

Effect Of Stress on Employees' Performance at West African Examination Council Zonal Office, Kaduna

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<https://doi.org/10.61090/aksujacog.2024.044>

Abstract

The research investigated how stress impacts employees' performance and also x-ray whether there is any relationship between stress and performance. To achieve this, the study looked at the meaning of stress generally, various causes of stress, and occupational stress, particularly among the staff of the West Africa Examination Council Kaduna Zonal Office. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary source of data was questionnaire administered to the respondents. The secondary data was sourced from textbooks, reports of past works, journals, and materials from the internet. Lazarus' interactional theory was adopted to analyse the work. From the collected and analysed data, the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between the primary sources of stress for employees at the West African Examination Council Zonal Office in Kaduna and their work efficiency and effectiveness and workplace stress have a significant impact on the overall job performance of employees at the West African Examination Council Zonal Office in Kaduna. The study recommended that WAEC should develop and offer specific programs addressing identified stressors, such as high workload and role ambiguity, to help employees manage their stress more effectively also WAEC should improve job descriptions and provide regular feedback to ensure employees have clear expectations and adequate support, reducing role ambiguity and its impact on efficiency.

Keywords: Stress, performance, employee, interactional, WAEC

Introduction

Stress is a common phenomenon experienced by individuals in various aspects of life, including the workplace. In recent times, growing attention has been given to how stress impacts employees' performance within organisations. Stress and stress-related issues are having a more overwhelming effect on employees today than ever before. Stress has become the biggest problem confronting the contemporary workforce in our society.

As societies become more complex and challenging, the worker needs to devise means and strategies for coping with the changes that are inevitable in the world of work. These changes include increased demand by employers for higher productivity, leadership style, organisation policy, some bureaucratic bottlenecks, technological advancement, coping with new plants and equipment, market forces of demand and supply, industrialization, bureaucracy, family responsibilities, the desire for self-

development, an unfriendly work environment, organisation politics, unfamiliar tools and their usage, the wrong recruitment and placement of personnel, meetings, etc. These changes are stressors for the employee, making work less enjoyable, as well as the issues of family, ageing parents, and dependents and relatives.

Stress at work, though a relatively new phenomenon in the curriculum of contemporary human resource management, has received much attention. This is simply because the nature of work and its demand have changed drastically in recent times, and they are still changing at a high speed as a result of scientific breakthroughs, technological innovations, and advancement.

Work on its own is a struggle that requires some adaptation. If this must be done effectively and efficiently, it then becomes obvious that any variable that makes it cumbersome and overwhelming for the employees to achieve the required satisfaction at any point in time while on the job is nothing but a potential stressor.

Stress has a lot of detrimental effects on the performance of employees. It is such a complex situation or condition that the cause cannot easily be ascertained. However, the pattern of behaviour exhibited by one under stress can help to deduce the likely cause of the stress, which may among other things include personal factors, family problems, work-induced stress, and a lifestyle change.

Statement of the Problem

Stress has become a significant concern in the workplace, impacting employees' performance across various sectors. The West African Examination Council (WAEC) Zonal Office in Kaduna is no exception, with employees facing high levels of stress due to heavy workloads, tight deadlines, and complex job demands. Studies by Khan et al., (2023) and Ahmed et al., (2022) show that work-related stress negatively impacts employee productivity, job satisfaction, and overall performance. This issue is particularly pertinent in organizations like WAEC, where the accuracy and efficiency of work are critical for examination processes. Despite existing literature highlighting the detrimental effects of stress on employee performance, there is limited empirical evidence focusing specifically on the WAEC Zonal Office in Kaduna. Understanding how stress impacts performance in this context is crucial for developing effective stress management strategies and improving organizational outcomes. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effect of stress on employees' performance at the WAEC Zonal Office in Kaduna, providing insights that could inform both policy and practice within the organization (Nguyen & Trinh, 2023; Ojo & Akinyemi, 2023).

To address this knowledge gap, this study explored the following research questions:

- i. What are the primary sources of stress for employees at the West African Examination Council Zonal Office in Kaduna?
- ii. How does workplace stress impact the overall job performance of employees at the West African Examination Council Zonal Office in Kaduna?

The primary aim of this study is to examine the effect of stress on employee performance at the West African Examination Council Zonal Office in Kaduna. The study seeks to identify key sources of stress affecting employees and evaluate how varying levels of stress correlate with job performance.

The study was guided by the following research hypotheses;

H0₁: Workplace stress does not have a significant impact on the overall job performance of employees at the West African Examination Council Zonal Office in Kaduna.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Stress

Stress is a complex psychological and physiological response to perceived challenges or threats, affecting individuals' well-being and performance. It originates from the body's natural "fight-or-flight" reaction, designed to handle acute stressors. However, chronic stress, resulting from ongoing pressures, can have detrimental effects on both mental and physical health (Lupien et al., 2023).

The concept of stress encompasses various theories. The Transactional Model of Stress by Lazarus & Folkman (2019) posits that stress is a transaction between an individual and their environment, where stress is perceived based on the individual's appraisal of the threat and their coping resources. This model emphasizes the subjective nature of stress and the role of cognitive appraisal in determining the stress response (Lazarus & Folkman, 2019).

Additionally, the Biopsychosocial Model integrates biological, psychological, and social factors in understanding stress. It highlights how stress can lead to a cascade of physiological responses, such as the release of cortisol, which can impact overall health if sustained over time (Schneiderman et al., 2015). Chronic stress has been linked to numerous health issues, including cardiovascular disease, weakened immune response, and mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression (McEwen, 2017).

Recent research has expanded our understanding of stress by exploring its impact in various contexts. For example, work-related stress has been shown to affect job performance and satisfaction, with employees experiencing higher levels of burnout and decreased productivity (Sonnentag & Frese, 2023). Effective stress management strategies are crucial for mitigating these adverse effects and enhancing both individual well-being and organizational outcomes.

Components of Stress

Stress is a multifaceted phenomenon involving several key components, each contributing to the overall experience and impact of stress. These components include stressors, cognitive appraisal, physiological responses, and coping mechanisms.

Stressors: Stressors are external events or situations that trigger the stress response. They can be categorized into acute stressors, such as a sudden deadline, or chronic stressors, like ongoing work pressure. Recent studies emphasize that the nature and intensity of stressors significantly influence the stress response and its outcomes (Smith & Shuman, 2022).

Cognitive Appraisal: According to Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress, cognitive appraisal involves evaluating the significance of a stressor and one's ability to cope with it. Primary appraisal assesses whether an event is a threat, challenge, or irrelevant, while secondary appraisal evaluates the available coping resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 2019). This process determines how stress is experienced and managed.

Physiological Responses: Stress triggers physiological changes in the body, primarily through the activation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis and the autonomic nervous system. These responses include increased heart rate, elevated cortisol levels, and heightened alertness. Chronic activation of these systems can lead to adverse health effects, such as hypertension and immune system suppression (McEwen, 2017).

Coping Mechanisms: Coping mechanisms are strategies employed to manage stress. They can be problem-focused, aimed at addressing the source of stress, or emotion-focused, aimed at managing emotional responses. Effective coping strategies are crucial for mitigating the negative impact of stress and enhancing resilience (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2022).

Employee Performance

Employee performance is a critical aspect of organizational success, reflecting how effectively employees achieve their job-related goals and contribute to overall organizational objectives. It encompasses various dimensions, including task performance, contextual performance, and adaptive performance.

Task Performance: This dimension involves the core duties and responsibilities of an employee's role. Task performance is typically evaluated based on how well employees execute their job tasks, meet deadlines, and achieve performance targets. Research indicates that task performance is significantly influenced by factors such as skill levels, role clarity, and job design (Borman & Motowidlo, 2022).

Contextual Performance: Contextual performance refers to behaviours that contribute to the organizational environment but are not directly related to task execution. This includes citizenship behaviours, such as helping colleagues, adhering to organizational values, and demonstrating organizational commitment. Contextual performance is crucial for fostering a positive work environment and enhancing team cohesion (Organ, 2021).

Adaptive Performance: In today's dynamic work environments, the ability to adapt to changes is increasingly important. Adaptive performance involves employees' capacity to manage and embrace change, solve problems creatively, and learn new skills. Recent studies highlight that adaptive performance is essential for coping with organizational changes and maintaining competitiveness (Pulakos et al., 2023).

Employee performance is influenced by various factors, including motivation, job satisfaction, leadership, and work environment. Motivational theories, such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's two-factor theory, suggest that addressing both intrinsic and extrinsic factors can enhance performance (Herzberg et al., 2020). Additionally, effective leadership and a supportive work environment contribute significantly to employee performance by providing direction, resources, and feedback (Judge & Piccolo, 2023).

West African Examination Council (WAEC)

The West African Examination Council (WAEC) is a regional examination body established in 1952 to conduct standardized examinations across West African countries. Its primary role is to administer the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE), which is pivotal for students seeking higher education and employment opportunities in the region (WAEC, 2023).

WAEC operates with a mandate to ensure the quality and integrity of educational assessments in member countries, including Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. The council's functions encompass designing curricula, setting examination standards, and certifying educational achievements (Aina & Ojo, 2022). Additionally, WAEC provides educational assessments that reflect the academic and professional standards required for regional integration and development.

The council faces challenges such as managing large volumes of examination scripts, ensuring security and fairness in the examination process, and addressing regional educational disparities (Bolarinwa, 2021). Despite these challenges, WAEC remains a cornerstone in the educational landscape of West Africa, facilitating educational and professional advancement across the region.

Causes and Sources of Work Stress at WAEC

Work stress at the West African Examination Council (WAEC) can be attributed to various causes and sources, reflecting both organisational and individual factors. Understanding these sources is essential for developing effective stress management strategies.

High Workload: One of the primary causes of work stress at WAEC is a high workload. Employees often face intense pressure due to tight deadlines, large volumes of work, and the need to ensure accuracy in examination processes. Studies have shown that excessive workload is strongly associated with increased stress levels and decreased job satisfaction (Deery & Jago, 2022).

Role Ambiguity and Conflict: Role ambiguity, where employees are unclear about their job responsibilities and expectations, can contribute to stress. Additionally, role conflict arises when employees face contradictory demands from different stakeholders or supervisors. These factors can lead to feelings of frustration and anxiety (Jackson & Schuler, 2023).

Organisational Changes: Changes in organizational structure, policies, or procedures can create uncertainty and stress among employees. In dynamic environments like WAEC, frequent changes may lead to difficulties in adjusting and adapting, exacerbating stress levels (Brewster et al., 2022).

Lack of Resources and Support: Insufficient resources, such as inadequate staffing or outdated technology, can hinder employees' ability to perform their tasks efficiently. Additionally, a lack of support from management or colleagues can increase stress by limiting employees' access to necessary help and guidance (Cohen & Wills, 2023).

Interpersonal Relationships: Workplace relationships play a significant role in stress levels. Conflicts with colleagues or supervisors, lack of teamwork, and poor communication can contribute to a stressful work environment (Kahn & Byosiere, 2023).

Addressing these sources of work stress involves implementing effective management practices, providing adequate resources, and fostering a supportive work culture. By targeting these areas, WAEC can improve employee well-being and overall organizational performance.

Empirical Review

Nduku et al., (2021) investigated the impact of working circumstances on the job performance of Kenya Commercial Bank workers. The study aimed to evaluate the impact of physical conditions, investigate the influence of occupational health and safety, and analyse the effect of internal organisational communication on the performance of Kenya Commercial Bank personnel. A total of 172 employees were selected using stratified random selection. Questionnaires were utilised to gather primary data. The data was analysed via Microsoft Excel and SPSS (version 20), and the findings were presented through frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations. A regression model was developed to ascertain the correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The regression analysis revealed that physical conditions exerted the most significant impact on the performance of Kenya Commercial Bank personnel, with internal organisational communication ranking second, while occupational health and safety had the least influence. The performance of employees is positively influenced by the working environment. The study suggested that Kenya Commercial Bank should prioritise efforts to create favourable working conditions and pay particular attention to improving the physical factors that have the most significant impact on employee performance.

Hasebur (2013) evaluated how staff motivation affects employee performance at public universities in Kenya. The research specifically aimed to examine the influence of motivational stress factors on employee performance. Using a cross-sectional survey approach, the study incorporated both qualitative and quantitative methods for participant selection and data collection. A total of 384 respondents were chosen through cluster sampling. Data were gathered via interviews, questionnaires, and document reviews, and analyzed using SPSS version 24. Linear regression and Pearson's correlation coefficient were applied to explore the relationship between stress factors and performance. Findings revealed that stress determinants—such as movement, motivation, worker relationships, management, and working conditions—have a significant impact on employee performance. The

analysis showed a positive correlation, indicating that improvements in worker relationships, movement, facilities, and management are associated with enhanced employee performance.

Muguna et al. (2021) examined the impact of job content on the likelihood of academic staff leaving their positions in Kenyan universities. The study was conducted under the framework of a positivist research philosophy, employing a descriptive cross-sectional survey design. The study population comprised 17,210 academic staff members employed in accredited universities in Kenya. A sample of 364 academic staff members was selected from this population. A technique called multistage sampling was employed. Data were gathered through the utilisation of a meticulously designed questionnaire. Analysed data employed both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study results were displayed through the utilisation of tables, charts, and graphs. The study revealed a substantial and negative correlation (regression coefficient 0.472) between job content and the intentions of academic personnel to leave their positions. The survey found that the academic staff expressed satisfaction with their work tasks, job content, duties, responsibilities, achievements, success, recognition, job independence, autonomy, and status within the university and society. High job content satisfaction among employees is associated with reduced turnover intentions.

Hassan (2017) examined the influence of work demand on the performance of employees. The data collection was conducted using a causal research approach. For this objective, individuals from several industries were selected. Before its distribution via social media, a questionnaire consisting of 26 items on the Likert Scale was constructed and assessed for its reliability and validity. A total of 310 participants were chosen from different industries in Malaysia through the use of a straightforward sampling method. The survey form was distributed over Facebook's messaging system, with a request for completion. A regression analysis was conducted using SPSS 21 to investigate the influence of stress on employee performance. The study revealed that both time pressure and role uncertainty had a substantial detrimental impact on employee performance. Workload and lack of motivation have negligible impact on employee performance. Thus, the study determined that augmenting time constraints and role ambiguity will diminish employee performance across all dimensions. Additionally, managers and supervisors should engage in discussions with their subordinates regarding the allocation of time, completion dates for tasks, and the duration of each work to prevent the occurrence of time constraints. This has the potential to improve employee performance.

Theoretical Framework

Interactional Theories

The Interactional theories of stress, prominently developed by Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman, focus on the dynamic interplay between individuals and their environments in shaping stress outcomes. According to Lazarus (1991), stress is not solely an external factor but arises from the interaction between an individual and their environment, mediated by cognitive appraisals of the stressor and coping resources. The Transactional Model of Stress, as articulated by Lazarus & Folkman (2019), emphasizes that stress is perceived through this appraisal process, which assesses both the significance of the stressor and the individual's capacity to manage it. This model underscores that the experience and management of stress are influenced by personal perceptions and coping strategies, shifting the focus from stressors alone to the dynamic process through which stress is experienced and managed. The basic tenet of interactional theories is that stress is not merely a response to external stressors but a result of the individual's cognitive appraisal of those stressors. According to this model, individuals assess the significance of a stressor through primary appraisal (determining whether it is a threat or challenge) and secondary appraisal (evaluating their coping resources). This cognitive evaluation process influences how individuals experience and manage stress (Lazarus, 1999).

The interactional perspective highlights that stress is context-dependent and varies based on personal perceptions and coping mechanisms. This approach underscores the importance of understanding both the stressor and the individual's response to it in managing stress effectively (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004).

The Transactional Model of Stress, developed by Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman, is highly relevant to studies examining stress in the workplace, such as those exploring stress at the West African Examination Council (WAEC). This theory’s emphasis on cognitive appraisal is crucial for understanding how employees perceive and respond to stressors. According to Lazarus and Folkman (2019), stress results from the interaction between individuals and their environment, where the perceived threat and available coping resources determine the stress response.

In the context of WAEC, the model helps elucidate how employees’ perceptions of workload, role ambiguity, and organizational changes impact their stress levels and job performance. By focusing on how employees appraise stressors and their coping mechanisms, the theory provides valuable insights into managing and mitigating work-related stress. This approach aligns with recent findings that stress management strategies should address both the stressor and the individual’s response to it (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004).

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was used for the study. This descriptive survey was used to collect original data for describing a population that is too large to be observed directly Glasow (2005). A descriptive survey obtains information from a sample of people using self-report, that is, the people respond to a series of questions using standardised research instruments like questionnaires and interviews.

The population for this study consisted all the staff of the West African Examination Council, Kaduna zonal office, and Kaduna State from 2017 to 2022.

The required sample was drawn using the non-probability sampling technique for efficacy. Using a judgmental or purposeful sampling technique, the sample of two hundred (200) respondents was drawn from a cross-section of the Examinations Department, Records Department, Administrative Department, Information Technology (IT), Finance Department, Legal Department and Customer Service Department.

Tables presenting the data were subsequently used. Results were reached after doing a comparative analysis with a simple percentage approach, percentage is defined $x/N \times 100/1$ (Glasow, 2005) where:

X = frequency of responses, and N = total number of responses.

Data Presentation

Table 1: Primary Sources of Stress at the West African Examination Council Zonal Office in Kaduna

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Workload	23	11.5
Role Ambiguity	80	40
Interpersonal Relationships	25	12.5
Job Security	57	28.5
Work-Life Balance	15	7.5
Total	200	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

The analysis of primary sources of stress among employees at the West African Examination Council (WAEC) Zonal Office in Kaduna reveals distinct areas contributing to workplace stress. The data obtained showed that 23 (11.5%) indicated workload as a primary stressor, 80 (40%) of the respondents indicated role ambiguity and 25 (12.5%) of the respondents indicated interpersonal relations. This suggests that conflicts or difficulties in workplace relationships contribute notably to stress levels. 57 (28.5%) of the respondents considered job security as a source of stress, reflecting concerns about the stability of employment and 15 (7.5%) respondents revealed that work-life balance is a source of stress, indicating that this is a less prominent stressor than others.

Overall, role ambiguity and job security emerge as the predominant sources of stress, highlighting critical areas for intervention to improve employee well-being at WAEC.

Table 2: Impact of stress sources on work efficiency of Employees’ at WAEC

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Enhances Efficiency	33	16.5
Significantly Decreases Efficiency	75	37.5
Moderately Decreases Efficiency	21	10.5
Slightly Decreases Efficiency	55	27.5
No Impact on Efficiency	16	8
Total	200	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

The data analysis for the impact of stress sources on work efficiency among employees at WAEC revealed that 33 respondents (16.5%) indicated that stress sources enhance their work efficiency, suggesting that some employees might experience motivational benefits from stress, 75 respondents (37.5%) reported that stress sources significantly decrease their efficiency, highlighting a substantial negative impact on productivity while 21 respondents (10.5%) noted a moderate decrease in efficiency, indicating a moderate impact of stress on their work and 55 respondents (27.5%) experienced a slight decrease in efficiency, reflecting a milder effect of stress, thus 16 respondents (8%) reported no impact on their efficiency, suggesting that stress does not affect some employees’ performance.

Overall, the data indicates that while a notable portion of employees feel stress significantly impairs their efficiency, a smaller percentage finds stress to have either a neutral or slightly positive effect.

Table 3: Rating the impact of work-related stress on overall job performance at WAEC

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Severe impact	45	22.5
Significant impact	73	36.5
Moderate impact	32	16
Minor impact	37	18.5
No impact	13	6.5
Total	200	100

Sources: Field survey, 2024

The analysis of the impact of work-related stress on overall job performance at WAEC revealed that 45 respondents (22.5%) reported that work-related stress has a severe impact on their job performance, indicating a major detrimental effect on their effectiveness and productivity. 73 respondents (36.5%) felt that stress significantly affects their job performance, showing a considerable negative influence on their work efficiency while 32 respondents (16%) described a moderate impact of stress, suggesting that stress affects their performance to a moderate extent and 37 respondents (18.5%) experienced a minor impact, reflecting a relatively small effect of stress on their job performance thus, 13 respondents (6.5%) reported no impact of stress on their performance, indicating that stress does not affect their job performance.

Overall, the data highlights that a majority of employees at WAEC perceive work-related stress as having a significant to severe impact on their job performance.

Table 4: Adequacy of resources and support for managing work-related stress at WAEC

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very adequate	39	19.5
Adequate	75	37.5
Very inadequate	28	14
Inadequate	43	21.5
Neutral	15	7.5
Total	200	100

Sources: Field survey, 2024

The analysis of the adequacy of resources and support for managing work-related stress at WAEC revealed that 39 respondents (19.5%) felt that the resources and support provided were very adequate, indicating a positive evaluation of the available stress management tools, 75 respondents (37.5%) considered the support and resources to be adequate, suggesting a general satisfaction with the existing measures, 43 respondents (21.5%) found the resources and support to be inadequate, reflecting some concerns about the effectiveness of stress management provisions while 28 respondents (14%) rated the support as very inadequate, highlighting significant dissatisfaction with the resources available and 15 respondents (7.5%) remained neutral, indicating uncertainty or lack of strong opinion about the adequacy of resources and support.

Overall, while a majority find the resources satisfactory, a notable percentage feel improvements are necessary.

Test of Hypothesis

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between the primary sources of stress for employees at the West African Examination Council Zonal Office in Kaduna and their work efficiency and effectiveness.

Chi-square is given below

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

$$i = 1 \text{ to } E_i$$

Where O_i = The Observed Frequency

E_i = The Expected Frequency

Responses	O	E	O – E	(O – E) ²	(O – E) ² /E
Enhance efficiency	33	40	-7	-49	-1.2
Significantly decrease efficiency	75	40	35	1225	30.6
Moderately decrease efficiency	21	40	-19	-361	-9.0
Slightly decrease efficiency	55	40	15	225	5.6
No impact on efficiency	16	40	-24	-576	-14.4
Total	200	200			11.6

To determine the tabulated chi-square (X^2) tab. Using the degree of freedom $DF = n - 1$ and level of significance of 0.05.

Where n = number of different values observed in row

$$X^2 \text{ Tabulated} = 5.991$$

Decision Rule: Accept the null hypothesis (H_0) if $x^2 \text{ Cal} < x^2 \text{ tab}$. Reject the null hypothesis (H_0) if $x^2 \text{ cal} > x^2 \text{ tab}$.

Decision Rule

From the computation above, it is seen that χ^2 Cal is greater than χ^2 tab ($11.6 > 5.991$). The null Hypothesis (H_0) is therefore rejected and the alternative Hypothesis (H_i) is accepted, indicating that there is a significant relationship between the primary sources of stress for employees at the West African Examination Council Zonal Office in Kaduna and their work efficiency and effectiveness.

H_{02} : Workplace stress does not have a significant impact on the overall job performance of employees at the West African Examination Council Zonal Office in Kaduna.

Responses	O	E	O – E	(O – E) ²	(O – E) ² /E
Severe impact	45	40	5	25	0.6
Significant impact	73	40	33	1089	27.2
Moderate impact	32	40	-8	-64	-1.6
Minor impact	37	40	-3	-9	-0.2
No impact	13	40	-27	-729	-18.2
Total	200	200			7.8

Decision Rule: Accept the null hypothesis (H_0) if χ^2 Cal < χ^2 tab. Reject the null hypothesis (H_0) if χ^2 call > χ^2 tab.

Decision Rule

From the computation above, it is seen that χ^2 Cal is greater than χ^2 tab ($7.8 > 5.991$). The null Hypothesis (H_0) is therefore rejected and the alternative Hypothesis (H_i) is accepted, indicating that workplace stress has a significant impact on the overall job performance of employees at the West African Examination Council Zonal Office in Kaduna.

Discussion of Findings

The findings reveal a significant relationship between primary sources of stress at the WAEC Zonal Office in Kaduna and employees' work efficiency and effectiveness. This aligns with empirical evidence suggesting that workplace stress notably affects job performance. For instance, research indicates that stressors such as high workload and role ambiguity can diminish work efficiency and effectiveness (Deery & Jago, 2022). Similarly, the study shows that work-related stress significantly impacts overall job performance, with a substantial portion of employees reporting severe or significant effects on their performance. This supports the notion that stress is a critical factor influencing job performance, as highlighted by Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress, which emphasizes the role of cognitive appraisal in determining the stress impact on work outcomes (Lazarus & Folkman, 2019). Addressing stressors and improving support mechanisms could enhance employee performance at WAEC.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study underscore a significant relationship between primary sources of stress and the work efficiency and effectiveness of employees at the West African Examination Council (WAEC) Zonal Office in Kaduna. Stressors such as high workload, role ambiguity, and inadequate support have been shown to substantially impact employees' job performance. This is consistent with existing literature, which highlights how workplace stress can adversely affect efficiency and effectiveness (Deery & Jago, 2022; Lazarus & Folkman, 2019).

The implications of these findings are profound. High levels of stress can lead to decreased job performance, affecting not only individual productivity but also organizational outcomes. Therefore, WAEC must implement targeted interventions to address these stressors. This might include enhancing role clarity, increasing resource availability, and providing effective support systems to help employees manage stress. By improving these aspects, WAEC can enhance overall job performance and foster a

more productive and supportive work environment. Addressing these issues proactively is essential for maintaining employee well-being and optimizing organizational performance.

The study recommends that,

- i. WAEC should develop and offer specific programmes addressing identified stressors, such as high workload and role ambiguity, to help employees manage their stress more effectively.
- ii. WAEC should improve job descriptions and provide regular feedback to ensure employees have clear expectations and adequate support, reducing role ambiguity and its impact on efficiency.
- iii. WAEC should invest in additional resources and tools to support employees in managing their workload and stress, such as better technology and more staffing.
- iv. WAEC should establish robust support systems, including access to counseling and stress management workshops, to help employees cope with stress and maintain high performance levels.

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