
WORK STRESS AND ITS IMPACT ON EMPLOYEES PERFORMANCE

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INTRODUCTION

Stress management is drawing more and more attention nowadays, particularly in the corporate context. There is no such thing as a stress free job. Everyone in his work is exposed to tension, frustration and anxiety as he gets through the duties assigned to him. In order to make our work experience and environment as pleasant as possible, it is better that we learn the technique of moderating and modulating our personal stress levels. Infact, stress can be used as a positive and forceful ally for achieving success in our life and for giving us the right level of motivation and drive to win through any obstacles on the way. When people talk about stress in the workplace, their views fall into two major divisions. First, we have the people who treat it as some kind of an ailment, something akin to a threat and a hindrance, something to be dreaded and eschewed at all times, and at any cost. The second position inform us that we must ‘appear’ to be stressed – all the time – so that we are accepted as efficient persons. We must understand that stress is not the problem. There is an optimum level of stress, where we work at our best. This may vary from person to person. Some stress is better than no stress ; the objective is not to abolish stress , but administrate stress is; stress is necessary for success but it needs to be mentioned and managed . When we feel that an outburst or some so is imminent, it is better that we do not suppress that feeling inside us. Instead, we must face up to that situation, and find out why we feel the way we feel.

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RESEARCH DESIGN

The study is a descriptive research set out to assess stress and its effects on employees' productivity in IT sector. According to Pilot and Hurgler (1995), descriptive survey aims predominantly at observing, describing and documenting aspects of a situation as it naturally occurs rather than explaining them. The design has an advantage of producing good amount of responses from a wide range of people. At the same time, it provides a more accurate picture of events at a point in time. Fraenkel and Wallen (1993) continued that one big advantage of the descriptive survey design is that it has the potential to provide us with a lot of information obtained from quite a large sample of individuals. Creswell (2003) is however of the view that a descriptive study is more than just a collection of data. It involves measurement, classification, analysis, comparison and interpretation of data. According to Creswell (2002), a descriptive study identifies and defines the problem, selects tools for collecting data, describes, analyzes and interprets the data. In this direction the study seeks to examine the effect of stress on the employees' productivity, the causes of stress and the procedures available for the workers to manage stress in the organization.

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

In the opinion of Agyedu, Donkor and Obeng (1999), population of a study refers to a complete set of individuals (subjects), objects or events having common observable characteristics in which the researcher is interested. They further stressed that; population constitutes the target of a study and must be clearly defined and identified. The target population for the study was the staff of the Human resource, Marketing, Finance, Port Operations, Marine Engineering, and the Civil Engineering departments of IT companies.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

It is noted that, analyses are best when conducted on samples that are still fresh (Sarantakos, 2005). Therefore, sampling was used to select a portion of the population to represent the entire population. He emphasizes the need for a researcher to select a sample from which he wishes to seek information using appropriate sampling techniques. The methods/techniques selected for the study was based on both probability and non-probability sampling. The two main methods that were employed in selecting sample from the population were purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Purposive non-random sampling technique was used to select respondents from the Human Resource, Marketing, Finance, Port Operations, Marine Engineering, and the

Civil Engineering departments of IT Companies. Due to the fact that, they have requisite information about the issues involved in the study. Simple random sampling technique was employed in selecting 100 out of the total population of 326 employees.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The process of data analysis involves making sense out of text and image data. This requires preparation of the data for analysis, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data, representing the data and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data (Cresswell, 2003).

This chapter contains the analyzed data. Microsoft Excel was employed analyzing the data. The findings were presented in figures and tables. Specifically, out of the total number of 250 respondents selected for the study, only 200 employees completed the questionnaires, given a response rate of 80%.

1 BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

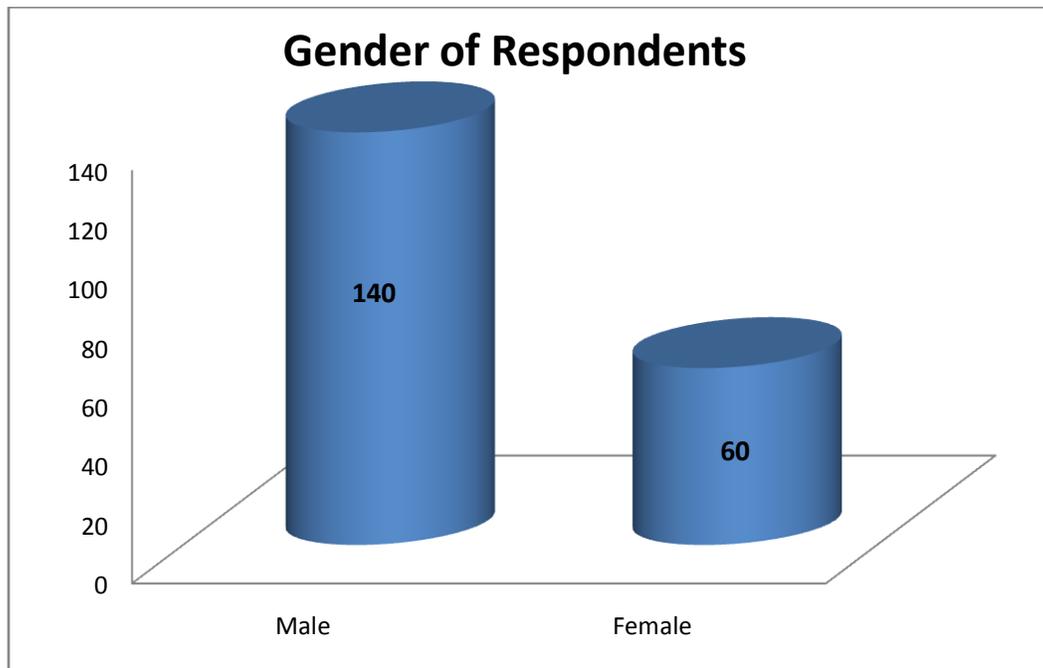


figure 1: Gender of respondents

From Figure 1 above, it can be seen that out of the 80 respondents, 70% were males and 30% were females. The data suggests that there was a vast difference between the number of males and females used for this research. This means male employees of the five departments of IT companies dominate females.

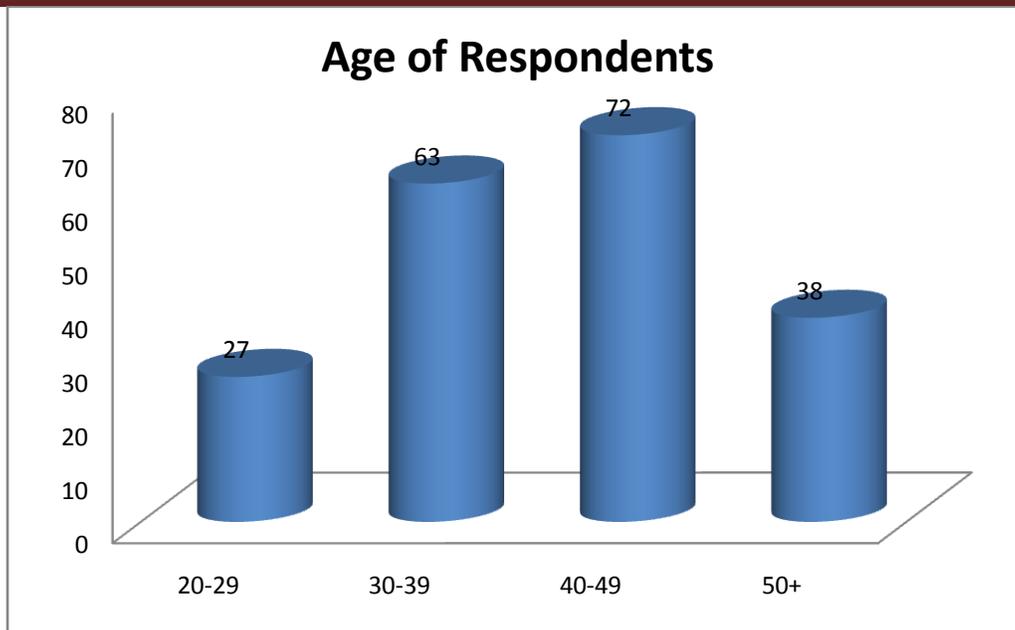


Figure2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Figure.2 indicates that, majority of the employees 36% were of the ages ranging from (40-49) years, whilst 31% out of the 50 respondents used for the research were ranging between the ages of (30-39) years. The figure also depicts the fact that 19% of the staff were above 50 years of age, whilst 14% were between the ages of (20-29) years. However, it was also found from the study that majority of the respondents were of the ages ranging between 30-49 years. The advantage here is that the port has majority of its workers within the active employment zone and with those within the retiring age forming the minority.

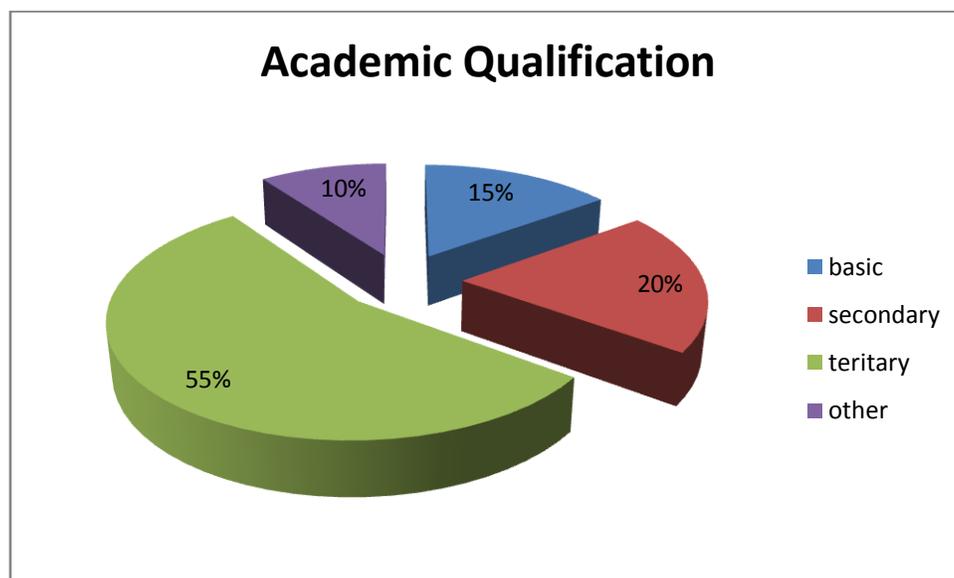


Figure 3: Academic Qualifications of Respondents

From Figure 3, it can be seen that 15% of the respondents were Basic Education Certificate Holders, 20% held Senior Secondary Certificate, 55% held Certificates from the Universities and Polytechnics and 10% stated Other Certificates from different tertiary institutions.

DETERMINING STRESS LEVELS AND EFFECT OF STRESS ON PRODUCTIVITY

Determining whether employees think that IT Companies cares about its employees

Table: Determining whether IT Companies cares

Determining whether employees think that IT Companies cares about its employees

Determining whether IT Companies cares Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	50	25
No	110	55
No response	40	20
Total	200	100

According to Frost (2003) the costs of employee's frustration and anger can prove even more serious. When people believe that they have been treated unfairly (especially by their supervisors) they can turn on their organizations, attempting to even the score at the cost to the organization. Apart from quitting, which carries its own set of costs to the company, acts of revenge, sabotage, theft, vandalism, withdrawal behaviours (withholding effort), spreading gossip or generally acting cynical or mistrustful, can all present direct and indirect costs to the organization. Dissatisfaction with management leads to reduced loyalty, and once that loyalty has been destroyed; an employee is likely to commit an act of sabotage.

If 55% of the respondents think that IT Companies does not care for their employees that calls for reason for concern, as dissatisfaction with management leads to reduced loyalty that could lead to acts of sabotage (Frost 2003).

Determining whether employees like working for IT Companies

Exploration of whether respondents like working for IT Companies Responses	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Always	45	22.5

Sometimes	125	62.5
Seldom	15	7.5
Not at all	15	7.5
Total	200	100.0

However 23% is confident about its need to work for IT Companies as only 7% of respondents are totally unhappy.

Determining satisfaction with the working environment



Figure 4 Satisfaction with the work environment

From Figure 4, respondents that confidently reported satisfaction with the working environment are relatively low (16%), and it was compared to those who reported not to like working for IT Companies (7%), in Table 2 on the previous page. These two responses may be correlated; it could be the same respondents who reported not to like working for IT Companies that are not satisfied with their working environment. However, negative emphasis on “sometimes not satisfied with the work environment” seems to be stronger (49%) as reflected by Figure 4.

According to Thomson and McHugh (1995) contemporary accounts of the stress “process” often follow the notion of stress as resulting from a misfit between an individual and their particular environment. Thus this gives an opportunity for the organization to explore this problem further.

Determining whether employees have control over their jobs

Determining whether employees have control over their jobs Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Always	35	17.5
Sometimes	75	37.5
Seldom	48	23.75
Not at all	37	18.75
No responses	5	2.5
Total	200	100.0

Only 38% of the respondents report to sometimes have control over their jobs. However 19% report not to have control at all over their jobs and on the contrary 17% confirm to have control over their jobs. The interpretation can be made that lack of control over one's job may induce frustration and anxieties due to uncertainty, thus leading to distress.

Exploring work pressure

Table 4: Exploring work pressure Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	150	75
No	45	22.5
No response	5	2.5
Total	200	100.0

Only 38% of the respondents report to sometimes have control over their jobs. However 19% report not to have control at all over their jobs and on the contrary 17% confirm to have control over their jobs. The interpretation can be made that lack of control over one's job may induce frustration and anxieties due to uncertainty, thus leading to distress.

Exploring work pressure

Exploring work pressure Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
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No	45	22.5

No response	5	2.5
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The response rate of 75% of the respondents reporting to work under pressure may be a reflection on the organizational mood; that expectations on delivery are high. However 23% of the respondents reported not to be working under pressure.

Blumenthal (2003) is of the opinion that events that are appraised as overwhelming, threatening, unsatisfying, or conflicting are more likely to be experienced as stressful. Thus the organization has a challenge of helping the employees manage their work pressure better.

Determining whether employees have adequate information about their role at work

Table 5: Exploring role clarity

Table 5: Exploring role clarity Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Always	50	25
Sometimes	90	45
Seldom	43	21.25
Not at all	12	6.25
No response	5	2.5
Total	200	100.0

According to Table 5, only 6% of respondents reported not having adequate information about their roles and the majority of the respondents (45%) report that they sometimes have adequate information about their jobs while 25% of the respondents are always clear about their roles. Thompson and McHugh (1995) propagated that where the demands of a role or roles are unclear and norms and standards of social comparison are lacking, people may experience role ambiguity. The interpretation can be made that if 25% of the respondents are always clear about their role at, it means that they won't be subjected to role ambiguity as a cause for their stress at work. At the same time if 45% of the respondents sometimes don't "have adequate information about their role at work" they may be inclined to experience stress due to role ambiguity. However the 21% that is seldom clear about their role is in a more threatening position that could cause them to have role ambiguity and stress subsequently. About 70% of the respondents can conclusively be seen as being threatened by role ambiguity as a cause for stress.

Major findings of the study are:

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- There is evidence to the effect that the majority of employees reported to work under pressure and that they feel uncared for by the organization. Thus stress is a factor that the employees in IT Companies endure.
 - The majority of the employees have issues with the organization; ranging from perceived non-care by the organization to feelings of being underutilized.
 - The majority of the employees think that IT Companies does not care for its employees and they sometimes do not like working for the organization.
 - The majority of the respondents range between the age 30 and 49, implying that the lowered positive regard against the organization might be age related.
 - The fact that the majority of the employees indicate to “sometimes” like working for IT Companies is reason to believe that those employees will endure stress.
 - There must be a misfit between the employees and their working environment as there is a minority of the employees who indicated that they are not all happy with their working environment.

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