

## **Job stress and employees' productivity in telecommunication sector of Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

People frequently experience stress while they go about their regular lives at home, school, and work. This study looks at workplace stress and how it affects workers' productivity. Using descriptive data analysis, correlation, and regression analysis using SPSS version 22, five factors that contribute to workplace stress were examined: inadequate working conditions, bullying/harassment, increasing workload, hostile work environment, and downsizing. 110 of the 120 questionnaires that were sent to the employees of MTN, Globacom, Airtel, and Etisalat were successfully completed and returned. The results indicated a bad correlation between employee productivity and job stress. According to the research, employers of labour should take every precaution to make sure that there is no stress at work. Moreover, hiring occupational psychologists and stress management specialists is advised.

**Keywords:** Job stress, Employees' productivity, Poor working condition, Bullying/Harassment, Increased workload

### **Introduction:**

Let's start by dispelling one myth: stress isn't really something terrible. Humankind would not have survived without this remarkable capacity to feel stress. The problem arises when our bodies experience stress in inappropriate circumstances. Brain function is diminished when blood flows only to the most critical muscles needed to fight or flee. An inability to "think straight" may result from this; a state that hinders our work and personal lives greatly (Stress Management Society, 2016). This view concurs with Segal, Smith, Segal and Robinson (2016) [4] made sense of that Pressure inside your usual range of familiarity can assist you with performing under tension, rouse

you to put forth a valiant effort, even guard you when peril looms. However, excessive stress can harm your health, mood, relationships, and quality of life as well as weaken your immune system. To put it another way, stress is a real thing that all of us experience at some point in our lives. Knowing how to recognize when one is under pressure, what are the causes (triggers) and different approaches to adapting to pressure can actually increment ones physical, profound and mental prosperity, in the event that not it could harm our lives, family and working environment efficiency and execution.

According to Olagunju (2010) [15], stress is a persistent, complex emotional state characterized by apprehension and is indicative of a variety of mental and nervous system disorders. According to Bewell (2014) [14], stress is essentially a clear response to an individual's depleting basic needs in an environment of competing needs. Stress is defined by Lahey (2003)[16] as any event or circumstance that tests or exceeds a person's capacity to cope. According to Merrett (2014) [3], the negative reaction that results when pressures at work exceed your capacity to cope is known as work-related stress. It's basically a mismatch between what an organization needs and what an individual can do (Pediwal, 2011; [8, 11] (Jayashree, 2010, Mubasher et al., 2013)

According to Dar et al. (2011) [7], job productivity can be defined as an activity in which an individual is able to successfully complete the task that has been assigned to him or her, subject to the usual constraints of making reasonable use of the resources that are available. In any association undertakings are performed with the assistance of assets; money, machinery, material, and, most importantly, people. Any remaining assets with the exception of people as representatives are non-living. Without these resources, employees won't be able to produce anything because they are used by employees to produce output. As a result, human resources should be given top priority because they are an organization's greatest asset.

Over the past ten years, workplace health and stress have emerged as major global and national concerns. Given the worth of work in this general public, how much time spent working and the ongoing changes that are influencing the idea of work, it isn't is to be expected that work pressure seems, by all accounts, to be expanding (Szymanski, 1999) [5].

One of the largest economic sectors in Nigeria is the telecommunications industry, which is dominated by four large multinational corporations; Etisalat, Globacom Limited, MTN, and Airtel all employ thousands of people in a variety of fields, including sales, customer relations, technical, marketing, human resources, and administration, to name a few. Their employees, like those in other industries, are subject to the same types of routine job stress as anyone else; service in poor condition, bullying and harassment, work overload, downsizing, and a hostile work environment are just a few examples.

The findings of this study shed additional light on a number of the main factors that contribute to workplace stress, including the negative impact of workplace stress on employee performance and the policies that can be implemented to alleviate workplace stress. Finally, the researchers believe that it will serve as a starting point for additional research.

2. Concept of Stress According to Amadi (2007) [29], there are two schools of thought when it comes to defining stress. Lahey (2003) defines stress as any event or circumstance that strains or exceeds a person's ability to cope, whereas one group refers to it as the cause (event or experience). The other group refers to it as the emotional response due to an event as the stressor (effect). In a similar vein, Santrock (2000) [19] defined stress as the way people react to stressful situations and events that put their abilities at risk. Whitebourne (2000) [21] also defined stress as the negative emotional responses and reactions a person has when he or she perceives a threat. A dynamic condition, according to Robbins (1999) [28], is one in which a person is confronted with an opportunity, constraints, or demand that are related to what they want and for which the outcome is thought to be both important and uncertain.

According to Robber and Reber (2001) [20], stress is a state of psychological tension brought on by some kind of pressure or force placed on a person. According to Danga (1991) [22], stress is a non-specific, generalized body response to physical and psychological demands. According to Ngoka (2000) [18], stress is the way people respond to changes in their internal and external environment. According to McGrate (1976) [17], stress occurs when an environment is perceived to be posing a demand that demonstrates an individual's inability to cope.

The harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the workers are referred to as "job stress," according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) (2014) [27]. Greiner (1998) shares a similar viewpoint. When one's job demands conflict with mental regulation processes like information processing, planning, and movement execution, they can lead to job stress.

According to Kotteeswari and Sharief (2014) [9], job stress is a persistent illness brought on by workplace conditions that have a negative impact on an individual's performance as well as his mental and physical health as a whole. It had a negative impact on performance. To put it another way, performance suffers when stress is high. Work pressure has turned into a significant test for the associations because of its monstrous event. Stress has a significant impact on the employees' work habits. It is perceived that workers are the main resources for the associations because of their significant job in running the association really and effectively and can't be dealt with like machines. Employees who are less stressed are more cooperative and valuable assets for an organization. On the other hand, if an organization ignores its employees' stress and needs, it can lead to increased absenteeism, high costs, low productivity, low motivation, and frequently legal financial damages. These factors eventually affect an employee's work behavior and lead him or her to engage in counterproductive work practices (Aftab and Javeed, 2012) [10]. When discussing the sources and types of workplace stress, Ekundayo (2014) [25] stated that the causes of stress are not only numerous but also complex and inextricably intertwined. The causes of stress can be externally induced or internal forces at work within the individual, as well as immediate or distant factors. Endogenous forces are factors like personality traits, psychological features like attitude, emotional disposition, inferiority or superiority complex, introversion or extroversion, etc., that operate within the individual. Social, political, cultural, religious, economic, organizational structure, climate, and career development policy are examples of exogenous factors.

Merkett (2014) [3] identifies a number of employee stressors; working in a noisy or poorly lit environment, working long hours, having difficult relationships with coworkers, having too much or too little to do, not feeling valued for your work, being bullied at work, and being under pressure to meet deadlines are all examples of poor working conditions. He also argued that an employee

may experience stress if he is employed in a position that is inappropriate for his skills, abilities, and expectations. Sometimes there are multiple factors that contribute to stress at work. It could be brought on by a combination of factors in your work and personal lives or by the accumulation of small things over time. Additionally, Mubasher et al. (2013) [13] identified five causes of workplace stress: a lack of financial rewards, a rigid work schedule, personal problems, and a lack of control over the workplace and management system (bureaucratic) Many factors contribute to workplace stress, according to Kotteeswari et al. (2014) [9]. It very well may be a requesting chief, irritating collaborators, insubordinate understudies, furious clients, dangerous circumstances, long drives and a ceaseless responsibility. Stressors like family relationships, finances, and a lack of sleep caused by worries about the future also affect your work performance.

Ibem et al (2011) [26] distinguished an agenda of the different work qualities and related stressors; personal characteristics-related sources, relationship-related sources, work-nature-and-time-related sources, policy- and position-related sources of organizational stress, and situation- and environment-related sources, among others. According to Meneze (2005) [12], employees' performance is impacted by personality traits, a lack of relaxation, and ambiguous rules, as well as the organization's misfit status, lack of participation in decision-making, and lack of control over the work environment.

4. **Productivity of Employees** Simply put, productivity is production efficiency: how much output a given set of inputs produces. As a result, it is usually expressed as a ratio of input to output. Measures of single-factor productivity show how much output is produced for each unit of an input. The most common type of this kind of measure is labor productivity; however, capital or even materials productivity measures are sometimes used (Syverson, 2011) [24]. Productivity was defined by Krugman (1994) [6] as the ratio of output volume to input volume. At the end of the day, it estimates how productively creation inputs, like work and capital, are being utilized in an economy to deliver a given degree of result. Rolloos (1997) [30] characterized the efficiency as that which individuals can create with the least exertion. The efficiency with which an

organization, individual, industry, or nation converts input resources (labor, materials, machines, etc.) is measured by productivity. into services and goods.

An evaluation of a worker's or group's efficiency is known as employee productivity (also known as workforce productivity) [1] (Rouse, 2014). Employee productivity, according to Meneze (2005) [12], is an employee's capacity to produce work or goods and services in accordance with or above the employer's expectations.

Empirical Research Dar et al. (2011) [7] investigated the effect of stress on employees' job performance in Pakistan's business sector. 143 bankers, multinational corporations, and university employees with at least five years of experience were used. The method of random sampling was used to select them. Pertinent information were gathered utilizing organized survey. The hypothesis was tested with the chi-square and t-tests. According to the findings, subjective effects of job stress include confusion over responsibilities and errands, feelings of undervaluation, bullying and victimization at work, fear of joblessness, work-home interaction, economic instability in our target population, and exposure to traumatic workplace incidents.

According to Kotteeswari et al. (2014) [9], a study involving employees in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry in India found that there is an inverse relationship between job stress and employees' job performance, and that empowering employees to work in a stress-free environment is essential if an organization is to maximize its returns on investment. In the public health sector of the Muzaffarabad and Poonch divisions of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K), Mubasher et al. (2013) [13] also investigated the causes and effects of workplace stress on employee productivity. Pearson's correlation and simple linear regression were used to examine the data of 210 respondents. The outcome showed that among general wellbeing area representatives Absence of monetary prizes, Firmness in work hours, Private matters, Low command over the workplace and Regulatory administration framework have a negative connection with workers' efficiency. While the majority of workplace stress among employees was caused by a lack of financial compensation.

Chowwen (2013) [23] looked at how occupational stress was affected by joint and independent predictions of emotional intelligence, perceived leadership style, and job characteristics among

bank workers in South East, Nigeria. The study included 210 bankers, both male and female. Five theories were tried with two completely and three to some degree affirmed. The capacity to understand people at their core, saw initiative style and occupation qualities essentially and mutually anticipated pressure, what's more, those with high ability to understand individuals on a deeper level detailed lower pressure experience contrasted and those with a low degree of the capacity to understand anyone on a deeper level. This entails determining the elements that are essential to a person's ability to manage stress and offering suggestions for facilitating the process of stress reduction. She suggested that employers can assist employees in altering their perceptions of stress, supplying them with strategies to assist them in coping, and boosting their confidence in their own abilities to do so.

Bewell et al. (2014) [14] looked at how stress at work affects organizational effectiveness and productivity among employees of the Nigerian Television Authority and the Nigerian Immigration Service. They found that there is a strong connection between stress at work, productivity at work, and effectiveness at work, and that these three factors are almost inseparable. They suggested that different associations in Nigeria utilize the administrations of prepared clinicians and work force to assist with giving training, guiding and important adapting abilities to representatives to assist with augmenting efficiency.

## 5. Methodology

The dependent variable is the employees' productivity. The independent variables are bad working conditions, bullying and harassment, more work, a hostile work environment, and downsizing. The primary objective of this study is to identify and examine some of the variables attributed to work pressure as well as the relationship between work pressure and representatives' efficiency. In order to achieve the research's objective, 120 questionnaires were given to MTN, Globacom, Airtel, and Etisalat employees. Additionally, we conducted telephone interviews with distant employees to gather pertinent data. 110 surveys with answers were returned. A Five Likert scale was used in the questionnaire, with 0 denoting extreme disagreement, 1 denoting disagreement, 2, denoting indifference, 3 denoting agreement, and 4 denoting highly agreement. SPSS adaptation 22 was

utilized to investigate the information. Descriptive data analysis, Pearson correlation, and regression were to be used to assess how each variable affected employee productivity. For the purpose of this study, the questionnaire is divided into two sections: demographics, stress at work, and how it affects productivity among employees.

The same will be tested in comparison to the following alternative hypotheses:

- H11: In H12, low service quality is negatively correlated with employee productivity: Bullying and harassment have a negative effect on employee output.
- H13: There is a negative relationship between increased workload and employee productivity.
- H14: A hostile work environment has a negative impact on employee productivity.
- H15: Downsizing has a negative impact on employee productivity.

### 1. General Findings of the Hypotheses

**Table 1:** Poor condition of service

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	30	27.3	27.3	27.3
	Indifferent	20	18.2	18.2	45.5
	Agree	30	27.3	27.3	72.7
	strongly agree	30	27.3	27.3	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	



According to the previous table, 27.3% highly agree, 27.3% agree while 27.3% strongly agree, and 18.2% are neutral. Even if the link is not particularly substantial, we may draw the conclusion that bad service conditions have a detrimental impact on employees' productivity.

**Table 2:** Bully/Harassment

		<b>Freque ncy</b>	<b>Perce nt</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Valid	strongly disagree	10	9.1	9.1	9.1
	Disagree	10	9.1	9.1	18.2
	Indifference	10	9.1	9.1	27.3
	Agree	40	36.4	36.4	63.6
	strongly agree	40	36.4	36.4	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	

**Table 3:** Downsizing

		<b>Freque ncy</b>	<b>Perce nt</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Valid	Disagree	10	9.1	9.1	9.1
	Indifferent	20	18.2	18.2	27.3
	Agree	40	36.4	36.4	63.6
	strongly	40	36.4	36.4	100.0

	agree				
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	

It is evident from the table above that the respondents agree that bullying and harassment are stressors and have a detrimental impact on their productivity. 9.1% each strongly disagree, disagree, and are neutral, while 36.4% highly agree and 36.4% also agree.

**Table 4:** Work overload

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	20	18.2	18.2	18.2
	Agree	40	36.4	36.4	54.5
	strongly agree	50	45.5	45.5	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	

Their productivity is negatively correlated with their workload; the capacity to complete tasks effectively. 45.5% strongly concur, 36.4% concur, and 18.2% disapprove. No one is strongly opposed or uninterested.

**Table 5:** Hostile working environment

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	10	9.1	9.1	9.1
	Agree	70	63.6	63.6	72.7
	strongly agree	30	27.3	27.3	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	

The majority of respondents, 63.6%, agree that a hostile work environment has a negative impact on productivity, while 9.1% strongly disagree, as shown in the preceding table. From the preceding table, 36.4% were unanimous in their belief that downsizing typically has a negative impact on productivity, while 9.1% were indifferent.

**Table 6:** Correlation Analysis

		Poor condition of service	Bully/Harassment	Work overload	Hostile working environment	Downsizing	Employee productivity
Poor condition of service	Pearson Correlation	1	.440**	.686**	.451**	.330**	-.178
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.063
	N	110	110	110	110	110	110
Bully /	Pearson Correlation	.440**	1	.476**	.550**	.226*	-.741**

Harassment	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.018	.000
	N	110	110	110	110	110	110
Work overload	Pearson Correlation	.686**	.476**	1	.643**	.704**	-.303**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.001
	N	110	110	110	110	110	110
Hostile working environment	Pearson Correlation	.451**	.550**	.643**	1	.639**	-.482**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	110	110	110	110	110	110
Downsizing	Pearson Correlation	.330**	.226*	.704**	.639**	1	-.352**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.018	.000	.000		.000
	N	110	110	110	110	110	110
Employees productivity	Pearson Correlation	-.178	-.741**	-.303**	-.482**	-.352**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.063	.000	.001	.000	.000	
	N	110	110	110	110	110	110

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

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The table: 6 showed that the reliant variable representatives' efficiency is corresponded with the free factors; service in poor condition, bullying and harassment, work overload, a hostile work environment, and reduction in size. The findings revealed that four of the independent variables have a negative and significant relationship: downsizing (-352) at 1%, bullying/harassment (-741), work overload (-303), hostile work environment (-482), and one insignificant inverse relationship with poor service condition (-178). To put it another way, there is a significant negative correlation between employees' productivity and the factors that contribute to their stress at work. As a result, an increase in stress at work will result in a decrease in employees' productivity.

Based on the table's analysis of the data: Table 5: 10 We can conclude that employees' productivity

is negatively impacted by downsizing, bullying/harassment, a hostile work environment, work overload, and poor service. As a result, we endorse each alternative hypothesis.

7. Analysis of the Findings The following findings are examined:

(a) The majority of workers employed by the four major telecommunications companies agreed that poor service lowers productivity.

b) The respondents also agree that being bullied and harassed by superiors hinders their ability to complete tasks effectively.

c) They also agreed that taking on too much work reduces productivity.

(d) The overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that a hostile work environment has a negative impact on productivity.

e) In the end, labor employers' downsizing has a negative impact on employee productivity.

8. Conclusion and Recommendation The study recommends the following: (a) Employers of labor should make every effort to ensure a stress-free workplace.

b) Bullying, both sexual and non-sexual, should be discouraged in all forms, and appropriate channels and media for reporting incidents should be established.

c) Stressed employees should receive counseling and therapy from occupational psychologists and experts in stress management to avoid lowering productivity.

d) In the event of a downsizing, employees ought to be promptly informed and compensated by employers.

e) Increasing employee morale requires monetary and non-monetary motivation.

Employing occupational psychologists and stress management specialists to prevent and manage workplace stress is recommended by the study, which found that stress at work has a negative impact on employee productivity.

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