

Administrative Stress and Employee Performance: A Study of Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Finance, Uyo

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between administrative stress and employee performance in Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Finance. Specifically, the objectives of the study covered: to ascertain the relationship between administrative stress variables which are superiors-subordinate relationship, limited organizational resources and equity while employee's performance was measured using increase in output, efficiency and workers' effectiveness. The study adopted a survey research design and was guided by three research hypotheses. The population of the study comprised all the employees of the Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Finance totaling 112, while the sample size was 87 respondents which was determined using Taro Yamane sample size determination technique. Structured questionnaire was used in generating the needed primary data. The data was analyzed both descriptively and inferentially. Results from the analysis showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between administrative stress and employees' performance. Based on these findings, it was recommended that management of the organization should adopt a contingency style of relationship; that tasks should be assigned to employees based on the availability of the resources; and that employees should be seen as important asset rather than a 'tool' in achieving corporate objectives.

Keywords: Administrative stress, superior-subordinate relationship, limited organizational resources, equity and employee performance.

Introduction

The concept of stress has gradually become a global phenomenon in different business organizations. Kargar (2018) sees the predominance of stress across organizations as the reality of modern day workplace. This can be attributable to the force of globalization and the increasing innovation in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) that have virtually enhanced knowledge, product awareness and usability across customers in different industries. As applicable in the telecommunication industry, the Nigerian business landscape generally is believed to be characterized by stress (Jackson and Rothmann, 2021). Globalization, and the dynamic business landscape have been described as hypercompetitive that possibly increase stress among employees in different business organizations.

To measure up in such business setting, business organizations are often expected to manage their resources (man, money, materials) effectively and efficiently. They are expected to be competitive, survive and remain in business through their business processes. Since these processes depend on the employees, attempts to meet organizational demands in such business environment often induce stress among the employees. For instance, employees may be assigned tasks on a given time frame, with limited resources, assuming multiple roles, among others (Ritzer and Trice, 2021). Such work environments permeate high-level of anxiety and tension among the employees. Thus, when there is a misfit between work demands and the individual employee, such individual experiences stress.

Selye (2017) first came up with the concept of stress. At first, he defined it as the non-specific neuroendocrine response of the body. Overtime, he realized that stress do not only affect the

neuroendocrine system alone but virtually every other system in the body. Since then, there been plethora of literature on the concept of stress, the antecedents and possible sequences, both theoretically and empirically. Altogether, such studies have yielded to the concept of administrative/occupational stress, Deardrick and Gardner (2020) define work stress as the response of employees to job demands and pressures that are not in line with their knowledge, interest, skills and abilities. Malta (2004) as cited in Amoako, Gyamfi, and Emmanuel (2017) conceive administrative stress as any discomfort which is felt and seen at an individual level and triggered by events or situations that are too intense and frequent in nature so as to exceed an individual's coping capabilities and resources to handle them adequately

In every work environment, an appreciative level of relationships is often expected for employees to accomplish assigned tasks effectively. Through work relationships, ideas, work-related suggestions on how to improve assigned tasks and helping behaviours are all demonstrated. Just as employees relate cordially with co-workers, work demands equally position employees to relate with their superiors as well. When employees cannot effectively relate with their superiors, it naturally breeds tension each time such superiors are seen by the employees. Thus, superiors-subordinates' relationship that is characterized with friendly interactions, recognition of employees' inputs and engaging in extra-role behaviours such as asking after the employees' well-being, reinforces employees to carry out assigned tasks beyond expectations (Nelson, 2005). However, inability to do so, according to Nelso (2019), results in demoralization and increased stress level among employees.

Employees are rational beings by nature. They expect the organization to treat them well as they happily engage in any assigned task. In the language of psychological contract, they expect to receive some benefits in exchange for their inputs (Khalili & Asmawi, 2017). Creating an equitable work environment involves promoting work policies where employees are treated fairly, receive managerial support, appreciation, recognition and provisions for growth and advancement in exchange for their efforts. It also includes that rewards and employees' remuneration should be fair across all employees to avoid workplace stress (Stecher & Rosse, 2017). When these parameters are lacking, employees are likely to engage in unethical work behaviours, which may ultimately affect team cohesion and employees' morale (Krohnik, 2012) which affects organizational performance adversely. Accordingly, employees' performance is the ability of employees to complete assigned tasks in the least possible time using the least amount of resources (Morison, 2018). Elsewhere, it is the ability of an employee in accomplishing assigned task within a given period of time. Darsen & Barbin (2020) contend that employees' performance is the ability and aptitude of an employee that is expressed in an assigned task.

Statement of the Problem

Stress has gradually become an integral part of corporate organizations. It affects employees physically, psychologically and emotionally. When stress is properly managed, work environment is seen as being a place where employees could maximize their satisfaction as they remain committed to assigned tasks.

Changes in business environment affects virtually all organizations and ministries. organizations are regularly expected to meet customers' expectations, achieve pre-determined goals and periodically innovate. Assigning tasks to employees with limited resources naturally induce stress among employees. In addition, employees can hardly exist independently in an organization. They require interactions that go beyond fellow subordinates to achieve targeted objectives. They need work relationships and interactions with their superiors. Inability to create work environment that encourage and support equitable treatment of the employees through the provision of needed organizational resources, predispose employees to stress which they exhibit through unethical

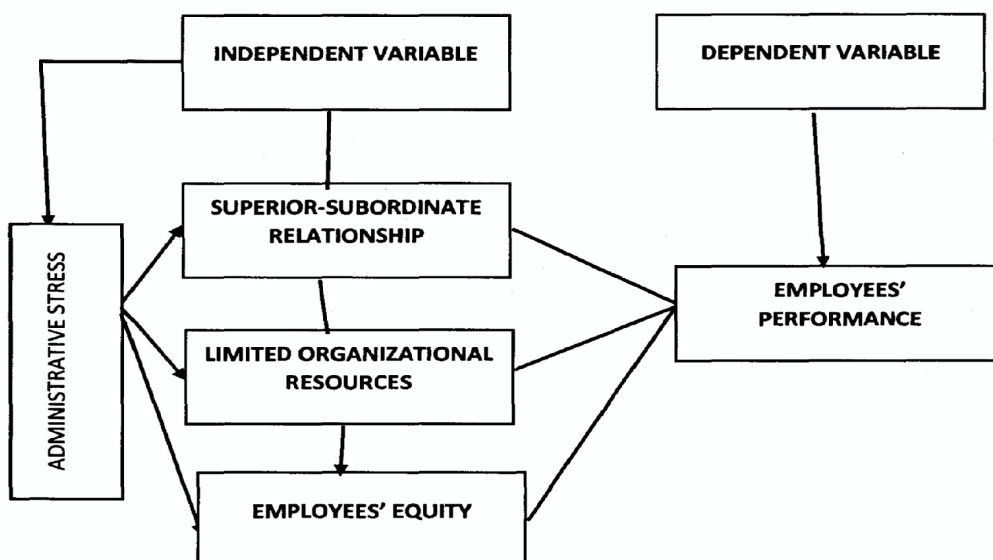
work behaviours such as impaired work relationships with co-workers and superiors. Nevertheless, the idea of stress in an organization is never inevitable. It is ubiquitous and confronts employees at almost every stage of work processes. The effect of stress on the employees means subsequent effect of stress on organizational performance at same point. Besides, higher management particularly in government ministries, do not realize the impact of stress on employee performance which ultimately results in critical managerial dilemmas, as higher level of stress that exist with no managerial concern for solution consequently lower employee performance, staking organizational reputation and loss of skilled employees. These situations call for immediate concern from organization management to employing effective stress management practices to increase employee satisfaction and overall employee performance. Moreover, Cummings & Cooper (1998) point out the difficulty in developing a coherent theory on stress, as different research methodologies and disciplines (medicine, psychology, sociology, management) have looked into this area. Owing to this difficulty, not much quality research is available in this subject area especially in Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Finance. Majority of available research and theories about job related stress have been developed and empirically tested in western context. However, the problem of job related stress and its consequences is more important for developing countries as these are undergoing enormous social and economic changes (Jamal,1999; Xie, 1996).

Therefore, since the effects of stress in inextricably linked to organizational performance, this study is undertaken to assess administrative stress and employees' performance in Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Finance.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To ascertain the relationship between superiors-subordinate relationship and employees' performance in Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Finance, Uyo;
- ii. To find out the relationship between limited organizational resources and employees' performance in Akwa thorn State Ministry of Finance, Uyo.
- iii. To examine the relationship between equity and employees' performance in Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Finance, Uyo.

Conceptual Explanation



Source: Researcher's Model (2022)

In today's work environment, corporate organizations strive in various ways to enhance their performance. In other words, organizational survival has been the primary goal of every organization which firms cannot neglect (Amoako, Gyamfi, & Emmanuel, 2017), as such, firms strive to enhance their advertising strategy, marketing strategy as well as adopt other approaches that they perceive could better their business processes and operations. This phenomenon is not peculiar to privately owned establishments but also serve as the subject matter of government owned organizations. The subject matter of every organization is their employees; the human aspect of the organization. In order to achieve any pre-determined goals, organizations must enhance the effectiveness of their employees. This implies that, any source of discomfort to the employees, even if it is stress, would significantly affect the realization of the aforementioned goals.

The Concept of Administrative Stress

Administrative stress can be defined as an emotional, cognitive, behavioral and physiological response to the aggressive and harmful aspects of work, work environment and organizational climate (McCormick, 2021). It is a condition characterized by feelings of helplessness in solving tasks. In other words, work-related stress is people's reaction when they have to face some demands or special tasks that are out of their abilities or knowledge. Malta (2004) argue that administrative stress is any discomfort which is felt and seen at an individual level and triggered by instances, events or situations that are too intense and frequent in nature so as to exceed an individual's coping capabilities and resources to handle them adequately. Hebert (2018) as cited in Meyer and Allen (2020) define administrative stress as a condition arising from the interaction of people and their jobs ad characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning. Olagunju (2010) defines administrative stress as a chronic, complex and emotional state with apprehension which is characteristic of various nervous and mental disorders. Among the employees, features of administrative stress include: high dissatisfaction among the employees, job mobility, burnout, poor work performance and poor interpersonal relations at work, poor coping strategies and resources to handle them adequately (Mathieu & Zajac, 2013).

From the above conceptualizations, one could observe that there are some interactive features of stress that add meaning to the concept. They are: feeling of helplessness, any symptom of discomfort, among others. With these features, one could, therefore, point out that stress, whether positive or negative, are simply situations in an organization that exceed the ability or resources needed to realize a given target of which the outcome often affects either employees' or organizational performance (Karunanithy & Ponnampolan, 2013).

Stress do not just happen and with the same features across individuals. Though it may have the same features, the type of stress and its effect varies sharply among employees in an organization. Past studies on administrative stress have adduced various forms of stress. Meyer & Herscovitch (2015) are of the view that stress could be classified according to the nature of the stressor (physiological or psychological stress), its influence on an individual (eustress, distress), and the duration of the stressor (acute or short-term, chronic or long-term). These forms of stress presuppose that to manage stress effectively, it requires different approaches.

Past studies have identified different approaches to stress. However, only three of those approaches are widely recognized. They are: response-based view, stimulus-based view and cognitive-transactional based view.

Response-Based View: The response-based approach to stress was first captured in the writing of Hans Selye, who was one of the first researchers to attempt to explain the process of stress related illness in terms of the general adaptation syndrome (GAS) (Birech, 2012). He introduced the

General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) to describe the short-term and long-term nonspecific physiological responses to stressors. The GAS has three stages of coping with a stressor. First stage, an initial alarm reaction, which is basically fight-or-flight response; second stage, resistance, during which the body adapts to the stressor by activating the neuroendocrine system; and third stage, a stage of exhaustion, which is the gradual decline of stress resistance, eventually resulting in physiological damage and organismic death (diseases) if continued (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2021).

Stimulus-Based View: The stimulus approach views stress as an independent variable whereas the response-based approach does not. Thus the stimulus characteristics of the environment are considered as disturbing or disruptive in some way. Stress, using this approach, could also entail a discrete life event that when experienced in sufficient amounts, gives rise to serious effects on both psychological and social wellbeing.

Transactional-Cognitive Based View: This approach to stress was propounded by Lazarus & Folkman (1984) as cited in Kim (2017). Lazarus & Folkman (1984) as cited by Amoako et al. (2017) opine that stress is a particular relationship between an individual and the environment appraised by the individual as taxing or exceeding available coping resources and posing a threat to their well-being. Looking at stress from that continuum, Lazarus & Folkman (1984) as cited in McCormick (2021) contend that Transactional-Cognitive based view of stress involves continuous actions and adjustments known as transactions between an individual and the environment. The individual is regarded as an active agent who can influence the impact of a stressor through behavioral cognitive and emotional strategies. As such, the transactional model of stress was to be the most satisfactory theoretical framework to emphasize the relationships between persons and their environment. This suggests that, to cope with stress effectively, there must be a balance between an environment that produces the stressors and the mechanism necessary to cope with the stress effectively.

Models of Administrative Stress

In understanding the concept of stress, past studies have shown that different approaches have been assumed. The approaches/models used is an indication that the cause of stress is multifaceted. The models recognize the importance of both the person and environment in understanding the nature and consequences of stress. In terms of person-related factors, Type-A behavior (Friedman & Rosenman, 1959), locus of control (Rotter, 1966), hardiness (Kobasa, 1979), and coping styles of an individual (Menaghan, 1983) are often mentioned.

Person-Environment (P-E) Fit Model: The model was developed by French (1972) and his colleagues who suggested that occupational stress occur if an individual lacks the capabilities, skill or resources which are needed to satisfy the demands of his/her work and organizational climate (French & Caplan 1972 cited in Strcher & Rose, 2017). The core premise of P-E fit theory is that stress arises not from the person or environment separately, but rather by their fit or congruence with one another (Olagunju, 2010). Thus, if job demands and pressures in the workplace exceed the skills and abilities of an individual, a misfit between the characteristics of an individual and his/her work environment has occurred.

Job-Demand (JD) Control Model: The Job Demand-Control (JDC) model (Karasek, 1979) and the Job Demand-Control-Support (JDACS) model (Johnson, & Hall, 1988) have dominated research on occupational stress in the last 20 years. According to JDC model, employees working in a high-strain job (high demands-low control) experience the lowest well-being (Morrison, 2018). The term job demand, according to this model, refers to the amount of workload or

responsibilities placed upon an individual. Consequently, increasing the workload as well as time limit of the individual to cope with it may result in psychological pressure in the workplace (Nelson, 2019).

Effort-Reward Imbalance: Social inequalities in the quality of work and in access to the labour market have been reported in numerous studies, such that it can be concluded that the benefits and costs of working life are unequally distributed across society. This conclusion also holds true for the health burden emanating from work life. Effort - Reward Imbalance Model (ERI) offer putative explanations of the relationship between stressful working conditions, job strain, and psychological and physical ill health. According to this model, the experience of a lack of reciprocity in terms of high costs and low gains elicits negative emotions in exposed people (Starke, Godin, Chandola & Marmot, 2004).

Cognitive-Relational Model: Richard Lazarus and his colleagues propounded the Cognitive - Relational theory of Stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). How an individual cope with stress is initially determined by how that individual subjectively appraises the stressful event, and how he responds, and adapts to stress. In other words, cognitive appraisal of an individual to stress-related situation is the subject matter of cognitive-relational model of stress. Cognitive appraisal has a mediator value in between the stressful events and the reactions of an individual to the stressor (Malaysia, Dixit & Bhati, 2015).

Superior-Subordinates Relationship and Employee Performance: According to Sutherland & Cooper (2000), the quality of interpersonal associations at work is important in that it helps in the reduction of stress. Olagunju (2010) found that issues such as social-support between the superior and the subordinate have an impact on levels of stress among workers. Thus, in a situation where the relationship between supervisor and subordinate is harmful, problems of emotional unsteadiness may occur. Therefore, relationship between the superior and the subordinate can be potentially stressful when leadership style is demanding. As Sutherland & Cooper (2000) rightly observe, poor-work relations between the superior and the subordinate that displays low levels of supportiveness and low attention in problem-solving, breeds anxiety and tension, which subsequently result to stress.

Limited Organizational Resources and Employee Performance: Herscovitch & Meyer (2015) submit that lack of resources leads to the decline in staff numbers and employees who may not be proficient to perform the work required. To the few knowledgeable employees, this causes more pressure and creates unbearable workload, leading to occupational stress increase. Limited organizational resources could also overlap to mean the adequacy of training that is provided to the employees. According to Herscovitch & Meyer (2015), employees can bring skills to a position but there are likely to be internal, company or industry specific activities that will require additional training. For instance, if a process requires a new software package, it's unrealistic to expect employees to just figure it out; they should receive adequate training.

Feeling of Equality and Employee Performance: Equity theory was propounded by Adam (1963). It states that individual employee who perceives that he or she is being overpaid or underpaid will experience distress and that such distress will lead to efforts to bring back equity. The equity theory is a theory of equality in pay. Equity in this regard refers to fairness, impartiality and justice in pay received by an employee. In other words, equity could translate to the amount of commitment, loyalty and motivation of an individual (Selye, 2012). Employees are not concerned with what they are paid, but what others are paid. Stecher and Rose (2017) indicate that one of the major causal factors to job stress is lack of equitable reward and recognition among the employees. By implication, if an employee perceives that his/her reward is unfair compared to

others, he/she may develop the intention to leave. When pay is perceived to be fair, employees are motivated to perform better.

Stress Management Strategies: Stress management can be defined as interventions designed to reduce the impact of stressors in the workplace. The goal of stress management is to manage the stress of everyday life among employees. As earlier emphasized, stress and the effects vary across individuals. As such, the coping or management strategies equally vary so that there would be an effective stress management tools in order to create the appropriate physiological, psychological and emotional reactions so as to ensure return to a state of balance as soon as possible. From a strategy perspective, there are basically two main approaches to coping with stress. They are problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies.

The Concept of Employees' Performance

Campbell (1990) defines performance as those actions or behaviors under the control of the individual, that contribute to the organization's goals, and that can be measured according to the individual's level of proficiency, a definition that is consistent with the others. Simply put, performance of the employee is considered as what an employee does and what he does not do.

In the analysis of performance in an organization, it has often been difficult to differentiate contextual performance from extra-role performance. Murphy (1989) defines task performance as the accomplishment of tasks within an incumbent's job description. According to Borman & Motowidlo (1993), task performance is the proficiency with which job incumbents perform activities that are formally recognized as part of their jobs; activities that contribute to the organization's technical core either directly by implementing a part of its technological process, or indirectly by providing it with needed materials or services. Put differently, they are jobs that employees are assigned to do; they are jobs that are part of employees' job description.

Accordingly, Borman & Motowidlo (1993) describe contextual performance as discretionary behaviours that apply across all jobs; are not necessarily role prescribed but contribute to the social and psychological environment of the organization. Organ (1988) formally defines contextual performance as behaviours that are discretionary in nature and are not part of employees' formal role requirements, but promote the effective functioning of the organization. Briefly, contextual performance entails: behaviours (i) performed by a member of an organization (ii) directed toward an individual, group, or organization with whom he or she interacts while carrying out his or her organizational role, and (iii) performed with the intention of promoting the welfare of the individual, group, or organization toward which it is directed (Morrison, 2018).

From the above conceptualizations, two facts are obvious: task performance are employees' work-related behaviours that are expressed as part of assigned tasks while contextual performance are discretionary in nature; they are expressed out of altruism as the employees are happy seeing other employees progress. While explaining employees' performance, both performance aspects are very vital. Since employees are recruited in an organization for core tasks purposes, they equally extend helping behaviours as they see the organization progress. But to engage in contextual work performances, an employee requires proficiency in an assigned task as task performance propose. That is, an employee cannot engage-in helping behaviour when he/she lacks the ability and capability. Thus, for overall understanding of employees' performance, task and contextual performances are very crucial.

Effects of Administrative Stress on Employees' Performance

Past studies on the effects of stress have often been centered on individual performance. According to Morrison (2018), there is an inverted U relationship in most studies on stress and performance.

Buttressing this assertion, McCormick (2021) contends that the inverted U pattern may also describe the reaction to stress overtime as well as to changes in stress intensity. It means too low or too high stress influence performance negatively. Accordingly, the notion that stress has detrimental effects on individuals, and subsequently affects the performance of organizations, is shared by a several researchers.

Thus, the effects of administrative stress on employees' performance is ubiquitous. Administrative stress reduces the morale of the employees. Workplace events such as heavy layoffs, the cancellation of overtime, cancelling benefits programs, and the lack of union representation, play a large part in changing employee morale. Other events can also influence workplace morale, such as sick building syndrome, low wages, and employees being mistreated. Factors influencing morale within the workplace can be illustrated through the following attributes: job security, management style, staff feeling that their contribution is valued by their employer, realistic opportunities for merit-based promotion, the perceived social or economic value of the work being done by the organization as a whole, the perceived status of the work being done by the organization as a whole, team composition, and work culture.

According to Lambert (2004), stresses is a major contributing factor to corporate inefficiency, high staff turnover, absenteeism, decreased quality and quantity output and increased health care cost for staff. Also that organization consequences are many and varied, as well as share one common feature. Ongori & Agolla (2008) mention that greater stress encountered by the employees in their life tend to reduce the performance of the employees.

Theoretical Framework

Theories have been propounded to assess the relationship between administrative stress and employees' performance. In this section of the study, Hooke's (1668) law of elasticity was considered. The law is explained hereunder:

Hooke's Law of Elasticity: The law states that, for relatively small deformations of an object, the displacement or size of the deformation is directly proportional to the deforming force or load. Simply put, the displacement, stretch or shift in an object is equal to the weight of the object. This means that, if an object is stretched, the object returns to its original shape and size upon removal of the load or weight upon it thereof.

In this study, Hooke's usage of the work 'object' extend to include humans, employees in the organization. In the literature considered in the course of the study, it has been emphasized that stress that employees encounter in an organization are of different types, so it is with the individuals. More so, not all stressors are bad within a work context. Thinking in that continuum, the manner in which an employee manages stress is sharply different from another employee. Also, every employee has stress absorption limit. There is a limit to which an employee can bear stress, beyond that limit, stress becomes unbearable. Within such limit, negative effects of stress on employees' performance would begin to manifest. Features such as physical work withdrawal, emotional withdrawal, job dissatisfaction, turnover intension, employee commitment and loyalty, among others, become the problem. Hence, Hooke's law of elasticity provides a good theoretical underpinning for this study.

Empirical Review

Past studies have been conducted to assess the relationship between administrative stress and employees' performance. In this section of the study, few of such studies are considered: McCormick (2021) carried out a study on effect of stress management strategies on employees'

performance in the public service in Kenya. The target population comprised of seven hundred thousand (700,000) respondents from the Public Service with a sample size of four hundred (400). Random sampling techniques was used in selecting a sample size from 21 ministries within the Public Service. The primary data gathered was analyzed using descriptive analysis and multiple linear regression. Results from the analysis indicated that there was a positive relationship between employees' performance and the factor variables studies of relaxation techniques and counselling services. It was concluded that all variables studied indicated a significant effect on employees' performance in Public Service. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others, that the management of the organization under study should create awareness to the employees to enable them be aware of utilization of stress management strategies available in the organization that can result in improved performance.

Malaysia et al. (2015) examined effect of stress management strategies on employees' commitments in family bank branches in Nairobi County, Kenya. The target population therefore was 347 employees working in the 3 levels of management while 69 of the employees were chosen as sample size for the study. The primary data generated was analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression. Results from the analysis showed that the variables considered had significant effects of employees' job commitment in family bank branches in Nairobi County, Kenya. It was concluded that psychological support, job redesign, training and development and employees' welfare program all had effects on employees' job commitment.

Methodology

In this study, survey research design was used. Predominantly, this form of research design was adopted because it enabled the researcher to assess the effects of administrative stress on employees' performance in the studied organization. This study was carried out in Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Finance. The organization served as the population of the study with 112 in its employ. However, Eighty-seven (87) employees was selected as sample size for this study using the Taro Yameni's sample size determination formula as shown below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = Sample Size

N = Population Size (112)

e = Margin of Error (5%)

1 = Theoretical Constant

Thus:

$$n = \frac{112}{1 + 112 (5\%)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{112}{1 + 112 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{112}{1 + 112 (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{112}{1 + 0.28}$$

$$n = \frac{112}{1.28}$$

$$n = 87$$

These decomposed variables are measured as shown hereunder:

Superiors-Subordinates Relationship: This construct was assessed using Tenzin (2008) survey on employee's perception on superior's power and status as related to superior/subordinate relationship. The survey comprised of 57-items that covers trust, relationship and exchange between the superior and the subordinates. Out of these items, 5 items that were found relevant for the study was selected. The survey was designed using a 5 rating scale of 'always' = 5, 'often' = 4, 'sometimes' = 3, 'rarely' = 2 and 'never' = 1. Example of those items selected include: “My supervisor expects more information from me than my skills and abilities”, “I spend too much time in unimportant meetings with my supervisor”, “I feel that I am always ordered”, “I usually hear about important changes through rumors rather than management communication” and “Company policies and procedures for employees make no sense to me”.

Limited Organizational Resources: This survey was measured using Gakenia (2015) survey on organizational resources and performance. The survey contains 14-items on technological resource of an organization. From the items, 3-items that could aid in eliciting the right responses from the respondents were selected but with necessary modifications. The survey was designed using a 5-point rating scale of 'Strongly agree' 5, 'Agree' =4, 'Neutral' =3, 'Disagree' 2 and 'strongly disagree' = 1. Example of items from the survey are: “Our organization supports and invests in employee training and development”, “We try to use most of modern technology in our administrative operations”, “our organization does not have the resources to keep our ICT department up to date.”

Employee Feeling of Equity: This construct was assessed using Usmani (2013) distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional justice, temporal justice, spatial justice and job satisfaction survey. The survey comprised on 7-items on employee equity/satisfaction. From those items, 4-items that were relevant to the study were selected. The survey was designed using a 5-point Likert rating scale of 'Strongly agree' = 5, 'Agree' =4, 'Neutral' =3, 'Disagree' = 2 and 'strongly disagree' 1. Examples of those items are: “I find that my opinions are respected at work”, “I am satisfied with the recognition I get for the work I do”, “I am satisfied with the way my pay compares with that for similar jobs in other firms” and “I am satisfied with the way my boss handles employees accordingly.”

Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis One

H0: There is no significant relationship between superiors-subordinate relationship and employees' performance in Akwa Thom State Ministry of Finance, Uyo.

Result of Hypothesis One

Correlated Variables		Superior-Subordinates Relationship	EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE
Superior-Subordinate Relationship	Pearson Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 85	.679** .000 85
EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE	Pearson Sig. (2-tailed) N	.679** .000 85	1 85

** .Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Computed Result, Version 23.

Table 1 shows the result of hypothesis one. From the Table, superiors-subordinates relationship variable of administrative stress showed a correlation co-efficient of $r = 0.679$ with employees' performance. This implies that, there is a both positive and significant relationship between superiors-subordinate relationship and employees' performance in the studied organization. Based on the result of this hypothesis, the stated null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship between superiors-subordinates relationship and employees' performance in Akwa Ibom State ministry of finance.

Hypothesis Two

H₀: There is no significant relationship between limited organizational resources and employees’ performance in Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Finance, Uyo

Result of Hypothesis Two

Correlated Variables		Limited Org. resources	Employees’ Performance
Limited Org. Resources	Pearson Correlation	1	.515**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	85	.000
	N	85	85
Employees’ Performance	Pearson Correlation	.515**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	85	85

. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Result of Hypothesis Three

Correlated Variables		Feeling of Equity	EMPLOYEES’ PERFORMANCE
Feeling of Equity	Pearson Correlation	1	.283**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	85	.009
	N	85	85
Employees’ Performance	Pearson Correlation	.283**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	
	N	85	85

. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Computed Result, Version 23.

This table depicts a correlation co-efficient of $r = 0.515$ between limited organizational resources and employees' performance variables. However, since a correlation co-efficient of $r = 0.515$ is greater than the probability value (P-Value) of 0.000, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between limited organizational resources and employees' performance in Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Finance, Uyo is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. This implies that there is a positive and significant relationship between limited organizational resources and employees' performance in Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Finance, Uyo.

Hypothesis Three

H₀: There is no significant relationship between equity and employees' performance in Akwa thorn State Ministry of Finance, Uyo.

Result of Hypothesis Three

Correlated Variables		Feeling of Equity	EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE
Feeling of Equity Correlation	Pearson	1	.283**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009
	N	85	85
Employees' Performance	Pearson Correlation	.283**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	
	N	85	85

. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Computed Result, Version 23.

In Table 3, employees' feeling of equity variable of administrative stress (as used in the study), showed a correlation co-efficient of $r = 0.283$ which is less than the probability value (P-Value) of 0.283. The result of this analysis prompted the rejection of the null hypothesis earlier stated in favour of the alternative hypothesis. This entails that there is a significant and positive relationship between employees' feeling of equity and their performance in the studied organization.

Discussion of Findings

This study examined the relationship between administrative stress and employees' performance in Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Finance. The three formulated null hypotheses were tested empirically and findings were made. The findings are discussed in this section of the study as shown hereunder:

Relationship between Superior-Subordinates Relationship and Employees' Performance

Superiors-subordinates relationship variable of administrative stress showed a correlation co-efficient of $r = 0.679$ with employees' performance. This implies that, there is both positive and significant relationship between superiors-subordinate relationship and employees' performance in the studied organization. Based on the result of this hypothesis, the stated null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship between superiors-subordinates relationship and employees' performance in Akwa Thom State ministry of finance. This finding is in tandem with the views of Jarvis (2002), who found that issues such as social-support between the superior and the subordinate have an impact on levels of stress among workers. Thus, a situation where the relationship between supervisor and subordinate is not positive, problems of emotional unsteadiness may occur, which ultimately lead to stress (Cartwright and Cooper, 1997).

Relationship between Limited Organizational Resources and Employees' Performance

Between limited organizational resources and employees' performance variables. Since the correlation co-efficient of $r = 0.515$ is greater than the probability value (P-Value) of 0.000, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between limited organizational resources and employees' performance in Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Finance, Uyo was rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. This implies that there is a positive and significant relationship between limited organizational resources and employees' performance in Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Finance, Uyo. This corroborate with the views of Goswami (2015) who contended that lack of resources leads to the decline in staff numbers and employees who

may not be proficient to perform the work required. Therefore, limited organizational resources causes more pressure and creates unbearable workload to employees in the organization, leading to increase in occupational stress which impairs on employees' performance.

Relationship between Equity and Employees' Performance

Employees' feeling of equity variable of administrative stress (as used in the study), showed a correlation co-efficient of $r = 0.283$ which is less than the probability value (P-Value) of 0.283. The result of this analysis prompted the rejection of the null hypothesis earlier stated in favour of the alternative hypothesis. This entails that there is a significant and positive relationship between employees' feeling of equity and their performance in the studied organization. This finding corresponds with the preposition of Nolan (2012) who posited that the inability of firms to recognize employees' feeling of equity in terms of their inputs induces stress among employees in the organization.

Conclusions

This study examined administrative stress and employees' performance in Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Finance. In the course of the study, administrative stress was decomposed into superiors-subordinates relationship, limited organizational resources and employees' feeling of equity. Based on the results from the test of hypotheses, it was concluded that administrative stress has a significant and positive relationship with employees' performance in Akwa Thom State Ministry of Finance. This implies that, the administrative stress variables used in the study showed positive and significant relationship with employees' performance in Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Finance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Management of the Akwa Ibom State Ministry of finance should see practicing of contingency relationship style as being appropriate. This would help in building an objective superior-subordinates relationship in the organization;
- ii. Management of the organization should consider assigning tasks to employees based on the resources expected to be given to the employee to accomplish those tasks; and
- iii. Employees, in the studied organization, should be seen as an important asset without being perceived as 'tools' in achieving pre-determined goals.

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