

Work- Pressure and Somatic Complaints among Nigeria Bank Workers

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated work pressure and somatic complaints among Nigeria bank workers. Using criterion sampling technique. 90 bank workers comprising 47 males and 43 females bank workers from 3 commercial banks and 3 community banks in Enugu metropolis were drawn to participate in the study. The bank workers were within the ages of 25-55 years. Job related tension scale (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, & Snoek, 1964) to measure work pressure and Enugu somatization scale (Ebigbo, 1981; Ebigbo, et al, 2016) to measure somatic complaints were administered individually to the participants. A correlational design and statistics were used for data collection and analysis to test the hypotheses which stated that work-pressure would not significantly correlate with both frequency and intensity of somatic complaints among bank workers. The results showed a low negative correlation -.044 on frequency of somatization (n = 90); and a low positive correlation .092 on intensity of somatization (n = 90) between work pressure and somatic complaints. It was suggested that other variables capable of influencing somatic complaints should be studied since a negative correlation was established on frequency and a positive correlation was established on intensity, with strong implication on frequency of symptom manifestation.

Keywords: *Work- pressure, Somatic Complaints and Bank workers.*

INTRODUCTION

According to Coleman (1976), modern age has been called the 'age of anxiety and stress'. Stress is "a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraints, or demand related to what he or she desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important." (Copper et. al, 1988; Greenberg and Baron, 2003; Huczynski and Buchanan, 2001; Robbins, 2002; Vazquez, 2001). Hence, stress is not only a response, but also a function of individual appraisal of the situation (Carver and Connor, 2010; Dumitrescu, 2014; Leskovic, 2013). Organizational Stress arises due to lack of person-environment fit (French, Kaplan, & Harrison, 1982; French and Kahn, 1962; McGrath, 1976). When organizational stress is mismanaged, it affects the human potential in the organization. It further leads to impaired quality, productivity, health and affects wellbeing and morale. Stress has psychological, physiological and behavioral dimensions (Childs and Stoeber, 2012; Schaufeli and Enzmann 1998). Psychologically, people perceive situations to be threatening and challenging and this cognitive appraisal lead to physiological problems such as blood pressure, cardiovascular problems, ulcers, diabetes, high cholesterol, and so on; psychiatric reactions like anxiety, anger, frustration, depression, fatigue, burnout syndrome and behavioral responses like drug abuse, smoking, and suicide

(Banovcinova and Baskovaa, 2014; Chung and Wu, 2013; Dumitrescu, 2014; Herrero et al., 2013). Such events may lead to Distress. Work pressure can be perceived as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker.

Stress can undermine the achievement of goals, both for individuals and for organizations when affected by work stress people may:

- (i) Become increasingly distressed and irritable
- (ii) Become unable to relax or concentrate
- (iii) Have difficulty thinking logically and making decision
- (iv) Enjoy their work less and feel less committed
- (v) Feel tired, depressed, and anxious
- (vi) Have difficulty sleeping and
- (vii) Experience serious physical problem such as heart disease, increases in blood pressure, headaches.

Work stress ought to affect organization by:

- i) Increasing absenteeism.
- ii) Decreasing commitment to work.
- iii) Increasing staff turn-over.
- iv) Increasing complaints from clients and customers.
- v) Increasing unsafe working practice.
- vi) Adversely affect staff recruitment and
- vii) Damaging the organization image both among its workers and externally (Leka, 2003).

Studies have suggested that stress results in a wider range of somatic and psychological patterns which is detrimental to the individual (Strange and Brown, 1970). This in turn has negative economic implications too (Cooper and Cartwright, 1994; and Edworthy, 2000). Previous studies in Nigeria on somatization have described somatic complaints as somatization of emotional distress (Ayorinde, 1977; Boroffka & Marinho, 1963; Lambo, 1963; Mbanefo, 1966, Okhomina and Ebie, 1973; Ebigobo & Ihezue, 1981a, 1981b). The simplest definition of somatization is the presentation of physical symptoms in the absence of organic pathology or the amplification of physical complaints accompanying organic disease beyond what can be accounted for by physiology (Kanton, Kleinman & Rosen, 1982). Ebigobo (1986) using the Enugu somatization scale, examined various groups of mentally and physically ill patients as well as normal and arrived at the following: conclusion. "Somatization represents a defence mechanism whereby psychological distress is channeled into somatic complaints and thereby prevented from emptying into the symptoms of a fully fledged mental breakdown. Very often the Nigerian cannot afford to break down since no one will take over his/her responsibilities, and he/she is forced to cope with somatic distress for a long time". In the recent past the banking sector had under gone rapid and striking changes like policy changes due to globalization and liberalization, increased competition due to the entrance of more private (corporate) sector banks, downsizing, introduction of new

technologies, and so on. Due to these changes, the employees in the banking sector are experiencing a high level of stress or work pressure. The advent of technological revolution in all walks of life coupled with globalization, privatization policies has drastically changed conventional patterns in all sectors. The banking sector is of no exemption, especially where many customers need attention and service of bank workers. In view of this, a typical bank employee may likely experience and express complaints of the body or somatic complaints due to the magnitude of work or the frequency of contacts with customers or clients. Workers in the banking sector are observed to operate and maintain a functional schedule based on the type of work and pattern of discharging their duties. Apparently, the quantities of operations they engage in daily tend to predispose them to numerous customers waiting for financial transactions leading to work pressure and stress. This explains the issue that work pressure is inevitable among bank workers; who may encounter stress while at work that seeks for outlet through body complaints. To verify the above, this investigation addressed the problem stated below:

Will work pressure significantly correlate with frequency of somatic complaints among Nigeria bank workers?

The purpose of the study was to determine that work pressure would not significantly correlate with frequency of somatic complaints; and also to determine that work pressure would not significantly correlate with the intensity of somatic complaints among Nigeria bank workers. It was hypothesized as follows:

1. That work pressure would not significantly correlate with frequency of somatic complaints
2. That work pressure would not significantly correlate with the intensity of somatic complaints among Nigeria bank workers

METHOD

Participants

A total of 90 participants comprising 47 male and 43 female bank workers were drawn from 3 commercial banks (Zenith bank, Diamond bank, and Union bank); and 3 community banks (Umuchimere community bank, Oha community bank, and Urban community bank) within Enugu metropolis. The bank workers are within the ages of 25–55 years, with minimum qualification of B.Sc. and above.

Instrument

To examine the co-variation between work pressure and somatic complaints, Job related tension scale (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, & Snoek, 1964); while Oseghare (1988) provided the psychometric properties for Nigeria samples and Enugu somatization scale (Ebigbo, 1981; Ebigbo, et al, 2016) were adopted as research instrument.

Procedure

A total of 105 copies of the research instrument were distributed within a period of four weeks. 60 copies (20 each) were distributed across the three commercial banks; while 45 copies (15 each) were distributed across the three community banks taking into consideration the size of the population for the two bank categories.

Design/Statics

A survey design was used to sample across banks within the target population, while Pearson Correlation was applied to measure the co-variation between work pressure and somatic complaints.

RESULTS

Table I: Summary table of correlations on work pressure and frequency of somatic complaints among Nigeria bank workers.

Item (Work pressure versus somatic complaints)	Pearson correlation	Sig. (2 tailed)	N
General	-.044	.678	90
Operation unit	.064	.668	47
Marketing unit	-.033	.833	43
Male	-.018	.903	47
Female	-.069	.662	43

Table I above shows the correlation between work pressure and somatic complaints with a correlation of $-.044$ indicating a low negative relationship apart from showing a non significant correlation. Thus, hypothesis I which stated that “work pressure will not significantly correlate with frequency of somatic complaints among Nigeria bank workers” was accepted. This means that an inverse relationship was obtained between the two variables on frequency of somatic complaints.

Table II: Summary table of correlations on work pressure and intensity of somatic complaints among Nigeria bank workers.

Item (Work pressure versus somatic complaints)	Pearson correlation	Sig. (2 tailed)	N
General	.092	.390	90
Operation unit	.013	.929	47
Marketing unit	.091	.561	43
Male	.122	.414	47
Female	.047	.764	43

Table II above shows the correlation between work pressure and somatic complaints with a correlation of $.092$ indicating a low positive relationship apart from showing a non significant correlation. Thus, hypothesis II which stated that “work pressure will not significantly correlate with intensity of somatic complaints among Nigeria bank workers” was also accepted. This means that a positive relationship was obtained between the two variables on intensity of somatic complaints.

DISCUSSION

The hypotheses examined were found to yield low negative correlation in relation to frequency of somatic complaints and low positive correlation in relation to intensity of somatic complaints with respect to work pressure and somatic complaints among Nigeria

bank workers. A negative outcome indicates that work pressure and somatic complaints in relation to its frequency manifest in different directions where increase in work pressure may generate decrease in somatic complaints and vice versa. Also, a positive relationship with respect to work pressure and intensity of somatic complaints was obtained indicating that they manifest in the same direction where increase in one generates increase in the other. Thus, the two outcomes were found to yield very low correlations either negative or positive.

Further, other findings as shown in the results with respect to bank workers at operation unit, and also at marketing unit, a positive and negative outcome were obtained respectively in relation to work pressure and frequency of somatic complaints; on the other hand positive outcomes were obtained in the above two units in relation to work pressure and intensity of somatic complaints. In addition, correlations between work pressure and frequency of somatic complaints yielded low negative relationship for both male and female bank workers; while correlations between work pressure and intensity of somatic complaints yielded low positive relationship for both male and female bank workers. Obviously, negative correlations were obtained across units and gender based on work pressure and frequency of somatic complaints; while positive correlations were obtained across units and gender based on work pressure and intensity of somatic complaints. The above findings have shown that somatic complaints have strong implications with work pressure, and the results tend to support previous investigation. An individual in a work place when engulfed with stress may have little or no option than to appraise the situation based on the psychological implications of stress (Carver and Connor, 2010; Dumitrescu, 2014; Leskovic, Miglic & Vukovic, 2013). Earlier observations of Strange and Brown (1970) revealed that stress results in a wide range of somatic and psychological problems which an individual may find it difficult to cope with; while somatic complaints serve as a defence mechanism to psychological distress (Ebigbo, 1986). The implication of the above findings is quite obvious when the nature and quantity in addition to quality of work being performed by bank workers is considered. Bank workers as employees are preoccupied with banking operations which allows little or no time for recreation. Generally, the findings revealed a negative correlation on frequency, and a positive correlation on intensity of somatization, in relation to correlation between work pressure and somatic complaints among bank workers.

CONCLUSION

In view of the findings, the researcher hereby recommends for shift work in banking sector as a way to reduce work pressure either at operation unit or marketing unit, and to ensure healthy organizational well being and person environment fit. The banking sector creates job for its employees and with its goals as target generates pressure that affects work. Thus, work pressure as a variable found to correlate with somatic complaints becomes inevitable based on the organizational climate of Nigeria bank workers.

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