INTRODUCTION

In today’s word, stress has become a world 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 [1], described occupational stress as the adverse psychological and physical reactions that occur in an individual as a result of their being unable to cope with the demands being made on them.

Work related stress has been a topic that has received increasing attention in the area of occupational health, over the last three decades. These authors of the opinion that the world, especially the work and business has become increasingly subject to fast changing forces like increased competitive, the pressure of quality, innovation and an increase in the pace of doing business. The demands on employees grew equally dramatically and this created stress within employees. Apart from stress that arose from the work situation, other sources of stress could relate to personal factors such as relationships with others and use of free time.

Stress can therefore be described as the adverse psychological and physical reactions that occur in an individual as a result of his or her inability to cope with the demands being made on him or her. That is tension from extra-ordinary demands on an individual. It is noted that, stress is not necessarily bad; it is an opportunity when it offers potential gain.

But whatever is nature, it usually begins when individuals are placed in a work environment that is compatible with their work style and or temperament. It becomes aggravated when individuals find out that they have or can exercise little control over it.

“Many organizations in the world are witnessing an alarming increase of the negative effects of stress on employee’s productivity. Typically examples are organizations in America, the United Kingdom, the Caribbean, East and Central Africa, West Africa and in other parts of the world. The American Academy of family physicians reported that about two-thirds of the visits to family physicians are the results of stress-related symptoms”

Specified causes of stress as follows: poor time management, unclear job descriptions, feelings of inadequacy and insecurity, inability to get things done, lack of communication, bad personal relationship, quality and complexity of tasks. In view of stress related illnesses as the leading cause for low productivity levels in the workplace. Immense pressure at work has led to stress, which made it the number one factors causing illness. The outlined reasons for low productivity as follows; poor training in the company, machine break downs, non-established performance standards, lack of planning and motivation, change, poor atmosphere and environment, inadequate communication at many levels, non-identification with company goals.
In Nigeria, several nationwide surveys have indicated that about 58% of the workforce in organizations suffers from stress-related problem. This means that stress can be a killer of many organizations in Nigeria.

On other front, is the international affiliation of the authority such that any changes in international convention and standards also demanded a change in the management strategies? Another issue is the Government’s drive to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) which introduced the free zones, some of which were meant to be sited within the harbor. There was also the issue of a strong competition among Nigeria, Ghana, Benin and LacoteD’ivoire, each of them fighting to attract the landlocked countries to use their port; and the consequent Government declaration of Nigeria as the gateway to West Africa.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This paper will provide in-depth insight on the nature of stress and the impact there of on productivity. Opinions from different authors will be utilized to provide a better theoretical understanding of the nature of stress, its causes and then the impact it will have on productivity.

The term stress was employed in a biological context by the endocrinologist. Then later broadened and popularized the concept to include inappropriate physiological response to any demand. Stress is a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with opportunity, constraint or demand related to what he desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important. From this definition one can say that stress is not necessarily bad, it also has a positive value when it offers potential gain.

Stress can be also be describe as negative emotional experience accompanied by predictable biochemical, physiological, cognitive and behavioral changes that are directed either toward altering the events of accommodating its effects.

One believes that stress is a complex phenomenon because it is not tangible so it cannot be overtly touched. Stress occurs with the interaction between an individual and the environment, which produces emotional strain affecting a person’s physical and mental condition. Stress is caused by stressors, which are events that create a state of disequilibrium within an individual.

Many employees may suffer from anxiety disorders or stress-related illness. In terms of days lost on the job, it is estimated that each affected employee loses about 16 working days a year because of stress, anxiety or depression.

The flight or fight response would ready them for action; powerful hormones epinephrine and nor epinephrine released by the adrenal glands, endowed humans with enhanced alertness, strength and energy. Thousands of years later humans live in the same bodies and posses the same human brains in a world with completely different stressors and hassles. While few humans may face danger from wild animals and unsuccessful hunting, urban life is equally demanding. The urban environment is rife with stressors (such as pollution, noise, violence, traffic) that stimulate the nervous systems into a flight or fight response but it is only in rare instances that an aggressive or vigorous physical response is appropriate.

Stress can also be view as anything that upset people’s ability to maintain critical variables (which can be social, psychological, spiritual or biological in nature) within acceptable limits. The experience of stress involves an event that is demanding or resources as well as the subjective feeling of distress experienced in its face. An event could be experienced as stressful if people appraised (evaluated) it as distressing. Whether an event is experienced as stressful depends on a person’s psychological orientation with things like culture, spirituality, values, beliefs and past experiences influencing the appraisal. Events that are appraised as being overwhelming, threatening, unsatisfying or confliction are more likely to be experienced as stressful. Differentiated different effects of stress as follows:

- **Subjective Effects**: Stress leads to anxiety, depression, frustration, fatigue and low self-esteem.
- **Behavioral Effects**: Stress leads to accident proneness, substance abuse, impaired speech, restlessness and forgetfulness.
- **Cognitive Effects**: Stress affects our thought process, leading to a difficulty or fear of making decisions, forgetfulness, hypersensitivity, mental blocks and difficult concentrating or thinking clearly. This may be intensified by substance abuse.
- **Physiological Responses**: Begin in the brain and spread to organs throughout the body. Catecholamine from the adrenaline medulla causes the kidneys to raise blood pressure and the liver to release sugar into the blood pressure and the liver to release sugar into the blood stream. The pituitary gland stimulates the release of corticosteroids, which helps to resist stress but if in the system for a prolonged period of time, suppresses the immune system. These responses are adaptive for dealing with stress in the form of “fight or flight” but this response is rarely useful in urban work, instead the accumulation of stress products in the body is immune-suppressive playing a part in degenerative processes and disease.
• Effects on Health: Prolonged exposure to stress has profound and detrimental effects on health. Among possible complications stress may exacerbate or play a role in causing ailments like asthma, amenorrhea, coronary heart disease, chest-pains, diarrhea, dyspepsia, headaches, migraines, diabetes mellitus, ulcers and decreased libido. In a world where AIDS is frighteningly prevalent people need to be aware that stress is immune-suppressive. HIV breakdown a person’s immune system, which leaves them vulnerable to potentially fatal infections and diseases.

Stress Process or Response Stages
Stress Response in three Stages Alarm, Resistance and Exhaustion:
i. Alarm is the first stage, when the threat or stressor is identified or realized, the body’s stress response is a state of alarm. During this stage adrenaline will be produce in order to bring about the “fight or flight response”. These are also some activation of the HPA axis, producing cortisol.

ii. The Resistance stage is where the body has to decide to “fight or flight”. The body will try to ass resources to help it cope through maximum adaption and hopefully, successful return to equilibrium for the individual. If however, the defense mechanism does not work or fails to cope, it will lead to the third stage which is exhaustion.

iii. Exhaustion stage is the third and final stage. At this point, all of the body’s resources are eventually depleted and the body’s unable to maintain normal function. The initial autonomic nervous system symptoms may reappear (sweating, raised heart rate etc), if stage three is extended, long term damage may result as the body and the immune system is exhausted and the function is impaired resulted in decomposition. The result can manifest itself in obvious illnesses such as ulcers, depression, diabetes or even cardiovascular problems, along with other mental illnesses.

Type of Stress
Chronic Stress
This type of stress as unrelenting demands and pressures for seemingly interminable periods of time. Chronic stress is the type that wears the individual down day after day and year after year with no visible escape. It grinds away at both emotional and health of individual leading to breakdown and even death.

Acute Stress
This type of stress is the most common and most recognizable form of stress. It is the kind of stress which the individual knows exactly why he is stressed; he was just in a car accident; the school nurse just called him, a bear just ambled onto his campsite. It can also be something scary but thrilling, such as a parachute jump. Normally, the body rest when these stressful events cease and life gets back to normal because the effects are short-term. Acute stress usually does not caused severe or permanent damage to the body.

Traumatic Stress
It is a severe stress reaction that results from a catastrophic event or intense experience such as a combat. Here, after the initial shock and emotional fallout, many trauma victims gradually begin to recover. But for some people, the psychological and physical symptoms triggered by the trauma do not go away, the body does not return to equilibrium and life does not return to normal. This condition is know as post trauma stress disorder. Common symptoms of this type of stress are flashbacks or nightmares about the trauma, avoidance of places and things-associated with the trauma, hyper vigilance for signs of danger and irritability and tension.

Episodic Acute Stress
Episodic acute stress is where individual experiences this type of stress lives are very chaotic out of control and they always seem to be facing multiple stressful situation. They are always in a rush, always late, always taking on too many projects, handling too many demands. Those who are prone to this type of stress include “Type A” personality types, if an individual is prone to episodic acute stress, he may not know it or admit it. He may be wedded to life style that promotes stress. Unfortunately, people with episodic acute stress may find it so habitual that they resist changing their lifestyle until they experience severe physical symptoms.

Causes or Sources of Stress at Work
Factors Intrinsic to the Job
The factors intrinsic to the job include
Poor Working Conditions
This talks about the physical surrounding of the job which include high level of noise, high or low lighting, fumes, heat, poor ventilation systems, smells and all the stimuli which bombard a worker’s senses and can affect his moods and overall mental state. Also, the physical design of the workplace comes under poor working condition. If an office is poorly designed with personnel who require frequent contact spread throughout, it creates poor communication networks and develops in poor working relationships which can cause employees.

Shift Work
This is where workers have jobs which requires them to work in shifts, some of which involves working staggered hours, which affects a workers blood temperature, metabolic rate, blood sugar levels, mental efficiency, sleep patterns, resulting in hypertension mild diabetes and peptic ulcers.

Long Hours
The long working hours required by many jobs appear to take a toll on employees health and also
making them suffer a high rate of stress. This means many individual workers and some medics who may have no sleep for thirty six (36) hours or more may find that both their quality of work and they themselves suffer.

Risk and Danger
A job which involves more risk and danger put employees in higher stress level. This because when an employees is constantly aware of potential danger and he is prepared to react immediately, this results in rush, respiration changes and muscles tension which are all seen as potentially threatening a long-term health.

New Technology
The introduction of new technology into the work environment has required workers to adapt continually to new equipment systems and ways of working. Thus leading to a great source of pressure at work on the worker. For instance, a boss trained in the latest methods may be extra burden for an employee trained in the old ways and this may increase his stress level.

Work Under-load
This describes the problem of employees not being sufficient challenged by their jobs. Job under-load is associated with repetitive routine, boring and under-stimulating work which causes a lot of stress for employees who find themselves in such situations. This means when employees are not given work which challenges their abilities and capabilities they suffer high level of stress.

Work Over-load
This is where the employee has too much work to do because of imposition of datelines which often causes stress in employees.

Role in the Organization
When a person’s role in an organization is clearly defined and understood and expectations placed upon are clear can be kept to a minimum. However, this is not the case in many work sites. The role in the organization include:-

Role Ambiguity
This arises when employees do not know what is expected of them at the workplace and how their work performances are evaluated. That is, employees do not know how and where they fit into the organization and they are not sure of any reward no matter how well they may perform. There is substantial evidence that role ambiguity can provoke stress. Lack of direction can prove stressful, especially for people who are low in their tolerance for such ambiguity.

Role Conflict
Employees experience a high rate of stress when two superiors are demanding conflicting things and when attending to one will mean they are disobeying the other superior. This makes employees confused and frustrated. For example, workers may often feel themselves torn between two groups of who demand different types of behaviour or who believe the job entails different functions. There are major types of role conflict, one types is the conflict between the person and the role. For example, a production worker and member of a union are appointed to head up a new production team. This new team leader may not really believe in keeping close control over the workers and it would go against this individual’s personality to be hardnosed but that is what the head of production would expect. A second type of intra role conflict creates contradictory expectations about how a given role should be played. Finally, a third inter role conflict results from differing requirements of two or more role that must be played at the same time. For example, work roles and non-work roles are often in such conflict. He is of the opinion that although all the roles that men and women bring into the organization are relevant to their behaviour in the study of organizational behaviour, the organizational role is the most important.

Role such as digital equipment operator, clerk team leader, sales person engineer, systems analyst, departmental head, vice president and chairperson of the board often carry conflicting demands and expectations. This study further stated that recent research evidence showed that such conflict could have a negative impact on performance and also be affected by cultural differences.

Responsibility
In an organization, there are basically two types of responsibility: Responsibility for people and responsibility for things such as budgets, equipment etc. Responsibility for people causes a lot of stress. Being responsible for people usually requires spending more time interacting with them, attending meetings and attempting to meet their needs, resolving conflicts and disputes between them and making unpleasant interpersonal decisions.

Relationship at Work
Dealing with bosses, peers and subordinates can dramatically affect the way an employee’s feels. People, high on the need for relationships, work best in stable work teams where they can get to know each other well. It might be stretching the measure too far to suggest that someone high on this factor would suffer stress if they were working with a large number of others in circumstances, which did not allow relationships to form, but it is probable that they will not work as well as they might.

On the contrary, when an employee experiences poor working relationship with superiors, colleagues and subordinates his stress level increases. This is because most employees spend so much time at the workplace and thereby poor working relationship can affect them adversely. It is more likely that they would avoid the problem of enforced intimacy by engaging in
as few interactions as possible with others and by distancing themselves mentally, it not physically by various means. There are many people who do not like the idea that those relationships at work should be anything other than formal and strictly work related, even to the point of outside life not being discussed.

Career Development
Organizations have become flatter, meaning that power and responsibility now radiates throughout the organization. The work force has become more diversified. Jobs and careers get scarcer. For the person who had been determined to rise through an organization, the challenge has recently become greater. Opportunities to learn new skills are now becoming requirements. Career development causes a lot of stress to employees through their working lives. Staying the same is quickly becoming an inadequate approach to work.

Lack of job security, fear of redundancy, obsolescence and numerous performance appraisals can cause pressure and strain. In addition the frustration of having reached one’s career ceiling or having been over promoted can result in stress.

Organization Structure and Climate
When employees do not have sense of belonging in the organization, they lack adequate opportunities to participate. These make them feel unimportant which could lead to strain and job-related stress. However, it was argued that the causes of work stress vary among individuals since they come from different backgrounds. That is to say one form and level of stress may affect one person more than another. The two divisions are physical and psychological causes. This further stated that, the physical causes include physical workload and physical environment-temperature, humidity, vibration etc. The psychological causes include workload and mental environment. On the other hand this paper also identified the following as causes of stress at work.

Economic Uncertainties
When the economy is contracting, people become increasingly anxious about their job security and this could lead to an increase on their stress level.

Technological Uncertainties
Innovations can make an employee’s skills and experience obsolete in a very short time. Computers, robotics, automation and similar forms of technological innovation are threat to many employee’s and therefore could caused stress.

Organization Leadership
This represents the managerial style of the organizations senior executives. Many senior executives create a culture characterized by tension, fear and anxiety. They establish unrealistic pressures to perform in the short run impose excessively tight controls and routinely dismiss employees who do not measure up to standard.

Symptoms and effects of stress on employee’s productivity. These can be grouped under three general categories (page 20).

Psychological Symptoms and Effect
These are the major consequences of stress. Then mental health of employees is threatened by high levels of stress and poor mental health. Unlike the physical symptoms, psychological symptoms could also cause employees work performance to deteriorate.

Anger, anxiety, depression, nervousness, irritability, aggressiveness and boredom result s in low employee performance declines in self-esteem, resentment of supervision, inability to concentrate, trouble in making decision and job dissatisfaction. Also the psychological symptoms of stress can lead to burnout. Job burnout is a prolonged withdrawal from which makes the sufferer devalue his work and sees it as a source of dissatisfaction.

Behavioural Symptoms and Effects
The behavioural signs of stress include eating more or less cigarette smoking used of alcohol and drugs, rapid speech pattern nervous fidgeting which leads to absenteeism from work, happing from job to job and causes performance to deteriorate.

Physiological Symptoms and Effects
These are changes in the metabolism that accompany stressors. The symptoms include increased heart rate; blood pressure etc. with this, the wear and tear on the body becomes noticeable and problematic. The effects of this are back pains, migraine headaches, insomnia, heart disease, hypertension, diabetes and even cancer which affect employees productivity.

The Impact of Stress on the Organization
Starting a new job would likely to be very stressful if the person felt in-experienced, unable to cope with workload, uncomfortable around their bosses or colleagues and unstimulated by their work. On the other hand, a person entering an areas of work where they felt competent, supported by their colleagues and stimulated would be more likely to experience the change as challenging than stressful. Besides the potential stressors that occurred outside the organization there were also those that were associated with the organization. Although an organization is made up of groups of individuals, there are also more macro level dimensions, unique to an organization that contains potential stressors.

It is also eluded that there were two main sources of job stress; environmental and personal. This paper made variety of external environmental factors could lead to job stress. Those included work schedules, place of work, job security, route to and from work, the number

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and nature of clients. Even noise, including people talking and telephones ringing, contributed to stress. This paper, however, noted that individuals reacted differently even if they were at the same job, because personal factors also influenced stress. The paper also noted that stress is not necessarily dysfunctional; some people work well only when a little stress and find they are more productive when a deadline approaches.

A study of 46,000 employees concluded that stress and depression may cause employees to seek medical care for vague physical and psychological problems and can in fact lead to more serious health conditions. The health care cost of the high-stress workers were 46% higher than those of their less stressed co-workers. Stress in the job took its toll on nonprofits; lost time from work, deflated productivity, low staff morale, turnover and higher health care costs.

In the United States of America, Britain and many other European Countries, about half the deaths each year for both men and women, were due to cardiovascular diseases. The factors associated with high risk of heart diseases included cigarette smoking, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and blood sugar levels and excess body weight. This research further stated that a number of studies have indicated that social and psychological factors may account for much of the risk and this has promoted research into factors in the work situation that may increase susceptibility to heart disease. Among the factors that have been shown to influence such susceptibility are dissatisfaction at work and occupational stress. On individual level, employees can become more responsible for their own well-being by recognizing unhealthy emotional and work patterns before they reach crisis proportions. At organizational level, employees need to be aware of the workplace structures that may contribute to burnout their hopes dashed their goals derailed or their confidence under mind. The sources of the pain vary, but much of it comes from abusive manager’s unreasonable company policies, disruptive co-worker or clients or from poorly managed change. It is a by-product of organizational life that can have serious negative effects on individuals and their organizations, unless it is identified and handled in healthy and constructive ways. The tangible consequences include lost profits resulting from things like diminished productivity or worse mass exodus.

To achieve a peak of performance, stress should be managed effectively with the negative effects of stress minimized. Viewing more prominent case of stress in the workplace being the following:-

**Overload**

Overload has two forms; an excessive amount of work and work for which and individual is ill prepared. One way of interpreting the challenge of increasing productivity is to understand that it means each individual will accomplish more than before. On an assembly line, the goal of increased productivity means that the total time to complete a product is reduced and overload is experienced in the form of the endless flow of work. These suggest that both quantitative and qualitative overload may produce at least nine different symptoms of psychological and physical strain such as:-

- Job dissatisfaction
- Job tension
- Lower self esteem
- Feelings of beings under threat
- Embarrassment
- High cholesterol levels
- Increased heart rate
- Skin complaints
- More smoking

**Time Pressure**

With the productivity demand comes the time pressure of getting the product completed or the service delivered in an ever-shorter time frame. It also stated that customers demand speed and quality and competition organizations must deliver on both. As employees become more involved, they too will recognize the priority that time has in the workplace.

**Managing Stress**

Stress can be managed in two approaches; the individual and organizational approaches. The individual approach include exercise that is the employees can manage stress by walking, riding bicycles, attending aerobic classes, practicing yoga, jogging, swimming, playing tennis and swatting squash balls. Most runners and fitness addicts admit that, it is very hard to focus on job stress when one is trying to complete vigorous workout. Again, individual can manage stress through relaxation. This is because when employees relax the response for stress will be reserved in the human mind-body system.

Individuals can reduce tension through relaxation techniques such as meditation, hypnosis and biofeedback. The objective is to reach a state of deep relaxation in which the employee feel physically relaxed, somewhat detached from the immediate environment and detached from body sensations. Relaxation exercise reduces employee’s heart rates, blood pressure and other physiological indicators of stress. Another way to reduce stress individually is opening up. A healthy response to this moments or period of personal crisis is to confide in others. Employees may not find it easy to discuss difficult personal traumas with others, but self-disclosure can reduce the level of stress and give them more positive outlook on life. Also honest entries on a regular basis in a diary may accomplish the same thing.

The organizations approach to stress management which include training programmes for employee, ensuring effective upward and downward communication in the organization, improvement in personnel policies such as (good welfare packages,
incentives, pension schemes), good job sign, improvement in the physical work environment and also management should provide technical support to employees. Stress can also be managed in an organization through increasing employees autonomy in their job, increase or decrease personal responsibility, allow more flexible working hour by the use of flexi-time, job rotation and transfers, provide better working conditions, including social/fitness club etc and institute a counseling service.

In managing work stress effectively, management should consider doing the following:-

- Provide work which allows some personal choice in the way it is carried out and the sequence in which it is carried out.
- Encourage employee’s participation in decisions which affect them.
- Set clear goals and targets and provide adequate feedback on performance.
- Induct new recruits thoroughly.
- Provide training as an ongoing updating process.
- Provide opportunities consisting regarding for effective output.
- Review performance gaps at the time of occurrence.
- Provide opportunities for employees to try new duties and different tasks.
- Design job to have even work pressures.
- Encourage group working procedures and friendly work relations.
- Provide secure and fair personal practices.
- Ensure work environment is free of hazards.

This implies that if these approaches and measures outlined above are carefully implemented it could go a long way to minimize the level of stress on employees.

CONCLUSION

The study aims at evaluating the effect of stress on productivity, the result from the study showed that the negative factors that distressed employee had a negative effect on productivity. There had been many stress factors that the employees endured and the enquiry proved that the effect of stress affected productivity negatively. The fact that the majority of the employees thought of leaving their job felt that the organization did not care about them was a reflection of huge dissatisfaction that undoubtedly lowered productivity.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that the following measures be put in place to help employees to manage and reduce stress on their work:-

1. The organization must conduct a needs assessment for an employee assistance programme.
2. Management must conduct an analysis of the organization mood and climate by assessing the reasons why the employee does not care about its productivity and what they can do to change it.
3. The supervision and managers need to explore the causes of the dissatisfaction of employees within the working environment.
4. Supervisors must assess the level of their subordinate’s knowledge, skills and whether they will be able to meet their deadlines. They must agree on a performance contact, so that they can give employees with job maturity and control over their jobs.
5. They must invest in a stress management strategy that will help increase productivity.
6. Time management training should be given to employees on a continuous basis. Managers should invite employees, who think that they are being given jobs that are in contradiction with each other and clarity their roles.
7. Managers should facilitate an employee skill audit that will help to place employees that feel underutilized. Managers should revise their decision making strategy.
8. Management should introduce stress management techniques in the organization.
9. An employee assistance programme has to be introduced for early identification and intervention on problems so that productivity levels do not increase.

REFERENCE