

# WORK STRESS AND OCCUPATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY AMONG ACADEMIC STAFF OF UNIVERSITIES IN CROSS RIVER AND AKWA IBOM STATES, NIGERIA

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This study investigated the influence of work stress and occupational productivity among academic staff of universities in Cross River and AkwaIbom States, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of this study, two research questions were raised to guide the study. Related literature was reviewed. Expost facto research design was adopted for the study. The stratified random sampling technique was employed and a sample size of 639 academic staff was used for the study. Work Stress and Occupational Productivity of Academic Staff Questionnaire (WSOPASQ) was used for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test the two null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that role ambiguity has a significant influence on teaching but not significant in terms of research and community service. Working environment has a significant influence on teaching and research but not significant in terms of community service. The study recommended among others that university management should provide adequate facilities such as staff offices, lecture halls, equipment, materials, this is to ensure that academic staff has the tools and technology to work to their full potentials. Academic staff should undergo proper orientation and monitoring in order to have adequate information about the demands and job roles.*

**Keywords:** *Work Stress, Occupational Productivity, Role Ambiguity, Working Environment*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The significance of education has been recognized globally due to its contributions to human and societal development. Most nations tend to spend more on education. Especially universities and other institutions of higher learning, which academic staff play a major role. The desire of such academic institutions most time laid on the academic staff who teaches the students, supervise the projects and also carry out community services. Consequently, academic staff occupational productivity is a fundamental concern of this academic institutions. According to Ndum (2014), employees are resources that should be effectively managed if organizations are to make

progress. With the absence of good human resources, even the best designed organization that is guided by well-made plans, necessary equipment, etc cannot realize its performance potential.

Work stress is the reaction of an employee to the challenges in the employee place of work. Stress is used to be the perception of a discrepancy between environmental demands (stressors) and employees capacities to fulfill these demands (Barkhuizen&Rothmann, 2016). Academic staff occupational productivity is influenced by different work stress such as working environment and role ambiguity among others. Okure (2004) opined that to achieve occupational productivity of academics requires conducive working environment. School administration must be conscious of the school environment and constantly strive to meet it expectations (Ekpo, Egbula&Abang, 2016). In many instances, the lack of adequate guidance and counseling services to inform their decisions and choice of career, demands systematic educational guidance; a process of assisting workers achieve the self-understanding and self-direction necessary to make informed decisions and move toward the realization of their individual stipulated goals (Ndum and Onukwugha, 2013).

Lack of understanding job responsibilities and expectation lead to role ambiguity, employees that faces role ambiguity tend to execute at smaller levels than those that have the knowledge of their work description as well as their job expectations (Tarrant &Dabe, 2010).

Occupational productivity in this study is narrowed down to teaching, research and community service. The scourge of occupational productivity among academic staff has eaten deep into the foundation of the Nigeria universities. It is observed that in most cases academic staff becomes unproductive in teaching, research and community service (Wonah, Egbula&Ekpo, 2016).

Most academic staff seem to compromise their teaching, research and community service roles for a non-academic activities be neglecting their teaching duties, as well as carrying out researches for publication which should have led to their promotion and enable them also contribute to the knowledge bank. However, Arshadi and Damin (2013) opined that every lecturer in the university is employed with three major terms of employment: to teach, to research and to carry out community service.

According to National Universities Commission programme evaluation form (2012), for the accreditation of academic programmes in Nigeria universities, lecturers should have well ventilated and adequate offices with furniture, adequate research laboratory. By contrast many lecturers now share office space because of inadequate office accommodation. This may influence the occupational productivity of lecturers in relation to teaching and research. Given this situation, the researcher carried out a study to investigate if work stress may influence occupational productivity among academic staff of universities in Cross River and Akwalbom States of Nigeria.

## **2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Academic staff in universities are faced with increased expectations of their services to schools, students and the community. Since their core responsibilities is to teach, carry out

research works and provide community services as a result of these stress could emanate from the working environment, unclear expected roles and responsibilities.

It has been posited that parents, students and the public complain about the decline in the quality of teaching, research publications and community service delivered by academic staff of Nigerian universities (Buk, 2015). Frequently, academic staff are blamed for low quality research, inadequate engagement in community services and the inability to impart knowledge to the study resulting in student poor academic performance.

For the past years, the government and the school authorities have put certain measures such as the provision of educational facilities, staff offices and quarters, organizing of training workshops to educate staff of their expected roles and responsibilities in the universities, but the problems still persist.

### **3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main reason for this study is to determine if work stress can influence the occupational productivity among academic staff in universities with an emphasizing of University of Calabar and University of Uyo.

The specific purposes of the research were to determine the extent to which:

- (i) Working environment influence the occupational productivity of academic staff in terms of teaching, research and community service.
- (ii) Role ambiguity influences the occupational productivity of academic staff in terms of teaching, research and community service.

### **4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- (1) To what extent does working environment influences the occupational productivity of academic staff in terms of teaching, research and community service?
- (2) To what extent does role ambiguity influence the occupational productivity of academic staff in terms of teaching, research and community service?

### **5. STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESES**

Hypotheses were formulated as follows:

- 1) Working environment does not significantly influence the occupational productivity of academic staff in universities in terms of teaching, research and community service.
- 2) Role ambiguity does not significantly influence the occupational productivity of academic staff in universities in terms of teaching, research and community service.

### **6. METHODOLOGY**

The research adopted ex post facto design. This design permits the examination of the independent variable (work stress) in retrospect to their possible influence on the dependable variable (occupational productivity of academic staff) in universities in Cross River and AkwaIbom States (Isangedighi, Joshua, Asim&Etim, 2004).

The study consisted of every academic staff of Federal Universities in the area. The study population was Three Thousand One Hundred and Ninety Four (3,194). The sample was

obtained using stratified random sampling technique. For a representative sample of the academic staff in the institution to be obtained, 20 percent sample was drawn from each of the universities. The sample size for the study was Six Hundred and Thirty Nine (639) academic staff, 382 academic staff from the University of Calabar while Two Hundred and Fifty Seven (257) academic staff from University of Uyo (males and females) were drawn out of the 3.194 academic staff in the two Federal Universities.

The data for this study were collected using a questionnaire titled Work Stress and Occupational Productivity of Academic Staff Questionnaire (WSOPASQ). The WSOPASQ was divided into three sections. Section A dealt with the respondents' demographic data such as gender, age, educational qualification. Section B consisted of 16 items, 8 items used in measuring each of the two variables.

A modified four point Likert scale of very stressful (VS), mildly stressful (MS), stressful (S) and not stressful (NS) was used to measure work stress and section C consisted of 18 items, with six (6) items used to measure each of the variables. A modified four points likert scale of very often (VO), often (O), rarely (R) and never (N) was used to measure occupational productivity of academic staff. The respondents were told to tick the option that best describe their responses. The content and face validity of the research instrument was examined by expert in measurement and evaluation. The reliability of the instrument (WSOPASQ) was obtained through a trial testing. This was done by a trial test group constituted by random selection of 60 academic staff from the population of the study who are not part of the study. 60 copies of the questionnaires were administered on the randomly selected academic staff. The questionnaire copies were collected, coded and scored. Cronbach Alpha method was used to find out the reliability of the instrument which ranges from 0.74 to 0.84.

Questionnaires were administered personally to the respondents with the help of two trained research assistants. Respondents were assured that the essence of the questionnaire was to generate data to examine if work stress have an influence of Occupational productivity of academic staff in universities in Cross River and AkwaIbom States. Six Hundred and Thirty Nine (639) copies were distributed and 620 copies were properly completed and retrieved. This represent 97 percent rate of return. The data collected were analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

## **7. RESULT**

Research question 1: To what extent does working environment influence the occupational productivity of academic staff in terms of teaching, research and community service.

Table 1

Description statistics and one-way ANOVA of influence of working environment on occupational productivity in terms of teaching, research and community service

Occupational productivity	Stress from working environment	N	Mean	Std. deviation
Teaching	Low	149	15.78	2.18
	Moderate	187	16.82	2.08
	High	284	18.30	2.04
	Total	620	16.97	2.10
Research	Low	149	15.28	2.56
	Moderate	187	15.96	2.84
	High	284	16.98	2.46
	Total	620	16.07	2.62
Community service	Low	149	15.66	2.21
	Moderate	187	17.02	2.19
	High	284	18.76	2.34
	Total	620	17.15	2.25

  

Academic staff output	Source of variation	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F-ratio	P-level
Teaching	Between groups	236.84	2	103.42	9.31	.002
	Within groups	10826.24	617	17.55		
	Total	11153.08	619			
Research	Between groups	398.72	2	199.36	10.97	.001
	Within groups	11210.06	617	18.17		
	Total	11608.78	619			
Community service	Between groups	102.42	2	51.21	2.38	.096
	Within groups	13261.31	617	21.49		
	Total	14463.73	619			

Significant at .05 ( $F_{2, 617} = 3.02$ )

Table 1 shows that working environment significantly influence occupational productivity in terms of teaching ( $F = 9.31$ ,  $P < .05$ ) and research ( $F = 10.97$ ,  $P < .05$ ). Null

hypothesis was therefore rejected while the alternate hypothesis was accepted as the calculated F-ratio of 9.31 and 10.97 were greater than the critical F-ratio of 3.02 at .05 alpha level. Since the f-ratio was significant in terms of teaching and research, the Fisher Least Significant Different (LSD) multiple comparison tests was done. The LSD result is shown in table 2.

Table 2

Fisher's (LSD) multiple comparison test analysis of influence of working environment on occupational productivity

Occupational productivity	Stress from working environment	Low (n = 149)	Moderate (n = 187)	High (n = 284)
Teaching	Low	15.78	-1.04	-2.52
	Moderate	-2.36*	16.82	-1.48
	High	-7.41*	-4.35*	18.30
MSW = 17.55				
Research	Low	15.28	-1.74	-3.48
	Moderate	-3.67*	17.02	-1.74
	High	-9.67*	-4.94*	18.76
MSW = 18.17				

\* Significant at .05

Table 2 shows the influence of working environment on occupational productivity in terms of teaching, academic staff who perceived high working environment stress significantly had a greater mean score for teaching than academic who perceived that low ( $t = -7.4$ ) and moderate ( $t = -4.35$ ). Academic staff who perceived working environment stress as moderate has significantly greater mean score for teaching than academics who perceived it as low ( $t = -2.36$ ). with reference to influence of stress from working environment on occupational productivity in terms of research, academic staff who perceived high working environment stress had significantly greater mean score for research than academics who perceived it as low ( $t = 9.67$ ) and moderate ( $t = -4.94$ ).

#### Research Question 2

To what extend does role ambiguity influence the occupational productivity of academic staff in terms of teaching, research and community service?

Table 3

Description statistics and one-way ANOVA of influence of role ambiguity on occupational productivity in terms of teaching, research and community service

Occupational productivity	Stress from working environment	N	Mean	Std. deviation
Teaching	Low	148	15.86	2.24

	Moderate	193	16.23	2.28
	High	279	17.42	2.16
	Total	620	16.50	2.23
Research	Low	148	16.22	2.38
	Moderate	193	16.71	3.13
	High	279	17.28	2.17
	Total	620	16.74	2.56
Community service	Low	148	16.04	2.18
	Moderate	193	16.18	2.16
	High	279	17.30	2.04
	Total	620	16.51	2.13

Academic staff output	Source of variation	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F-ratio	P-level
Teaching	Between groups	386.21	2	193.11	12.08	.001
	Within groups	9862.46	617	15.98		
	Total	10248.67	619			
Research	Between groups	81.26	2	40.62	2.44	.138
	Within groups	10261.81	617	16.66		
	Total	10343.07	619			
Community service	Between groups	102.42	2	51.02	2.80	.086
	Within groups	11246.24	617	18.23		
	Total	11348.66	619			

Significant at .05 ( $F_{2, 617} = 3.02$ )

Table 3 shows that role ambiguity significantly influence occupational productivity in terms of teaching ( $F = 12.08$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Null hypothesis were therefore rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted. It also shows that role ambiguity does not significantly influence occupational productivity in terms of research ( $F = 2.80$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Since this result shows a significant influence of role ambiguity on occupational productivity in terms of teaching, Fisher (LSD) multiple comparison tests was carried out. The LSD result is shown in table 4.

Table 4

Fisher's (LSD) multiple comparison test analysis of influence of role ambiguity on occupational productivity

Occupational productivity	Stress from role ambiguity	Low (n = 148)	Moderate (n = 193)	High (n = 279)
Teaching	Low	15.86	-0.37	-1.56
	Moderate	-1.17	16.23	-1.19
	High	-3.12*	-1.29*	17.42

\* Significant at .05

Result in table 4 shows that for occupational productivity of academic staff in terms of teaching, academic staff who perceived high role of ambiguity stress have a significantly greater mean score for teaching than academics who perceived it as low ( $t = -3.12$ ). Comparison among low and moderate ( $t = -1.17$ ) and among moderate and high ( $t = -1.29$ ) were insignificant.

## 8. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Based on the result obtained from the study, it was revealed that working environment significantly influence occupational productivity of academic staff in terms of teaching and research. It also revealed that working environment does not significantly influence occupational productivity of academic staff in terms of community service. This finding is a conformation with the findings in a study carried out by Aquokogbuo (2002) on the problems of infrastructural provision in tertiary institution in Nigeria, which revealed that inadequate infrastructural facilities in tertiary institution have an adverse effect on job performance. This again is in consonance with the view of Ndum and Udoye (2020), who indicated that it is disheartening to note that there is a growing level of poor performance of employees today as a result of psychological stressors and poor working environment.

Another finding revealed that role ambiguity significantly influence occupational productivity of academic staff in terms of teaching. The implication of this result is that stress due to role ambiguity affect productivity of academic staff in terms of teaching. The present study confirmed the earlier research findings of Kazmi, Amjad and Kahn (2008) in a study carried out on how work stress such as role ambiguity affects the job performances of 55 house officers. The finding is also in line with the findings in a study carried out by Nilufar, Abdullah, David and Syed (2009) which revealed a significant and direct effect of role ambiguity on job performance.

## 9. CONCLUSION

From the findings of the study it was concluded that working environment significantly influence the occupational productivity of academic staff in terms of teaching and research but not significant in terms of community service. It was also concluded that role ambiguity

significantly influence the occupational productivity of academic staff in terms of teaching but not significant in terms of research and community service.

### 10. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings, it was recommended among others that

- (1) Universities management should provide adequate facilities such as staff offices, lecture halls, equipment, and material.
- (2) Academic staff should undergo proper orientation and mentoring in order to have adequate information about their job roles and demands.
- (3) Periodic, mandatory medical checkup should be initiated for academic staff.

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