaching many courses in a semester, supervising many undergraduate projects and postgraduate theses, lecturers' involvement in community services and administrative duties have negative influence on both male and female lecturers. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the management of universities in Kwara State, should employ more hands, if necessary, on part-time basis, to reduce the work pressure on lecturers; while their remuneration packages should be properly attended to, in order to enhance dedication and enhance productivity.

Keywords: *Work-Related stress, Lecturers' Job Productivity, Workload Stress, Remuneration.*

Introduction

The goal of education in every nation, including developing countries like Nigeria is to equip students with skills, knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, and innovative ways of solving day to

day problems. Education is aimed at supplying human capital that can efficiently convert other resources into output of high value for quality life. To attain quality education for sustainable development, it is expected that the teacher, as the core instiller of knowledge should be motivated, healthy, and satisfied with the job, for excellent productivity. Teachers that are exposed to work-related stress may not be able to achieve the expected high levels of performance, hence, ineffective education and delays in national and global development. Job dissatisfaction caused by multiple factors (stressors) also leads to teacher's stress, poor performance and eventually high teacher turnover.

Stress is a universal phenomenon that every living organism experiences, regardless of age, gender, occupation, or socioeconomic status. McEwen (2005), considered as the father of the modern concept of stress, consider stress as the "spice of life" as complete freedom can only be attained at death. Factors, situations, or conditions that tend to cause stress are generally referred to as "stressors". Stress may be physical, biological, emotional, or psychological and can be found everywhere (including home, work and in social environments). Nonetheless, though stress is unavoidable, its effect can either be beneficial or harmful to an individual. Scholars have revealed that the harmful nature of stress affects two-thirds of the number of people who visit doctors (Drabick et al., 2021). It has also been disclosed that seven of the top leading causes of death are directly linked to stress (Goodday & Friend, 2019). Given this outlook, stress can be considered one of the most formidable health and performance threats of the 21st century. This is because no one is immune to stress (Chowdary & Kumar, 2018) since it occurs in every occupation (Breitenbach et al., 2021).

Work-related stress refers to the negative adaptive reactions such as anxiety, anger, frustration or depression experienced by an employee due to new, threatening or over demanding aspects of their work which is beyond their abilities, resources, control or needs thus affecting their physical, emotional and/or behavioral health, performance and quality of life. Work and the workplace are itself stressful aspect and therefore various aspects are connected to stress. According to Dodanwala, et al., (2023) Almost all dimensions of the organization including physical environment, structure, roles, policies, and relationships can cause stress.

Many teachers experience high levels of work-related strain due to time pressure, which over a period can lead to various health problems, including emotional exhaustion. However, there is growing evidence that this could be a reciprocal effect. Moreover, it is known that perceived social support can buffer the negative effects of stress, such as time pressure, on health outcomes. To meet their professional demands, it is important that teachers remain motivated and healthy at their work. Sandmeier et al., (2017) observed that many teachers experience high work pressure, lack of recovery time, and exhaustion. Impaired teachers' health may have severe consequences such as reduced teaching quality, reduced job satisfaction, higher intention to leave the profession, and lower students' achievement. To fulfil the educational mandate teachers' health is very essential. Promoting and maintaining, therefore, teachers' health is one of the many challenges schools are facing (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Olorisade (2014) reported academic staff difficulty to scale promotion hurdles for lack of sufficient research output, owing to their tight work schedules and work pressure. Reddy and Poornima (2012) concluded their study that there was a positive relationship between occupational stress and professional burnout of university teachers.

Human resource management refers to the practices, systems, and policies that influence the behavior, performance, and attitudes of employees (Bukhuni, 2022). Human resource management practices are a broad term that include related but different activities, functions, and processes directed at an enterprise's holistic view of human resources. According to Dessler and Tan (2017), human resource management practices include analyzing human resource needs, screening, recruiting, and training, rewarding, appraising as well as attending to labor relations, safety and health, and fairness concerns. All of which affects personnel productivity. Human resources (HR) practitioners, now gives attention to human resource management, having observed that workplace stress has adverse influence on productivity, occupational health of professionals and managers, in a variety of organisations (Kerdpitak & Jernsittiparsert, 2020). Globalization, innovation in technology, increased competition, work intensification, and workforce diversification have all added to the increased pressure and stress in the workplace.

Stress is a universal element and persons from nearly every occupation face stress. Employers today are critically analyzing stress management issues that contribute to lower job performance of employees, originating from dissatisfaction and high turnover; ultimately affecting organizational goals and objectives. In today's world, stress has become a worldwide phenomenon, which occurs in various forms in every workplace. In today's work life, employees are generally working for longer hours, as the rising levels of responsibilities require them to exert themselves even more strenuously, to meet rising expectations about work performance. Stress has been defined in different ways. According to Moorhead and Griffen (2018) Occupational stress, known as professional stress, job stress or work-related stress, is an aspect of stress that an employee or a group of workers experience in their workplace.

Moorhead and Griffen, (2018) described stress as the adverse psychological and physical reactions that occur in an individual because of their inability to cope with the demands being made on them. It is the tension generated from extra demands on an individual. According to Mauno et al., (2023) work related stress has been a topic that has received increasing attention, in occupational health, over the last three decades. Authors believed the world of work and business, has become increasingly subject to fast changing forces like increased competition, the pressure for quality, innovation, and an increase in the pace of doing business. The demand on employees has grown dramatically, creating stress within employees. Apart from stress arising from work situations, other sources of stress relate to personal factors such as relationships with others and use of free time.

According to Quick (2021), workplace stress has increased continually since the mid-1980s creating a significant burden for organizations through direct and indirect costs such as, loss of workdays, lower productivity, high turnover rates, increased staffing, and health benefit costs. Workplace stress in the United Kingdom costs employers £3.7 billion per annum; in the United States, the cost exceeds \$300 billion per annum (Borg, 2022). Organizational leaders must intervene to ensure a healthy workforce, increase productivity, remove inefficiencies, lower costs, and encourage behaviors that will contribute positively to the social-psychological environment of the workplace.

The development of any nation depends to a very large extent on the caliber, organization, and motivation of its human resources. In the specific case of Nigeria where diversity exerts tremendous influence on education sector, the capacity to increase the job performance of lecturers' and reduce the costs of this diversity constitutes a Human Resource Management Practice challenge on the education sector. Human Resources Management Practices (HRMP) is the function within an organization that focuses on recruitment, management, and provision of direction for the people who work in the organization (Dung & Anh, 2020). According to Anwar and Abdullah (2021) Human Resources Management Practices is the organizational function that deals with issues related to people within organizations which has to do with hiring, performance management, compensations, organization development, safety, wellness, benefits, employee motivation, communication, administration, and training.

Effective Human Resources Management Practices enables employees to contribute effectively and productively to the overall organizational direction and the accomplishment of the organization's goals and objectives. Human Resources Management Practices now add value to the strategic utilization of employees at enhancing job performance (Alam, 2022).

According to Olorisade (2014), the task of academic staff in Nigerian tertiary institutions, as in other parts of the world, are many and varied. Academic staff members have tripartite function of teaching, research, and community development services. He reiterated that among the stated functions, academic staff research activity is more highly rated than others, academic staff research effectiveness is the basic criteria considered for staff employment, promotion, salary enhancement and it is the main criteria for ranking "world Class Universities."

Job productivity is viewed by Mbon et.al, (2019) as the degree to which a combination of duties (such as teaching, research, and community service) are performed by academic staff of universities. Academic staff job productivity can also be viewed as the association between teaching features and educational success in the classroom. Thus, the influence of stress on the job productivity of academic staff may be observed by their teaching effectiveness, job commitment, satisfaction, and motivation to perform, among others. The importance of lecturers' job productivity cannot be overemphasized because of the far-reaching effect it has on the educational outcome of students and the nation. Again, lecturers' productivity entails the effectiveness of the lecturers, based on students' performance or results, attendance in classes, communication skills, syllabus coverage, professionalism, decision making, interpersonal relationships and classroom management. For enhanced productivity, lecturer's work-related stress and human resource management practices need to be addressed. This, the present study seeks to accomplish.

Statement of the Problem

Lecturing job is an extremely demanding profession that is without closing hour, and involving serious competition, ethical dilemma, regulatory bottlenecks with difficult students at times and requiring high commitment to research work. Uwaliae and Owie (2013) opined that people in human service profession, such as lecturing are often required to spend substantial time engaging intensively with other people, book, in research works; and when students' problems are not resolved immediately, the situation can become more complicated and frustrating. Thus,

an empirical study on stress management in teaching/lecturing, by Uwaliae and Owie, (2013), confirmed the existence of stress-causing factors. He noted that actors in the educational sector including teachers, exhibit high levels of stress. The issue of job stress among Nigerian lecturers could be better addressed if the factors responsible for the stress are properly identified and evaluated. The question of how job stress affects lecturers' job performance is relevant, in this regard, given the nature of today's lecturing job and challenges faced by Nigerian lecturers.

Okoi and Odigwe, (2018) opined that institutions, aimed at attaining higher productivity, and thus, end up saddling lecturers with high workload, demanding them to meet deadlines which might have psychological and physical effects on them. Again, to generate enough revenue and be self-sustaining, and to fund the acquisition of modern equipment meant for efficient service provision, optimal use of the human resources is made (Uwaliae & Owie, 2013).

As a result of the researcher's interaction with lecturers in the Faculty of Education in Kwara State University, for over two years, the researcher observed that the lecturers were stressed out because of high workload, promoting the decision to carry out this study to determine the influence of work-related stress and human resource management practices on lecturer's job productivity in universities.

Purpose of the Study

The specific purposes of the study are:

1. Examine the perceived influence of workload stress on lecturers' job productivity in universities in Kwara State.
2. Examine the perceived influence of remuneration on lecturers' job productivity in universities in Kwara State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the perceived influence of workload stress on lecturers' job productivity in universities in Kwara State?
2. What is the perceived influence of remuneration on lecturers' job productivity in universities in Kwara State?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean perception of male and female lecturers regarding the influence of workload stress on lecturers' job productivity in Universities in Kwara State.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean perception of male and female lecturers regarding the influence of remuneration on lecturers' job productivity in Universities in Kwara State.

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive survey research design. The total population for the study was 2,841 which comprised all the permanent lecturers in all the nine universities in Kwara State (Source: Human Resource Development of the Universities, 2023). Proportionate random sampling technique and Research Advisor were employed to obtain the sample size of three hundred and thirty-three (333) respondents (lecturers). The instrument for data collection was a 40- item structured questionnaire titled "Work-related Stress, Human Resource Management Practices and Lecturers' Job Productivity Questionnaire (WSHRMPLJPQ)". The instrument provided responses to the two research questions. Item 1-10 dealt with research question one, and item 11 – 20 dealt with research question two on a 4-point rating scale of 'very high extent (VHE) 4 points, high extent (HE) 3 points, low extent (LE) 2 points and very low extent (VLE) 1 point. To establish the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was subjected to face and content validity by three experts from the Department of Educational Management, Business and Entrepreneurship Education, and Early Childhood Education, all of Faculty of Education in Kwara State University, Malete. To ensure the consistency of the instrument, the Cronbach Alpha method of reliability was adopted in establishing a reliability coefficient of 0.91. Out of the 333 copies of questionnaires that were administered only 316 were retrieved and used for the study. The data analysis was done using the mean and standard deviation to analyze the research questions, while t-test was used to test the hypotheses. The mean score of 1.00 – 1.74 indicated very Low Extent, 1.75 – 2.49 indicated Low Extent, 2.50 – 3.24 indicated High Extent, 3.25 – 4.00 indicated Very High Extent. Also, the decision rules for the hypotheses were that when the observed probability value is greater than or equal to 0.05 level of significance, the hypothesis was rejected and if its value is less than the Table value, the hypothesis is accepted.

Results

Research Question One: What is the perceived influence of workload stress on lecturers' job productivity in Universities in Kwara State?

Table 1: Perceived influence of workload stress of lecturers' job productivity in Universities in Kwara State.

S/N	Items	Mean	Remark
1.	I am overwhelmed by the volume of tasks and responsibilities associated with my job as a lecturer.	3.23	High Extent
2.	Workload stress hampers my creativity and innovation in teaching.	3.51	Very High Extent
3.	Pressure to meet deadlines negatively impacts my ability to maintain a high level of job productivity.	3.50	Very High Extent
4.	High workload affects my ability to focus on tasks and responsibilities.	3.63	Very High Extent
5.	Stress-related symptoms constitute challenge to lecturer's job performance.	3.72	Very High Extent
6.	The current support system in the university addresses the workload-related challenges faced by lecturers.	3.59	Very High Extent
7.	Workload affects the ability of lecturers to engage in professional development activities.	3.77	Very High Extent
8.	Workload interferes with work-life balance.	3.68	Very High Extent
9.	Workload stress impacts the quality of my teaching and interaction with students.	3.58	Very High Extent
10.	Reducing workload stress would improve my overall job satisfaction and productivity as a lecturer	3.66	Very High Extent
	Weighted Mean	3.59	Very High Extent

Decision Rule: *Very Low Extent: 1.00 – 1.49, Low Extent: 1.50 – 2.49, High Extent: 2.50 – 3.49, Very High Extent: Above 3.50.*

Analysis of data in table 1 shows the frequency on the perceived influence of workload stress on lecturers' job productivity in Universities in Kwara State. The findings revealed a weighted mean of 3.59 which is a clear indication that the perceived influence of workload stress of lecturers' job productivity in Universities in Kwara State is to a very high extent.

Research Question two: What is the perceived influence of remuneration on lecturers' job productivity in Universities in Kwara State?

Table 2: Perceived influence of remuneration on lecturers' job productivity in Universities in Kwara State.

S/N	Items	Mean	Remark
21.	My current remuneration positively motivates and aid my commitment to work.	4.00	Very High Extent
22.	My remuneration affects my overall job satisfaction and morale.	3.96	Very High Extent
23.	I am satisfied with the adequacy of my current remuneration package.	3.84	Very High Extent
24.	Fair and competitive remuneration impacts my commitment to professional tasks.	3.87	Very High Extent
25.	Remuneration influence decisions on professional development.	3.85	Very High Extent
26.	Increased salary and benefits would lead to a more productive research output of lecturers.	3.85	Very High Extent
27.	Improved remuneration is likely to attract and retain highly qualified and experienced lecturers with high output.	3.80	Very High Extent
28.	Remuneration given to the lecturers to encourage hard work promotes good performance	3.69	Very High Extent
29.	Being fairly compensated impact my overall job performance and effectiveness.	3.81	Very High Extent
30.	The remuneration I receive commensurate with my workload and responsibilities.	3.75	Very High Extent
Weighted Mean		3.84	Very High Extent

Decision Rule: *Very Low Extent: 0.00 – 1.49, Low Extent: 1.50 – 2.49, High Extent: 2.50 – 3.49, Very High Extent: Above 3.50.*

Analysis of data in table 2 shows the frequency of the perceived influence of remuneration on lecturers' job productivity in Universities in Kwara State. The findings revealed the influence of remuneration on lecturers' job productivity in Universities in Kwara State, with a weighted mean of 3.84 which is a clear indication that the influence of remuneration on lecturers' job productivity in Universities in Kwara State is to a very high extent.

Test of Hypotheses

Research Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between the mean perception of male and female lecturers regarding the influence of workload stress on lecturers' job productivity in Universities in Kwara State.

Table 3: Summary of t-test Analysis of Male and Female Lecturers' Responses Regarding Influence of Workload Stress on Lecturers' Job Productivity in Universities in Kwara State

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig.	Remark
Male	260	36.20	6.918	1.820	314	.146	Not Significant
Female	56	34.30	7.839				

Data in Table 3 shows the significant difference between the mean responses of male and female lecturers regarding the perceived influence of workload stress on lecturers' job productivity in Universities in Kwara State. The finding revealed that there was no significant difference ($t = 1.820$; $df = 314$; $P > 0.05$). The hypothesis was therefore rejected in the light of the result, since the significant value is greater than 0.05. This implies that workload stress on male lecturers' productivity (Mean= 36.20) is significantly different from that of female lecturers' (Mean= 34.30).

Research Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female lecturers regarding the perceived influence of remuneration on lecturers' job productivity in Universities in Kwara State.

Table 4: Summary of t-test Analysis of Male and Female Lecturers' Responses, Regarding The Perceived Influence of Remuneration on Lecturers' Job Productivity in Universities in Kwara State

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig.	Remark
Male	260	38.62	5.853	1.199	314	0.050	Significant
Female	56	37.54	7.211				

Data in Table 4 shows the significant difference between the mean responses of male and female lecturers regarding the perceived influence of remuneration on lecturers' job productivity in Universities in Kwara State. The finding revealed that there was a significant difference ($t = 1.199$; $df = 314$; $P = 0.05$). The hypothesis was therefore rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is greater than to 0.05 level of significance.

Discussion of Findings

The study focused on the perceived influence of work-related stress and human resource management practices on lecturers' job productivity in Universities in Kwara State. The result of the analysis in table 1 revealed that workload stress hampers lecturers' creativity and innovation in teaching. Pressure to meet deadlines negatively impacts lecturers' ability to maintain a high level of job productivity and High workload affects lecturers' ability to focus on tasks and responsibilities in Universities in Kwara State, as to a very high extent (Weighted mean = 3.59). The result of the first research hypothesis revealed that there was significant difference between the mean responses of male and female lecturers regarding the influence of workload stress on lecturers' job productivity in Universities in Kwara State ($t = 1.820$; $df = 314$; $P > 0.05$).

Workload stress was evident when job demand exceeds an individual's ability to deal with it, in relation to the time and resources available. Workload stress may be seen as having too much work to do within the time available. The findings of this study differs with Obi and Oghounu (2023) who stated that there was no significant influence of experience and staff category on the relationship between job satisfaction and work-induced stress among the workforce of tertiary institutions in Delta State. Also, the finding agreed with Obinna-Akakuru, et.al (2022) who indicated amongst others that physical, psychological and psycho-social stressors are factors on job performance of lecturers in tertiary institutions in Imo State.

Table 2, on research question 2 indicated that the level of lecturers' remuneration was satisfactory and motivates them, towards high performances in the universities, indicating a weighted mean of 3.84. The result of the test of hypothesis shows that there was a significant difference between the mean responses of male and female lecturers regarding the influence of remuneration on lecturers' job productivity in Universities in Kwara State ($t = 1.199$; $df = 314$; $P = 0.05$). This revealed a difference on remuneration influence in which the male lecturers probably their take-home as not sufficient in meeting needs of their families; while for female lecturers it was okay, since they only contribute to provisions made by husbands, for home keeping. This finding supports an earlier finding of that inadequate remuneration results to low productivity, causes low level of job performance, decreases staff morale to work, leads to absenteeism, results to corruption and stains the image of the institution. Aliyu, et.al (2018) revealed in their study that there was a significant positive effect of remuneration on the productivity of academic staff. Akah, et.al (2022) revealed that remuneration was a significant positive predictor of academic staff job performance.

Conclusion

The study concludes that lecturers are over-whelmed by the volume of tasks and responsibilities including; teaching many courses in a semester, supervising large number of undergraduate projects and postgraduate theses, with lecturers' involvement in community services and carrying out administrative duties in universities in Kwara State. Time pressure stress was also observed among lecturers in universities, that can result in lecturer's burnout and impaired health on the long run.

The study also found that, the lecturers' remuneration package was high, impacting the overall job performance of lecturers in Universities in Kwara State but its influence on job productivity was differently viewed by male and female lecturers this may be due to the different expectations from the different genders for the upkeep of the families.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made on the basis of the findings of this study:

- i. The management of universities in Kwara State should endeavor to employ more academic staff/lecturers, in order to reduce the workload on present crop of lecturers.
- ii. The management of universities should ensure effective and efficient offering of all items of lecturers' remuneration package, towards inducing lecturers' job dedication to work in the universities. This will encourage lecturers to be more dedicated to their primary assignment.

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