

Impact of Job Stress on Family Integration

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Abstract. This study was carried out to examine the impact of job stress on family integration. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The information was collected through the use of questionnaire. One hundred and twenty participants whose ages ranged from 20 to 65 were used for the study. The participants were drawn from the educational, health, and banking sectors using purposive sampling procedure. The data collected were subjected to appropriate statistics of paired sample test, ANOVA, and Chi-square. All the four hypotheses postulated for the study were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The results revealed that job stress differed from one job to another. It also showed that job stress has a significant impact on the integration of one's family and that families differ in their expectations concerning stress present at work. It showed that there is a significant difference in the perception of job stress by male and female employees. The study recommended that provision for employee training in the area of stress management periodically so that employees can personally be conscious of what they need to do to stay healthy and to stay productive.

1. Introduction

A great number of people experience unacceptable levels of stress. It can stem from events in their personal lives or at work. Although small amounts of stress can have positive effects by energizing people to achieve goals which are motivating and challenging. The study of job stress has shown that the nature of work situation can sometimes lead to aversive effects on the employees' physical or mental

health or wellbeing. Because many organizations subject their employees to stress, it is important to understand the effects of stress, the relationship between stress and performance and the sources of stress in organizations. In many ways, stress is a perceptual process. An event that one perceives to be stressful may not be labelled as such by someone else. Some jobs, by definition, tend to possess higher stress – such as ones that are in dangerous settings (e.g. fireman, police), that deal with demanding customers (service providers), that have demanding time pressures (healthcare), and that have repetitive detailed work (manufacturing) – but stress is not limited to any one particular job or industry.

Although we most often think of job stress as an unpleasant state, it can have both negative and positive effects. For example, imagine that a person had been working for several years as an assistant manager for a large company and finds that he has just received promotion to the level of the departmental manager, a position that he had been trying to obtain for some time. With his new position come feelings of stress. Some of these are negative, such as the stress that will result from having to work many overtime hours without additional compensation; being required to make formal presentations to his peers and superiors (and having his presentation critically evaluated by them) and taking the responsibility to take the criticisms for any problems occurring in the department. On the other hand, there are many positive reactions associated with the promotion, including, feelings of accomplishment, anticipation, pride, and challenge. Like the negative aspects, these

positive responses also induce physiological and psychological reactions in the body.

According to early stress researcher, Hans Selye (1976), stress is primarily a physiological reaction to certain threatening environmental events in the workplace. From Selye's perspective, worker stress would simply refer to the stress caused by events in the work environment. Psychologist John French and his colleagues (French, Rogers, & Cobb, 1974) say that job stress is a lack of "fit" between a person's skills and abilities and the demand of the job and the workplace.

Job stress is the condition that result when the person – environment transactions lead the individual to perceive a discrepancy – whether real or imagined – between the demands of a situation and the resources of the person's biological, psychological, or social systems. Generally, job stress can arise from either the environment (situational stress) or from an individual's personal characteristics (dispositional stress). Situational stress can come from all aspects of our lives. We are subjected to a wide range of stressors at home, at school, and in our interpersonal relationships as well as the stressors that we encounter at work. Dispositional stress is the stress that results from the personal characteristics of the worker himself. This relates to type A or B behaviour or stress-prone personality.

The recognized causes of job stress are numerous and fall into several categories. Job practice, pressure, working environment, burnout, exhaustion, etc. are categories through which individuals experience job stress. Job practice cause stress for individuals in the following ways: when people are unable to exert control or influence over the demands placed upon them. Stress result when there is a lack of clear job description or chain of command. Also, a high level of uncertainty about job security or career prospect, temporary work, and fixed term contracts generate stress. No opportunity to use personal talents or abilities, inadequate time to complete tasks to personal or company standards are also stress-causing practices. Lastly, chances for small error or momentary lapse of attention that have serious or even disastrous

consequences on job behaviour thereby causing stress. These are referred to as stressors – environmental events that causes stress reactions, any stimuli that the individual perceives as challenging, threatening, or demanding which are internal or external. The stressors can be grouped under the following subheadings:

Workload: For many employees having too much work to do and not enough time or resources to it can be stressful. Role overload exists when demands exceeds the capacity of the employee or manager to meet all of them adequately. Surveys commonly identify work overload or having to work too hard as a major source of stress. Having too little work to do also may create stress – but in very few circumstances. This is referred to as role underload. This is brought about by underutilization when workers feel that their knowledge, skills or energy are not been fully used.

Role Conflict and Ambiguity: In the job setting, a role is a cluster of tasks and behaviour that others expect a person to perform while doing a job. Role conflict occurs when an employee perceives incompatible messages and pressure from role senders i.e. there are differing expectation of or demands on a person at work. This means that the role a person is assigned to in work place is in conflict with others' and there is no clear job description of what such employee is supposed to do. Role ambiguity occurs when an employee is uncertain about assigned job duties and responsibilities i.e. when aspects of a job such as tasks and requirements are not clearly outlined.

Job Conditions: Poor working conditions represent another important set of job stressors. Temperature extreme, loud noise, too much or too little lighting, radiation, air pollution, overcrowding, poor spacing, very little safety preventions, powerful machines and equipment that are capable of causing bodily harm to the employees and the work layout are examples of work conditions that can cause stress for the employees.

Aggressive Behaviour: A frightening category of job stressors is overly aggressive behaviour in the workplace, often taking the form of violence or sexual harassment. Aggressive behaviour that

causes actual physical or psychological harm to an employee is classified as workplace violence. Employees are constantly subjected to violence of one form or the other ranging from actual physical assaults to other forms of unwarranted harassment. Individuals subjected to violence or the threat of violence in the more workplace are more likely to experience negative stress reactions.

Multiple Roles: A person has many roles in life (e.g. breadwinner, employee, family member, father, son to some parents, church volunteer, member of social clubs, friends to others to name a few), only one of which is typically associated with work. These roles may present conflicting demands that become sources of stress. Furthermore, a job typically meets only some of a person's goals and needs, other goals and needs may conflict with career goals presenting additional sources of stress. Also a person may be bringing in issues and stress-causing factors from these other roles into the workplace and vice-versa, thereby resulting in a condition of stress for the individual. For example, employees' personal desires to spend time with their families may conflict with the extra hours they must work to advance their careers.

Pressure emanating from the workplace can be threatening and taxing on the individual. Pressure pile one on top of another, they are unremitting and prolonged and there is confusion caused by conflicting demands. There are various symptoms that an individual can experience in the workplace that are indicative of job stress. When they occur to an individual, stress is gradually setting in or has set in for the individual to tackle. They are behavioural, physiological, and psychological symptoms. The behavioural symptoms are becoming irritable or aggressive, withdrawn, showing signs of change in eating habits or sleeping pattern, consumption of alcohol tea/coffee or drugs, self-medication, becoming more difficult in the workplace, less cooperative, more accident-prone, less-social, inability to cope with family/domestic roles, neglects of personal appearance. The physiological symptoms of work stress are headache, migraines, stomach disorders, raised blood pressure, changing sleep patterns, muscle spasm, back/shoulder/neck or general body pain,

a sense of feeling unwell, an unwillingness to work. The psychological symptoms are growing feelings that the workplace is a 'threat', a place of anxiety, tension, and the cause of irritability, low self-esteem, and forgetfulness, an increase in worry about problems and negative feelings in the individual.

Family integration can be viewed as a phenomenon that encourages family members to create daily routines, as well as special traditions and celebrations which affirm members, connect them to family roots, and add creativity and fun to ordinary events. Families build secure nests which shelter without smothering and allow for all members to "test their wings" under protection and encouragement i.e. it create a platform where family members can freely express themselves and enjoy each others' company. Strong families recognize that there are benefits to be gained from time and activity together. They also realize that they have contributions to make to the family and its members and some obligation to do so. They value the family bond and make efforts to preserve time together for family activities and interaction.

Families that value unity will, from time to time, evaluate the time and energy allocated to family, and when necessary, makes needed adjustments. By spending pleasant, positive time together, families build up a reserve of good feelings. When trouble comes, it has to be shared with the family and resolved. What families do together does not matter so much as they do something that is mutually planned and enjoyable. As a general principle, it is probably a good idea to strive for a balanced activity program, including active and inactive, physical and mental, old and new, at home and away, work and play. Spontaneity, humour, wit and fun are goals to strive for.

Family integration includes time that family members spend together, both in quality and quantity. It means maintaining family identity and togetherness, balancing family priorities with support for members' needs, producing strong family bonds, and freedom for individual self-expression. Families that are integrated make up

for many things in their family. A family that is integrated is a complete family where love and mutual respect is the focal point for comfort and that feeling of being 'home' is present.

2. Literature Review

There is increasing evidence which suggests that today more than ever before, employees are working in an atmosphere of anxiety and stress. A fundamental and dynamic shift is taking place in the world of work. Many have called this change the third revolution or 'tidal wave'. Most experts have agreed, however, that the situation is a transformation from an industrial economy to an information or knowledge based economy. Structural changes (downsizing, mergers, acquisitions and restructuring), changing social and working contexts and the introduction of new technology are all implicated in the stress process. The negative impact of stress can be observed in the wide range of conditions that are associated with it. Stress has been associated not only with a variety of psychological conditions including anxiety and depression, but also with a number of important physical conditions including heart attack, ulcers and stroke. It is also considered to be a contributing factor to low back pain and repetitive stress injuries.

The incidence of stress within European society is on the increase and accounts for over 30% of all absence from work (Paoli, 1997). Evidence for this is emerging from a number of sources including surveys, longitudinal studies and absence statistics (e.g. Van der Hek and Plomp, 1997). Estimations of the Health and Safety Executive (1998) are that between 30 – 60% of all Sickness Absence in the UK is related to a mental or emotional disturbance (i.e. stress, burnout). In The Netherlands long-term sickness absence due to 'mental disorders' has increased from 17 % in 1974 to 32 % in 1992 (Allegro & Veerman, 1998). This figure has increased over the past decade. Evidence from the literature suggests that Workers on long-term absence as a result of stress are less likely to return to work than those with physical injuries or illnesses (Wyatt, 2000).

Wyatt (1998), in their annual survey of integrated disability management programmes, found that incidents of disability are increasingly related to slowly developing, chronic conditions and work-induced stress. In this survey, musculoskeletal problems such as carpal tunnel syndrome and repetitive motion complaints (50 percent) exceeded injuries (44 percent) as the most common condition triggering an occupational disability expense. The survey also found that mental health-related disabilities are on the rise. Forty-five and 58 percent of employers, respectively, expressed growing concern about mental illness as a source of occupational disabilities and non-occupational disabilities. Moreover, one-third of survey respondents characterized the management of mental illness in the workplace as very difficult.

The cost of stress to workers, employers and society is enormous and serious negative impacts on worker health and well-being (cardiovascular disease, psychological distress, general mental health, depressive symptoms, psychiatric disorders, and suicide), the family (work family conflict), the organization (absenteeism, reduced performance) and on society (public health costs, insurance costs) are well documented in the literature.

Like other occupational injuries and illnesses, although the injured worker is normally the person most directly affected, occupational stress injury and illness has serious broader consequences including adverse effects in the following domains: vocational function (e.g. work ability, wages, productivity, employment, training), organizational performance (e.g. absenteeism, turnover, poor customer service, workers' compensation claims), family relationships, community relationships (e.g. impact on social care agencies) and economic well-being (Harrison, 2003).

As the numbers of dual-earner households are rising, the potential conflicts between the demands of family and career are also increasing – these conflicts being well documented for both women and men (Wiley & Eskilson, 1988). Work and family conflict, as a stressor, has been related to negative consequences including

reduced life satisfaction, lower mental health, and decreased productivity, and it is therefore of great concern for both organizations and individuals. Although there have been big changes in family structure and women's labour force participation, there have only been minor changes in responsibility for domestic chores. Women continue to be responsible for the majority of domestic chores and are therefore experiencing the stress of coping with a double day (Reskin & Padavic, 1994). Women are also more likely to take on other family-related roles such as caring for elderly parents, and finding appropriate childcare.

Langan-Fox (1998) proposes that the more roles an individual is involved in, the higher the potential for stress. According to Nelson & Burke (2002) women are particularly likely to suffer from role overload (conflicting demands from different roles). Nelson & Quick (1985) conclude from their review of the literature, on stress and women, that the career-family conflict is one of the main sources of stress for working women. Similarly, Davidson & Cooper (1984) found that female managers reported greater pressure than men from work and home stressors. McDonald & Korabik investigated stressors and coping in 19 male and 20 female managers in Canada. It was found that work and family interfaces were more often sources of stress among the female participants than among the male. Although both the qualitative (description of stressful experiences) and quantitative methods (work-stressor questionnaire) resulted in similar findings, the authors suggest that the findings should be treated with caution due to the small sample size.

3. Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were generated for testing for this study:

- There is a significant difference in job stress among various occupations.
- Job stress has a significant impact on the integration of one's family.
- Families significantly differ in their expectations concerning stress at work.

- There is a significant difference in the perception of job stress by male and female employees.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive research which made use of questionnaire as its research instrument. It established empirical truth with the use of statistics to analyze and interpret results obtained from survey of opinions.

4.2 Population and Sample

The population for the study was the overall number of employees in each of the selected sites which were domiciled in the health, banking and educational sectors in Ibadan, Oyo State. The three sectors were selected to draw opinions from the various sectors to understand the nature of stress in each of these occupations and how it affects their jobs and particular instance, their families. The samples for the study were drawn from the underlisted sites:

- Adeoyo Maternity Hospital, Yemetu, Ibadan.
- Maternity and Child Welfare Clinic, Apata, Ibadan.
- Wema Bank Plc, Apata, Ibadan.
- First Bank Plc, Apata, Ibadan.
- Adifase High School, Apata, Ibadan.
- Apata Community Grammar School, Apata, Ibadan.

One hundred and twenty (120) questionnaires were distributed of which one hundred and fourteen (114) were retrieved and processed for further analysis.

4.3 Procedure

Pre-survey visits were made to the selected establishments to collect information concerning their schedules activities and. The visits were used to source for information about the participants' job schedules and to book appointments for the conduct of the data generation exercise. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents at their various

departments. The questionnaire was handed down personally to the participants by the researcher. For ease of filling their responses,

the respondents were given five working days to complete the questionnaire after which it was retrieved from them for further analysis.

5. Data Analysis

The table below describes the demographic characteristics of the respondents in the study.

Table 1 – Distribution of Respondents’ Demographic Characteristics

VARIABLE	GROUP	HEALTH	BANK	EDUC.	FREQ	%
GENDER	Male	15	19	12	46	40.4
	Female	24	19	25	68	59.6
	Total	39	38	37	114	100
MARITAL STATUS	Single	7	8	9	24	21.0
	Married	30	30	28	88	77.2
	Divorced	0	0	0	0	0
	Separated	2	0	0	2	1.8
	Total	39	38	37	114	100
EDUCATION LEVEL	Primary	1	0	0	1	0.9
	Secondary	2	1	0	3	2.6
	OND	5	5	3	13	11.4
	HND	9	5	6	20	17.5
	University Degree	18	27	27	72	63.2
	Masters/Ph.D	4	0	1	5	4.4
	Total	38	38	37	114	100

There were 46 male respondents indicating a 40.4% and females were 68 which constitute 59.6%. The respondents that were single in terms of marital status were 24 indicating a 21.0%. Those married were 88 respondents (77.2%). There were no divorcees and only 2 respondents (1.8%) were separated. Only 1 respondent (0.9%) had primary education while secondary school leavers were 3 respondents (2.6%). 13 respondents (11.4%) had Ordinary National Diploma while 20 had Higher National Diploma (17.5%). Those who had a University degree were 72 (63.2%) and those with postgraduate degrees were 5 (4.4%).

6. Results

H1: There is a significant difference in job stress among various occupations.

The hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in job stress among occupations was tested with a Paired Sample test and the result is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Paired Sample Test

	Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower				Upper
Occupation Job is very hectic	-1.96581	1.54770	.14308	-2.24921	-1.68241	-13.739	113	.000

Table 2 show a significant two-tailed test about the various levels of stress in the various occupations under consideration in the study. From the above table, the paired sample test at $t = -13.739$ with degree of freedom at 113 is significant at 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis is therefore accepted indicating that there is a significant difference in job stress among various occupations i.e. stress encountered at work varies from one occupation to another and that some jobs are more stressful than the others.

H2: Job stress has a significant impact on one’s family

The hypothesis which states that job stress has a significant impact on one’s family was tested with Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and the result is presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Analysis of Variance

		Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Care for family reduce due to stress	Between groups	36.020	4	9.005	5.896	.000
	Within groups	171.057	112	1.527		
	Total	207.077	116			
Spend time with family has reduced	Between groups	29.247	4	7.312	5.186	.001
	Within groups	157.899	112	1.410		
	Total	187.145	116			

The table above tested the impact of job stress on one’s family integration. Considering the ANOVA result in the table, Fisher’s value of $f = 5.896$ and 5.186 ($df = 4$). The result is significant at 0.05 level of significance and therefore it could be said that job stress encountered at work have significant impact on the integration of one’s family. This means that an individual’s care for his/her family and the time spent with them is significantly reduced as a result of the stress the employee goes through at work.

H3: Families significantly differ in their expectations concerning stress present at work.

The hypothesis which states that families significantly differ in their expectations concerning stress present at work – in particular instance for members of their family – was tested using the Chi-Square test and the result is presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Chi Square Test

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.977(a)	12	.011
Likelihood Ratio	26.751	12	.008
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.354	1	.245
N Of Valid Cases	114		

The Chi-square table above deals with the expectation of family members concerning stress present at work. A chi-square value of 25.977 with degree of freedom of 12 is established. The result generated was 0.011 tested at 0.05 level of significance. It therefore shows that families significantly differ in their expectations concerning stress present at work. What this connotes is that different families have different opinions of what constitute stress in the workplace of their members and as such think differently on how they expect their family members to relate with them due to the stress those ones face at work.

H4: There is a significant difference in the perception of job stress by male and female employees. The hypothesis which states that there is a significant difference in the perception of job stress by male and female employees was tested with Paired Sample Test and the result is presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Paired Sample Test

	Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower				Upper
Sex Occupation	-52632	1.55268	.14542	-81442	-23821	-3.619	113	.000

From the above paired sample table, the t-test value is -3.619 with degree of freedom of 113. The result is significant at two tailed and it means that there is a significant difference in the perception of job stress by male and female employees. Male employees perceive stress differently as against females. They perceive themselves as experiencing more stress than the females. It was observed that females are not always present in jobs characterized with high degree of stress so that they can effectively manage their families and have more time to spend with them.

7. Discussion

The study is geared towards studying the impact of job stress on family integration. The discussion is based on the results arrived at from the data analyzed. The first hypothesis which states that there is a significant difference in job stress among occupations was accepted. This indicates that though all jobs possess some level of stress, some are more stressful than others.

The testing of the second hypothesis which state that job stress has significant impact on the integration of one’s family identified more people as responding that because of their job stress, their care for their family has reduced and the time they spend with their families has reduced. The stress encountered at work has serious implications for the families of the workers as these lead to a breakdown in communication in the family structure. This is

due to the fact they the family members are so tired to even stay up and spend some time with their families and they often shows behavioural signs of irritation, aggression, frustration, anger, resentment, and tension.

The testing of the third hypothesis revealed that families differ in their expectations from their stressed family members. They differ on the basis of the fact that they put into consideration the stress present at work before laying their expectations by considering the possibility of meeting such expectations from their stressed family members. This goes to show that families perceive stress differently and differ in their definition of what constitute stress. It can therefore be deduced that family members view job stress with various ends of the societal prism.

The fourth hypothesis which states that there is a significant difference in the perception of stress by male and female employees was accepted. Males perceived themselves to engage more in stressful occupations than females. They also feel they are the ones that experience stress more in the course of their day to day activities in order to provide for their families, the basic needs of life. By this, observation is drawn that the female employees are not always seen to be present in jobs that are characterized by high levels of stress. This is so for a woman to effectively manage the family while the man in the house goes to fend for the family. This finding posits that women were more likely than

men to report low quality of work life when they had high work-family conflict, whereas men were more likely than women to report low quality of family-life when they had high work-family conflict.

This finds support from the works of Hasnain, Ansari, Ali, & Sharma (2012) which depicted that male and female managers differ significantly only on three factors of occupational stress i.e., role overload, role conflict and strenuous working conditions. On all the three factors, means of male managers were found to be significantly higher than the female managers. Strenuous working conditions across different branches of the same organization may bring to them more work to family and family to work conflicts than female managers.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

In view of the results from the study, it has been observed that job stress has significant impact on the integration of employees' families. Job stress is now been considered a safety and health problem in many organizations. Employees have found difficulty in taking days off from their work to catch a good rest and recuperate or to sometimes visit distant family members because of job stress. Some even subject themselves to daily medication after the day's work.

Organizations need to consider job stress as an important health and safety issue in their operations and make adequate plans for it. If this aspect of life is not well taken care of, it can lead to more things than envisaged. In homes where the breadwinners of the family leave home early for work and come back very late only to wake up early the next morning to continue the ritual or where they begin to take out their anger at work on their family members, this can lead to a breakdown of communication and joyfulness in the once-happy family thereby resulting in unpalatable behavioural tendencies both from the parents and the siblings.

As a corollary to the foregoing, it is therefore recommended that managers and company administrators develop the job schedules in such

a format that will have breaks or rest periods and early closing time. This will enable the employees to function more productively as they are able to have time to refresh themselves and are also able to go home early to rest and not the mundane long hours of extensive work without breaks. There should also be provision for employee training in the area of stress management periodically so that employees can personally be conscious of what they need to do to stay healthy and to stay productive. There can also be creation of leave schemes for organizations that don't have and maintenance or improvement of such schemes for employees such as maternity, annual, sabbatical, and sick leaves. The organization could also institute a procedure of reward system wherein outstanding performance is rewarded among the employees. This will encourage others to put in their best and ensure the organization's mission and vision is achieved.

If health and risk assessments of the organization highlights that employees are suffering from any of the stressors, it is important that steps are taken to reduce or eliminate these hazards. Flexitime within the workplace could allow women and men to deal with home issues and thereby reduce the pressure from the workplace. Allowing for greater flexibility for employees encourage them to take more responsibility for childcare and other family affairs, therefore reducing the stress and possibly improve the overall quality of family life.

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