



CHALLENGES OF WORK STRESS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF WORKERS IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT: *Contending with stressful situations at work in the contemporary society is a common struggle side by side the psychological well-being of workers. The review shows that although work is the essence of life because it manifests what one has externally and what one is internally; some jobs are so stressful due to either the work environment, personality disposition of the worker, or boringness and lack of prestige and security in such jobs. These reasons lead to stress which can have negative or positive implication on the well-being of the worker. This article shows that a mild degree of stress can sometimes be beneficial and compels workers to work more energetically thereby promoting sterling performance. Studies shows that it is when stress is overwhelming, poorly managed, that the negatives start to show affecting the psychological well-being of the individual. Theories also posit that bad sides of stress show when the demands that are being placed on an individual exceeds available resources as appraised by the individual. While some persons have hardy personality, which is a tendency that facilitates their abilities to adapt and deal with work place stress (allostasis), others cannot because such individuals appraise situations differently and so respond to issues in quiet different ways. However, the adaptation, or allostasis, often has a price of promoting pathophysiology- allostasis load leading to psychological and physiological issues like depression, drug abuse, draining of internal resources, hardening of the arteries and upsetting the individuals complex internal chemistry and affecting the operation of the immune system. Strategies were proposed to manage the overwhelming stress issues and recommendations made among others is that organizations should establish stress level assessment centers to educate and enlighten workers on the dangers of work stress and seek solutions for a healthier psychological state of workers for national development.*

KEYWORDS: Work, Stress, Well-being, Allostasis, National Development, Worker, Work Environment, Work Stress

INTRODUCTION

Human adult life is all about work, which enables them, meet their needs. Work is important to human beings because of various reasons which include; giving a sense of dedication to life, providing structure to life, promoting community cohesion and safety; increasing civic participation; and promoting social and economic development. Younkins (2018) states that work is the root of a meaningful life, the path to individual independence, and necessary for human survival and flourishing. Work is clearly a form of social action, since it is oriented toward and coordinated with the actions of other people given personal and social identity,



promoting family and social bonds, ways of making money, promoting physical and mental well-being, self-confidence and self-esteem; a sense of self-worth provided by the feeling of contributing to society and common good (Gini, 1998)

Although work and people's career give them balance and various fulfillment in life by creating a great deal of satisfaction, contributing to sense of well-being and self-worth, however, the supposed need to accomplish more and more in very limited time produces a false sense of urgency leading to negative physiological changes in the individuals and subjecting them to uncomfortable (and potentially harmful) stress (Baron, 2006). Moreover, not all jobs and work offer satisfaction. This is because some jobs are boring, unchallenging, socially isolating as well as poorly paid and without prestige/security. This makes some workers to view their job just as a means of earning a pay check. Employees with such views about their jobs are faced with occupational stress leading to psychological ill health. Human day to day experiences seem to present only instances of "survival of the fittest" and all pleasure of living for some seems to completely disappear from life. People seem only to exist, and the state in which they exist seems to be fraught with stress and tension (Roy, 2006). This has beclouded people from really stepping back to analyze the meaning of their conducts and existence, putting them under stress and leading them to face stress related illnesses.

Modern life is full of stress which can be pleasant and unpleasant; it could be deleterious for some individuals and for others mere hassles of life. A mild degree of stress and tension can sometimes be beneficial by compelling us to do a good job and work energetically by promoting sterling performance. It is when stress is overwhelming, poorly managed, that the negatives start to appear leading to health problems. Work stress is an important current problem because the rate of temporary incapacitation, absenteeism and early retirement, among others in the work place are alarming. The negative effects of stress affects not just the individual and the family, but industries and organizations, thereby making people to resort to medications to reduce the risks of continuous stress in addition to huge sums of monies lost annually as a result of decline in productivity associated with it (Dachallom, Gyang & Azi, 2017). Moreso, the fast-changing technological world and search for knowledge to face tough global demand and competition has made it extremely difficult for modern organizations to function their optimum pace and capacity (Gul, 2015)

Some efforts have been made in Nigeria to tackle work-stress and other occupational problems among Nigerian workers. This began since the last five decades evident in the International Labour Organization Report (as cited in Adegoke 2014) where it was mentioned that the government of Nigeria requested the International Labour Organization (ILO) for assistance on measures to improve occupational health conditions of workers in the country. In this respect, the Commission was set up in 1968 to look into the prevailing working conditions in Nigeria and to elevate occupational health problems and services. The Commission therefore advised the government on development of occupational health services, medical inspection of factories and workplaces (Lemu, 2007). Even with the above Commission on ground, stress in the work place is still on the increase with its accompanied problems. The basis for this paper therefore, is to expose workers to the essence of work and understanding the dangers accompanied with work stress to enable them take a balance to avoid issues with their psychological well-being.



We shall start by examining the concept of work, and then delve into the nature of stress, looking at the theoretical models of work-stress and their implications on the psychological well-being of workers. Also, the aspects of work environments that are generally associated with stress and the factors that influence these effects will be examined. Finally, coping strategies with stress will be considered for better work environment that would promote workers psychological well-being for efficient and greater productivity. Let us first examine the concept of work before delving in to the nature of stress.

Conceptualizing Work

The importance human beings place on work is revealed in the first question we often ask when meeting someone new: “what do you do?” By this, we mean not what are your hobbies or how do you spend your leisure time, but what is your occupation, what work do you do? What then is the meaning of work? Most of us rarely consciously consider this question in all our working lives. Yet it is worth examining because the meaning of work does influence several factors of interest not just to us, but also to the organizations we work in. Work is one way of defining other people and our selves, for what we do is what we will become (Gini, 1998). When we enter any occupation, we tend to mold our behaviours to conform to what we think is appropriate for that particular social role and for most occupations – factory worker, nurse, physical education trainer, stockbroker, dairy farmer, scientist, auto-mechanic, priest, lecturer, hairdresser - we have certain expectations about the kind of people who fill them.

Gichure (2014) observed that in work and through work man also receives recognition by his fellow men as having achieved this or that. Work therefore manifests not only what one has externally or economically, but what one is: a synthesis of goods of having (externally) and the goods of being (internally). We then speak of the material and spiritual goods of human nature for human perfection, fulfillment, balance and happiness (Gichure, 2014). The concept we form from the term work is that of an activity which requires of the agent that there will be some effort in self-application to something, with the view of realizing and obtaining something.

Understanding the meaning of work impacts the extent to which the individual is satisfied with their work; how much stress the individual encounters while performing their jobs; the individual's physical and psychological health; the degree of motivation the individual feels; performance; and the extent to which the individual feels connected to their workplace and their job (Maxwell, 1996). The concept of meaningful work is in many ways closely related to the concept of satisfaction. There are several studies where this is present. Considering the job satisfaction model put forward by Hackman and Oldham (1976), to them, workers motivation and satisfaction is determined by the following three, critical psychological states.

- i. The meaning of work and its significance denotes the feeling of the individual that their work is, in some ways, purposeful, and significant (what matters is what the individual's experiences are with their work)
- ii. The responsibility the individual feels for the result of their work: the individual's feeling that the results of their efforts are truly dependent on them.
- iii. The understanding of the results of the individual's work: understanding how satisfactory their performance on the job is.



When workers do not feel and understand the above points, it puts them under stressful situation leading to lack of job satisfaction. The next section will succinctly examine the nature of stress and in particular work-stress.

Nature of Stress

Stress is a multi-faceted process that occurs in reaction to events or situations in our environment termed stressors. Definitions of stress are products of their time because they give us a sense of time and place (Dewe, O'Driscoll & Cooper, 2012) producing a state of knowledge built around a research agenda that expressed the issues of the day. The features of stress are the wide range of physical and psychological reactions that different people have to the same situation; some may interpret an event as stressful, whereas others take it as a stride. (Baron, 2006). Moreover, some persons may react quite differently to the same stressor at different points in time. A mild degree of stress and tension can sometimes be beneficial and compels us to do a good job and work energetically thereby promoting sterling performance. It is when stress is overwhelming, poorly managed, that the negatives start to appear. Stress is a universal phenomenon that essentially manifests itself in humans as a result of pressure emanating from several experiences or challenging situations. Thus, the word "stress" may be used as an umbrella term covering all of an employee's physical and emotional problems. Davies (as cited in Ugoji and Isele 2009) defined stress as "condition of strain on one's emotions, thought processes and physical conditions. It deals with physical and emotional response that occurs when the requirement of the job does not match the capabilities, skills and the resources of the employee. Lazarus and Folkman (as cited in Riggio, 2000) explained that stress occurs when the demands that are being placed upon a person tax or exceed available resources as appraised by the individual involved. Stress is said to be a physical, mental, or emotional response to events that causes physical or mental tension on an individual (Dhanapal, Kumar, Ramachandran & Ram, 2011). The term "stress" was coined by Hans Selye in 1936 (as cited in Baron 2006) who defined it as "the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change in attempting to extrapolate his animal studies to humans so that people would understand what he meant. He redefined it as the rate of wear and tear our bodies experience as we adjust to our continually changing environment which has physical and emotional effects on us and can create positive or negative feelings. Stress is primarily a physiological reaction to certain threatening environmental events. It is a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize (Lazarus, 2000). This means stress is generally a self-developed pain by thoughts. When a person expects more than what he actually deserves for his work, or when a person thinks an assignment is beyond his capability, he gets a mental strain- called stress. There are chances that individuals try to adapt to these stressful situations but the continuous exposure to such stressful situations can break people down, both, internally and externally, and so, it is wise to adapt the ways to handle stress, at the right time. Therefore, since stress is a part of everyday life, it behooves on every one to strategize how best to cope with work stress.

Having looked at the nature of stress, we shall turn our attention to the models and theories of stress for the different perspectives on the concept of stress.



Psychological Well-Being

Psychological well-being is a very subjective concept meaning, contentment, satisfaction with all elements of life self-actualization, peace and happiness with one's self. This means it is the presence of psychological and social skills and abilities that contributes to optimal functioning in an individual's daily life (Ryff and Keyes, 1995). Mental health is inextricably linked to that of psychological well-being and World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health includes subjective well-being, perceived self-efficacy, autonomy, competence, inter-generational dependence and self-actualization of one's intellectual and emotional potential among others.

Work-related stress has great implications on the psychological well-being of the worker leading to psychological disorders with anxiety, depression, high blood pressure, asthma, cognitive impairment, diabetes and even hardening of the arteries emanating as a result. Besides, the National Institute for Occupational safety and Health (NIOSH, 1999) has identified psychological disorders as one of the ten leading work-related diseases and injuries.

Theories of Stress

Diverse theoretical models abound on how stress should be viewed. Five prominent approaches are identified in this paper. They include: The General Adaptation Syndrome, Person-Environment Fit Model, Transactional Model of stress, Job Demands-Job Control Model, Effort-Reward Imbalance (ERI) model. These are briefly discussed below.

The General Adaptation Syndrome

The General Adaptation Syndrome by Selye (as cited in Baron 2006) explained a three-step profile of response to stress to include alarm stage, resistance stage and exhaustion stage. The alarm stage is the fight-or-flight syndrome when the body prepares us for immediate action; arousal of the sympathetic nervous system releases hormones that help prepare our body to meet threats and dangers. If stress is prolonged, however, the next stage of resistance begins. In this second stage called resistance, arousal is lower than during the alarm stage, but our bodies continue to draw on resources at an above-normal rate in order to cope effectively with the stressor. Continued exposure to the same stressor or additional stressors drains the body of its resources and leads to the third stage which is called, exhaustion. During this stage, our capacity to resist is depleted, and our susceptibility to illness including psychological ill health increases (Baron, 2006). This model explained only the physiology of stress without looking at its cognitive aspects which is a critical weakness of this model. However, his model provides a framework for understanding our physiological responses to stressful events and suggests explanations on how stress and illness are related (Riggio, 2000).

Person-Environment Fit Model

The above model suggests that match between a person and their work environment is key in influencing their health. For healthy conditions, it is necessary that employees; attitudes, skills, abilities and resources match the demands of their job, and that work environments should meet workers' needs, knowledge, and skills potentials (Hart, 1999). One specific advantage of the P-E fit conceptualization over other (more specific) theories is that P-E fit is



based essentially on the idea of employee adjustment in the work setting, which has been illustrated as being critical for overall well-being. The basic notion underlying this model is that there needs to be a match between what people want and what they receive, as well as match between their abilities (knowledge, skills) and the demand upon them. Dewe et al (2012) observed that lack of match (misfit) creates strain and ultimately reduces their sense of psychological well-being. However, P-E model seems not to take into consideration individual differences and subjective well-being factors that may vary personal or situational experiences causing misfit (Akanji, 2015)

The Transactional Model

Transactional model also called Cognitive-Relational (CR) approach conceptualized by Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman (as cited by Akanji, 2015) posits that stress resides neither solely in the person nor solely in the environment, but in the transaction between the two. The power of this model is the analytical processes of stress appraisals and coping responses that it presents. Saying defining stress lies in the fact that transaction implies a process, and in order to understand the nature of that transaction make researchers to explore those cognitive processes that link the individual to the environment (Dewe, O'Driscoll & Cooper 2010). Transactional model of stress define stress as arising from cognitive appraisal that particular environmental demands are about to tax individual resources, thus threatening the well-being. This means that stress is a product of the transaction between the individual and the environment and that the power of the transaction lies in the appraisal that binds the person and the environment (Dewe et al, 2010). However, this model is also criticized by experts for being inexplicit and too vague because it provides no information like the P-E about the specific types of variables that should be considered during appraisal and coping processes (Akanji, 2015)

The Demand-Control-Support model

The job demand-control model is frequently referred to as job strain model or job demands-job decision latitude model. It was developed by Scandinavian researchers in the late 70s (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). This model has provided the underlying theoretical basis for most large-scale studies of job stress. The model specifies two broad constructs that can vary independently in work environment- job demands and decision latitude (Ganster & Schaubroeck, 1991). Job demands are defined as psychological stressors, such as requirements for working fast and hard, having a great deal to do, not having enough time, and having conflicting demands. These aforementioned factors may impose physical requirements that lead to fatigue, leading to stress-related outcomes predicted by the model which are related to the psychological effects of this workload (e.g., the anxiety associated with the need to maintain the workplace and the associated consequences of failing to complete the work). Job decision latitude comprises two components: the workers authority to make decisions on the job and skill discretion. The major hypothesis of the model is that strain, which is a stressful condition that leads to mental and physical health problems, occurs when jobs are simultaneously high in demand and low in control. This is because high demands produce a state of arousal in the worker that would normally be reflected in such responses as heart rate or adrenaline excretion. Ganster & Schaubroeck (as cited in Dewe et al 2012). Ganster and Schaubroeck (1991) pointed out that, in contrast with the other occupational stress models, this formulation does not view individual difference



characteristics as important in mediating the stress-strain relationship. Decision latitude and control are seen as characteristics of the job itself, not of the individual.

The Effort-Reward Imbalance (ERI) Model

The Effort-Reward Imbalance view work stress differently from other models. This is because the ERI model incorporates individual difference components, saying individual perceptions of work outputs and expected returns vary from person to person (Akanji, 2015). The ERI Model is based on the notion that perceived intrinsic and extrinsic effort like motivation and commitment put into work should be reciprocated by adequate rewards (like money, esteem, job security and career opportunities. When this social exchange is not achieved, it can result into stress and burnout (Akanji, 2015). This approach to work stress has been criticized as being inconclusive because of the limited components of effort and reward variables it considers.

The stress models reviewed above have been found to advance knowledge in the field of organizational stress research, although critical observation of these models suffer either from being too linear in scope or subject to diverse interpretations and perceived as lacking in any “predictive validity” but open to a broad range of inconclusive views (Akanji, 2015). These criticisms notwithstanding, one known fact is that occupational stress arises from unsustainable work burdens that stimulate negative reactions from workers. This means the diversity of these stress theories despite their limitations still provides a sound basis for proffering actions in tackling the detrimental organizational-person interfaces caused by workplace stress. In essence, it calls for more concentration on evaluative research on how organizations can mitigate the harmful impact of stress in the employees’ well-being (Akanji, 2015)

Sources of Stress

In the preceding section of this paper, we examined some theories of stress which are general expectation of the concept of work stress. We shall in this section identify some specific sources of work stress.

Broadly speaking, stress can arise from either the environment or organization (situational stress) or from a person’s personality characteristics (dispositional stress). From these broad sources of stress rise the causes of all manner of stress.

Organizational stress comes from any work environment and can either be because of work related tasks and stress resulting from work roles, work overload or even having too little to do (under-utilization) can also be stressful (French & Caplan, as cited in Riggio 2000). Work place stressors like job ambiguity, lack of control, physical work condition, interpersonal stress and organizational changes can be a source of stress. For instance, in interpersonal stress, a great deal of stress may be generated if two individuals must work together while both are competing for the same honor. There is also evidence that organizational politics and struggle over power can be important sources of stress in the workplace (Kacmar; Delery & Ferris 1994). More so, as humans, we are subjected to a wide range of stressors, not just at work, but at home, school and our interpersonal relationships, these various sources accumulate and add to our overall stress levels.



Dispositional factors are also major sources of workplace stress. This deals with the characteristics of the individual worker. Some persons are type A personality type having behavioral pattern that are highly susceptible to stress and stress effects. Such people are impatient, having tense facial expression, competitive in all their dealings; they are quick, loud, aggressive, and also try to hurry the speech of others (Baron, 2006). While those with type B behavioral patterns are calm, gentle, relaxed, having soft smile and sense of contentment in life. They rarely complain and they listen attentively before responding in any conversation (Malgosa, 2005). The type B personalities have less risks of stress related issues and heart attacks but may lack energy when it comes to fulfilling everyday tasks.

Stress at work is produced from lack of regards for physiological, psychological and social comforts from the equipment use in working, relationships, and other considerations that can be found in working, relationships, and other considerations that can be found in the working environment (Adegoke, 2014).

Similarly, Lasisi (2013) identified causes of work-stress to include job insecurity, high demand for performance, technology, and work place culture. For instance, it was observed that job insecurity in organized workplaces is going through metamorphic changes under intense economic transportations and consequent pressures, thus, reorganizations, takeovers, mergers, downsizing and other changes have become major stressors for employees, as companies try to live up to the competition to survive.

Given attention to work stress is paramount in our contemporary society because it is a common part of human life – something we cannot avoid altogether, and because it seems to exert negative effects on both physical health and psychological well-being. Let's now examine the impact of work stress on the psychological well-being of workers in an organization.

Work Stress and Psychological Well-Being

Work-related stress is the response workers may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope as stipulated by the person-environment fit model. Also, stress occurs in a wide range of work circumstances but often made worse when employees feel they have little support from supervisors and colleagues and where they have little control over work or how they can cope with its demands and pressures (Lasisi, 2013).

The link between work-stress and personal health according to medical experts is very strong with quantifiable facts (Kiocolt-Glaser & Glaser, 1992). Stress plays some role in 50 to 70 percent of all physical illnesses (Frese, as cited in Baron, 2006). Similarly, The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (2014) observed that in 2013/14, 39% of work-related illnesses were associated with work related anxiety, depression, and stress which has remained at a similar percentage for more than a decade with each case resulting in 23 days being lost each year. In relation to age, HSE (2014) reports that the age group 45 to 54 had the highest stress level leading to stress related illnesses. Moreover, included in these percentages are some of the most devastating and life-threatening ailments known to medical sciences. To list just a few, stress has been implicated in the occurrence of heart related diseases, high blood pressure, hardening of the arteries, asthma, cognitive impairment, obesity, viral infection, depression, ulcers, and even diabetes (Baron, 2006)



Two of the ways stress has been treated by researchers in relation to psychological ill health are: (a) an environmental stimulus that initiates a chain of responses that ultimately leads to pathological ends, and (b) an organismic response to real or imagined environmental events (Ganster & Schaubroeck, 1991). Few would dismiss the important role that cognitive appraisals play in determining effective and physiological responses, and few would deny that there are important individual variations in the way that people respond to the same event. It is important to understand the cognitive processes that intervene between exposure to environmental conditions and eventual health outcomes to arrive at an understanding of the phenomenology of the stress experience. Linking health outcomes, or at least their plausible short-term precursors, to objective characteristics of the environment allows us to determine whether it is the predispositions that people bring with them to the workplace, including prior health status that account for health.

It is presently accepted that prolonged or intense stress can have negative impact on an individual mental and physical health (Health and Safety Executive, 2001; Cooper, Dewe & O'Driscoll, 2001). This scenario has led others to maladaptive behaviours like engaging in substance abuse to cope. Ganster and Schaubroeck (1991) collaborated this position when they stated that, they belief that stress, and in particular, work stress, is a causal agent in physical and mental disorders as well as organizational outcomes such as absenteeism, substance abuse tendencies and reduced productivity has gained widespread acceptance. Also, the notion that prolonged exposure to stressful job demands can lead to a variety of pathological outcomes.

Growing evidence on the mechanisms involved in the effect of stress suggests that the process goes by draining our resources, keeping us off balance physiologically, and upsetting our complex internal chemistry. In particular, it may interfere with effective operation of the immune system, hence exposing us to many potential threats to our overall well-being. In studies with animals for instance, subjects exposed to inescapable shocks demonstrate reduced production of lymphocytes (white blood cells), but subjects exposed to shocks from which they could escape had no issue with their white blood cells production (Ader & Cohen, 1984). Additional research on the effects of stress on interpersonal relationships, loneliness, academic pressure, daily hassles and lack of social support shows stress can interfere with our immune system exposing us to diverse ailments (Cohen, Kaplan Cunnick Mnuck & Robin, 1992). For example, persons with inadequate social support networks, those who are not properly nourished those who do not sleep well or who are physically unwell will have reduced abilities to cope with daily pressures and may come under the impact of stress.

Work stress has become one of the major influences on the health, daily living and psychological well-being of work stress. It is sad that in Nigeria, most workplaces have no respect for mental health of their employees though such is supposed to be part of the work social contract (Adegoke, 2014).

It is important to note that different professions manifest different types and level of work stressors and workers perception of their occupation is a good determinant of their job attitude and psychological well-being (Lindsay, 2001; Akinawo, 2010). It is believed that there are some stringent rules and administrative policies in male-dominated jobs which may be difficult for women to cope with, and thereby constituting major sources of occupational stress ((Lindsey, 2001; Akinawo, 2010). Buhrmaster (2006) and Mangwani (2012) found that, some kinds of jobs give workers sense of helplessness, feeling of inadequacy, anger,



shock and quilt, while others go through periods of disbelief, depression and self-blame, and these trigger frustration in the long-run which eventually have significant effects on the psychological well-being of workers.

Coping and Managing Work Stress

Having buttressed how work-stress impacts negatively on our health and psychological well-being, we now examine some strategies that can be used to cope with stress and work-stress in particular.

Varieties of strategies and techniques to cope and manage work related stress can be categorized into individual strategies and organizational strategies. Riggio (2000) posits that individual strategies are those that can be used by individual employees to try to reduce or eliminate personal stress, while the organizational strategies are techniques and programs that the organizations can implement to try to reduce stress levels of workers in an organization

It is important to note that, stress management and not stress removal or elimination is the mantra of the present day, whether for individuals or organizations. This is because we are not aiming at achieving a stress-free society and work environment since it is impossible to eliminate stress all together. Instead, we are attempting to learn how to keep the level of stress or work stress within control, by accepting its positive dimension and not allow its negative dimension to have adverse effects on our psychological well-being (Roy, 2006). The research findings that stress negatively affects health raises an important question: what really makes people perceive a situation as stressful? Aronson, Wilson and Akert, (2005) posit that one important determinant is the amount of control people believe they have over the event and self-efficacy. Therefore, having control over events and self-efficacy are major ways of coping and managing stress. Dispositional factor of an individual is also a major point to consider when examining stress, its effect and management. As seen above, type B personality types are less prone to stress than type A personality. Also, Kobassa (1982) argued that hardy personality types are resistant to the harmful effects of stress because of their styles of dealing with stressful events by adaptation. For example, rather than viewing a stressor as threatening, they view it as a challenge identifying successes and accomplishments on a regular bases no matter how small, by looking for ways to keep their perspectives on the situation. More so, Bandura (1997) looked at self-efficacy as a dispositional factor that is related to one's sense of competence and effectiveness. Evidence shows that a sense of self-efficacy and perceived control can lead to positive effects in reducing negative stress and promoting psychological well-being.

Strategies to cope and manage work-stress problems also include: work redesign, stress management training, ergonomics and environmental redesign, management development and organizational development (Cox, Griffith & Rial-Gomalez as cited in Ugoji & Isele, 2009; Lasisi, 2013). However, these researchers perceived that the best strategy for providing solution to work stress is "work redesign". This is so because work redesign focus on demands, knowledge and abilities, support and control. For instance, work redesign involved in changing the demand of work, ensure that employees have develop the appropriate knowledge and abilities to perform their jobs effectively, and improve employees' control over the way they do their work and increase the amount and quality of support they receive.



McEwen (2012) pointed out that adaptation in the face of potentially stressful challenges involves activation of neural, neuroendocrine and neuroendocrine-immune mechanisms. This has been called “allostasis” or stability through change (Sterling & Eyer, 1988). Noting that allostasis is an essential component of maintaining homeostasis. When these adaptive systems are turned on and off efficiently and not too frequently, the body is able to cope effectively with challenges that it might not otherwise survive. However, there are a number of circumstances in which allostasis systems may be overstimulated leading to allostasis load which leads to disease over long period and repeated stress has grave consequences on the functioning of the brain (McEwen, 2012).

Some other mechanisms that could be used to enhance psychological hardiness (commitment, control and challenge) in facing stressful situations could be; revise and rehearse what you would do the next time the specific stressful events happen. This will help you practice how to actively become involved in the stressful event rather than passively retreating and trying to avoid the situation when it arises again (Lambert & Lambert, 2003). Also, individuals should always try and rework any situation in their minds and express themselves directly to the involved person(s). For instance, explain or repeat your feelings and reasons, ask for explanations of the other person’s feelings or interpretations as they relate to the specific situations. To build one’s control and reduce stress, Lambert and Lambert (1993) also opined that individuals should seek more information about situations, because information provides one with control of a situation. Similarly, Roy (2006) opined that moderation in all spheres of life is cardinal in managing stress. He said people seem to labour under some ruling passion or the other so much so that everything else disappears from sight. For instance, some love work to the exclusion of all else, while others pursue money or status forgetting any other thing. Still others have so much zeal for helping others that they force themselves on even those people who resist their overtures. Others waste their lives in seeking pleasures and in senseless addictions. Moderation is the key in all life adventures to have a balance and proper psychological well-being.

It is important to note that social support is a great buffer against the adverse effects of chronic stress (Baron, 2006). More so, some studies have shown that optimism, regular exercise, and feelings of control over stressful events are necessary in coping with stress.

CONCLUSION

It is obvious that work and industriousness is important in human life. Since man is a social being, work is also service to others and signs of identity, friendship and benevolence. Any effort to achieve any form of development without it will encounter a hitch. Unfortunately, today’s rat race to achieve so much in very limited time has beclouded workers from analyzing and balancing their essence of work which leads to work-stress and affects their health in the long run.

Work stress is a growing concern of our contemporary society and it includes not only situations where the pressures of work exceed the worker’s ability to cope, but also where the worker’s knowledge and abilities are not sufficiently utilized (Lasisi, 2013). There are many other causes of occupational stress, including qualitative and quantitative work overlord, role ambiguity and conflict, lack of opportunity for personal growth, and burden of



responsibilities. Work stress has a different impact on each individual depending on their ability to cope with it. It changes one's personality, disturbs their psychological well-being, lowers self-esteem, disrupts relationships, makes people dependent on others, and makes adjustment and coping difficult for people.

This article posits that if the above issues are not resolved, a person under work stress may experience personal, psychological and behavioral changes that may last permanently. The stress-out worker may also become involved in risk-taking behaviours, alcohol consumption, and even suicide. Therefore, it is pertinent to work out these issues to prevent any negative consequences on the well-being of the worker.

RECOMMENDATION

Having examined the importance of work, and the impact of work stress on the psychological well-being of the worker in an organization, we now recommend the following to aid workers, administrators and all stake holders to grasp the essence of work, work stress, and coping strategies for better psychological well-being.

First, organizations should endeavor to find means of managing psychological attributes such as workers self-efficacy, work motivation, psychological well-being, emotional labour, work stress and social network of their employees. This is because management of these attributes will go a long way in enhancing their organizational commitment and well-being.

Second, workers should take time to appraise their work by appreciating its essence and meaning to avoid the danger of working just for the pay check without job satisfaction.

Third, all stake holders should focus on the characteristics of the work environment which is an ideal way to study the causal impact of objective stressors on health and organizational outcome.

Fourth, it is also recommended that workers should review their activities and see if anything is taking precedence over others, and in the process marginalizing everything else. Moderation brings balance to all that we do - work, actions, thoughts, beliefs, everything.

Fifth, though adaptation in the face of stress is good, individuals should keep in perspective any allostatic load which brings about pathological outcomes leading to overall ill health of the victim.

Finally, workers should broaden their range of influence and concern beyond their specific work situations. They should also cultivate an objective, intellectual attitude by emphasizing what is objective and realistic and look at all circumstances as a learning process.

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