



# **Stress Management and Employees' Productivity Performance: A Psychological Approach to Organizational Wellbeing**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Employees are the life-wire that determine the fate of every organization, and productive employees (talents), are assets to the organization. Productive employees utilize fewer quantity of organizational resource inputs such as time, technology, and quality to their full capacities, when the employees are in their normal state of mind while delivering assigned tasks. These employees work tirelessly to enhancing organizational growth in productivity and profitability, by playing the roles in which they were employed, efficiently and effectively. Perhaps, when stress sets in, especially distress, some productive employees may turn out to become liabilities; as they may be wasting resources to the expense of the organization. Resource wastages such as time maximization, quality minimization, waste maximization, obsolete resource maximization, and others, can lead to a drastic decline in organizational efficiency, growth rate and/ sudden death of the organization. This study, stress management and employees' productivity performance adopted an analytical research approach to evaluate the effects of stress on employees' productivity performance, and how appropriate stress management techniques can help boost the productivity performance of employees. The paper revealed that both domestic and occupational stress can impact negatively on the productivity performance of an employee. Thus, the management of both domestic and job stress will help employees improve their productivity performance in the workplace, which is a major concern for the management. The study also revealed that employees with little or no stress are capable of minimizing time of delivery, minimizing wastes, utilizing available techniques and technologies, and improving quality and quantity of products/services; thereby meeting targets, clients specifications and enhancing profits, while sustaining the feasibility of the organization in the market.. The study therefore concludes that stress is inherent in man, as such organizations should be proactive to managing the emotional state of employees, which is their engine-room for better performance. In order to achieve this superordinates should observe employees emotional states regularly to know when there is deviation, and appreciate counseling taken place as intervention to help put them back on track.

**Keywords:** Employees' Productivity Performance, Psychotherapy, Stress, Stress Management

## **INTRODUCTION**

Organizational well-being is directly a function of employees well-being. When employees are mentally and physically doing well, the organization in turn becomes very functional and in good working conditions capable of promoting survival and growth. Aptly put, this is one of the prominent reasons organizations are skeptical about how their employees behave and function, as these impact on their productivity performance and organizational wellbeing. Thus, employees' productivity performance is a

major tool through which organizations boost its performance indices such as market share, sales ratio, profitability, etc. To achieve these concomitantly, good organizations ensure that their employees have same visions as theirs, strengthen the strength of identification and bond between them and their employees, promote employees' voice in decision-making, and equally show concerns for employees' health and welfare (Dukerich, *et al.*, 2002), as the ability to fulfilling these parameters indicates to their stakeholders what developmental capacities and image the organization possess (Cummings & Worley, 2005). One major area of concern to organizations on employees' health and welfare is the issue of employees' stress. This is because stress disrupts the effective and efficient performance of employees in organizations (Amadi, 2007). Stress has been closely linked to major health problems and emotional strains, which have greatly disturbed mankind generally, and the workforce specifically, causing reductions/declines in employees' productive capacities. Okere (2013), defined stress as the physical and psychological conditions resulting from the forceful attempts to adapt to one's environments. Sequel to this, and the fact that stress is an integral part of human existence, scholars argue that intensive efforts should be made to create better awareness of this contemporary realities amongst the workforce, so they could know its nature, consequences and how to manage it in their daily routine in the organization (Amadi, 2007; Armstrong, 2012; Okere, 2013).

Bosma and Brouwers (2004), argue that there is definitely a significant relationship between stress and employees performance; as generally high levels of stress can have negative impact on employees productivity. This implies that stress can lead to a decrease in productivity, an increase in absenteeism and employees turnover. However, this relationship is complex and may depend on the employees ability to cope. Obviously, though stress can never be completely washed away from human activities, as human beings need some moderate level of stress to function effectively in certain situations, but when it becomes too much and persistent, it may lead to severe damage in the psychological and physiological well-being of the individual (Ekwe, 2000). On this ground, many researches and literal works on stress in the workplace, have the primary motive of creating more awareness about stress so as to help employees develop ways of managing/coping with it in order to sustain and maintain good health for the effective and efficient performance of tasks towards the realization of organizational goals and wellbeing.

### **Meaning and Nature of Employee Stress**

In defining stress, two schools of thought were reviewed in this paper. One group of schools describe stress in terms of cause (event or experience) (Lahey, 2003; Reber & Reber, 2001), while the other explains it in terms of effect (emotional response due to an event called stressor) (Reber & Reber, 2001; Santrock, 2001; Whiteborne, 2001; Njoka, 2000). Hence, these two schools of thought described stress in terms of cause and effects. Thus, defining stress as a cause, Lahey (2003), asserts that stress is any event or circumstance that strains or exceeds a person's ability to cope. Reber and Reber (2001), in their first perception of stress observed that it is any force that when applied to a system causes some severe changes of the system's original form and brings it to a disorganized state. The above scenarios considers events or circumstances as the stress itself.

On the other hand, describing stress in terms of effect, Santrock (2000), opines that stress is the response of individuals to the circumstances and events called stressors, which threatens them and tax their coping abilities. Similarly, Whiteborne (2000), opined that stress is an unpleasant emotional reaction and response which an individual makes when he perceives an event to be threatening. Reber and Reber (2001), in their second understanding of stress disclosed that stress is a state of psychological tension produced by some forms of forces or pressure imposed on a person. In another scenario, Njoka (2000), describes stress as the response people make to environmental and internal demands to which individuals have to adjust.

Consequently, from a comparative analysis of the above definitions, one can arguably say that stress is the response which an individual feels when he is facing circumstances or events referred to as stressors which may push him towards performing above his capacity or threaten his well-being and normal life patterns. To some people it is a normal reaction that the body makes when changes occur, resulting in physical, emotional and intellectual responses/challenges. Chika and Iwundu (2000), observed that stress is experienced by all categories of people such as old and young, rich and poor, males and females,

employers and employees, literates and illiterates. According to them, it is normal to experience stress but very dangerous when it becomes excessive for the individual to bear. At such point, it is very vital to manage stress to avoid being harmful to the host individual.

However, employees stress may be described as employee's response to intrinsic and extrinsic circumstances within and outside the work environment that impacts on the performance of such employee, towards the realization of stipulated or organizational goals. Employee stress is mostly induced by domestic and/ job stress (Amadi, 2020). Domestic stress is caused by all stressful activities surrounding employees outside the organization. Job stress is induced by activities surrounding the employee on the job. It is mostly negative emotions experienced by an employee such as anxiety and frustration in attending to the demands of the job. Job stress can cause physical and psychological health problems including increased blood pressure, increased heart-beat rate, headaches, and difficulties in sleeping. It can equally lead to negative work outcomes such as reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, increased turnover, amongst others.

### **Types of Employees Stress**

There are two types of employees stress; eustress and distress (Amadi, 2007). These were discussed in this work;

**a. Eustress:** This in short form is EU and is a Greek word meaning positive (good) stress. This is the kind of stress faced by people due to tasking life events which will yield beneficial and rewarding outcomes. Selye (1974) described the eustress as positive features of stress. The Eustress is often experienced by individuals/workers who engage in normal competitions such as sports, games, proposing to a loved one, contesting for a big project or contract, handling a huge project, carrying out an innovative project, taking risk for the company, saving money to buy a new car or building a house, planning a wedding ceremony, waiting for pregnancy diagnostic test result, expecting the cry of a new baby, completing and packing down to a new house, etc. These activities can be very stressful to the employee, even when they have positive results and expectations. Amadi (2020), opines that employees who engage in intrapreneurial activities often face eustress in their bid to enhance their productivity performance to help boost organizational growth. He added that this situation is mostly found in those employees with high level of achievement motivation, innovative spirit, and intrapreneurial leadership. These employees are always at the bid of taking the organization to the next levels.

**b. Distress:** This is also known as DE and is a Greek word meaning bad (negative) stress. This type of stress implies that the events or circumstances that cause distress is usually producing unpleasant and regrettable consequences. Research has found that some of the events that cause distress in employees are time pressure of job, lack of required skills to handle tasks, undisciplined staff or co-workers, counter-productivity or unproductive co-workers, economic recession workload (Okere, 2013); unskilled or inexperienced workers/supervisors, over-strict supervisor/manager, (Amadi, 2020); death of loved one(s), family problems, too much workload, lack of workplace social supports, etc.

The nature of this distress is naturally discouraging because it causes discomfort (Amadi, 2020). This means that distress negatively affects the behaviour of the individual/employee affected as he/she is intrinsically imbalanced and disturbed. Thus, situations like this could lead to health challenges including mental ill health and death when there is no quick intervention to help rescue the victim.

### **Categories of Employees Stress**

It is expedient to identify the levels or categories of stress, as this will help to better understand the nature of stress with regards to how individuals/employees experience them. There are indications that stress could be described in terms of its extent of severity, as such some of the categories of stress from available literature are: normal, severe and chronic stresses (Parker, 2004; Amadi, 2007; Armstrong, 2012).

**Normal Stress:** This has been described as an integral part of man. According to Selye (1974), no employee can perform without experiencing some degree of stress. Virtually everything man does on earth on daily basis is capable of causing him some amount of stress. That is why Selye calls stress "the

spice of life". Lahey (2003), also says that no life is free of stress, and that a certain amount of stress is probably healthy as it is capable of energizing and challenging humans to grow. Amadi (2020), believes that people or employees with achievement motivated intrapreneurial spirit are mostly victims of normal stress. He opines that these set of people face some amount of normal stress in their bid to strive to achieve more, or attain a particular level in life. Thus, to these persons with achievement motivated, innovative and leadership mindsets, stress is seen as a normal and predetermined roadmap or benchmark for success, and the attainment of greater heights (Amadi, 2020).

**Severe Stress:** In this level of stress, a traumatic event triggers off a remarkable impact that lasts for a considerable period of time in the life of the person. This level of stress usually result to serious illness due to the shock that accompanies it (McErven & Seeman, 1999). When employees are involved in this type of stress, they become consistently ill and become weak to perform their job roles. Thus, employees may not necessarily be absent from work, but may show a lot of inefficiencies in the delivery of assigned/routine tasks. Tims and Bakker (2018), found that high levels of stress can lead to a negative effect on employees job satisfaction and engagement. This situation can impact negatively on the employees level of performance and productivity (Briner *et al.*, 2005).

**Chronic Stress:** This is the advanced stage of severe stress when a full blown post-traumatic stress disorder is experienced. This level of stress is such that its occurrence evokes severe social, psychological and physiological disturbances. Several researches have shown that chronic stress can lead to a variety of negative effects on employees performance and organizational wellbeing such as reduced productivity and work quality, increased absenteeism and turnover (Bosma & Brouwers, 2004), decreased employees satisfaction, engagement and morale, increased level of burnout (Tim & Bakker, 2018), increased rate of depression and anxiety and increased rate of accumulated health (Folkman & Lazarus, 2017), and challenges such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and sleep disorders (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2009). When employees experience chronic stress, they can fall into depression and become unconscious of their regular routine jobs. Chronic stress can make talented employees to become very unproductive and nonperforming. This level of stress dwindles the emotional and mental states of the employees suffering from it. Due to this inconsistency in reasoning and work behavior, the employee may not be able to deliver routine jobs effectively; thereby reducing the level of his productivity performance.

### Symptoms of Employees Stress

In order to know if an individual is stressed or not, it is important to ask such question as: what are the indications that can show that an individual is stressed? Except through the body changes caused by stress, an affected person may ordinarily not realize that he has developed stress. Thus, the symptoms of stress can be discussed under these two sub-headings vis: physiological and psychological behavioural symptoms (Amadi, 2007; Okere & Onyechi, 2007; Check, 2011);

**1. Physiological Symptoms of Stress:** These include the various signs and experiences people have in different parts of the body system which show that something strenuous has happened to the individual. Some of the symptoms are according to (Hart, 1993; Schular, 1980; Hellebrandt, 1958; Akinnusi, 1995); migraine headaches, rapid heartbeat and high breathing rate, stomach upset, body pains, sweating, breathing problem, fidgeting of the whole body. Besides, these symptoms defer from persons to persons, as such need adequate observations and appropriate interventions. Schaufeli *et al.*, (2009), found that physiological symptoms of stress negatively affect job performance and satisfaction. However, these physiological symptoms of stress are generally capable of disrupting the work routines of employees thereby leading to low productivity performance and poor organizational wellbeing.

**2. Psychological Symptoms of Stress:** Several psychological reactions accompany the onset of employees stress. Some of these symptoms have been identified by Cooper and Marshall, (1976); Kyriacou & Sutchiffe, (1978); Lamberth *et al.*, (1978); Robins, (1983); Hart, (1995); and Njoka, (2000), as anxiety, daydreaming, indecisiveness, sleep disorders, tension, nervousness, aggression, depression, hallucination, and agitation, respectively. Tim and Bakker (2018), opine that psychological symptoms of stress can react differently on employees, as such their impacts on employees productivity performance may also differ. According to these scholars, these symptoms may have positive impact on some

employees, and may equally have negative impacts on some employees towards performance and relatively, organizational wellbeing.

### **Employee's Stress Management Techniques**

Stress management is the act of applying various techniques to reduce the effect of stress on an individual. Amadi (2007), describes it as a wide spectrum of techniques and psychotherapies aimed at controlling a person's level of stress, specifically the chronic type of stress. Stress can be managed in many different ways depending on the type of stress and its cause. The best stress management plans usually include a mix of stress relievers that address stress related ailments (Checks, 2011). Individuals must accept that they cannot control everything in life; as such, they need to settle for the best they can afford rather than always aiming for perfection. They should also learn what triggers stress and anxiety in them, and try to limit the intake of caffeine (Nwimo, 2005).

It is very important to identify the underlying causes of employees stress and their possible reasons in their categories such as the stress that requires medical attention; and stress that requires psychological therapy. The effective and appropriate management of stress helps employees to reduce the tension which stress imposes on them (Armstrong, 2012), so that the employees can be happier, healthier, and more productive in the workplace. However, there are several ways of managing employees stress but the most popular and simplest forms are meditation, listening to music, yoga and exercise. Thus, Schaubroeck *et al.*, (2011), assert that employees stress may be managed such that the individual needs to seek other people's support, change the situation through maintaining a positive reaction that alters the situation by seeking alternative situations, and finally changing the event that caused the stress. Powley and Nissen (2012), advocate the techniques to manage stress as sleeping, exercising regularly, getting out on the sunlight, drinking less alcohol and caffeine close to bedtime, seeking support from loved ones, and structuring out time for relaxation.

In addition to the above employees stress management techniques, it is also very important that individuals/employees engage in jobs they have the skills, experience, and passion for. Besides, such jobs should not be too time demanding/consuming to reap them of leisure and rest; such job should not be boring, not be too manually based, and not be too personalized such that the employee is the only one who has the skill/experience to perform it, to avoid burnout and other health challenges. Remember employees are like operating machines, if you overuse them, they disappoint you when you need to most. So, employees as operating systems in organizations need not be overused to avoid it malfunctioning. As such stress can be proactively managed productively by assigning appropriate time to work and rest, doing things at their right times, avoiding too much workloads and domestic/office pressures. Going out for breaks, sitting out with friends, and listening to good music can equally help in managing stress.

On the organizational level, employees stress can be managed by the creation of a conducive workplace social environment such as workplace social programmes, workplace social infrastructures and workplace social support. Camero *et al.*, (2011), revealed that positive organizational practices such as a positive work environment and supportive leadership can help to reduce employees stress and improve job satisfaction and performance. The workplace social practices may consist of holding social programs such as seasonal parties and event tours; workplace social infrastructures may be in the form of provision of staff clubs/guest houses, housing schemes, and provision of transport facilities (staff bus or official car); and workplace social support in the form of peer loans (car loans, housing loan support, and thrift cooperative), personal function support (marriage/wedding planning support and burial planning support), and supervisor's support (emotional support- when supervisors listen and show their subordinates that they care about their work-life demands, and instrumental support- when supervisors take the responsibilities of helping employees feel comfortable with balancing their work-life and entire daily responsibilities. In addition, it was found that job stress can be managed reduced job demand, increased job control, and increase in social support (Aronsson *et al.*, 2014).

### Theories of Employees Stress

There are many theories of stress which provide background explanation of the process of employees stress. These theories try to explain that stress is initiated in the body when certain events occur, how the individual consciously and unconsciously tries to overcome it, and when he does not succeed, how the stress affects his physical, emotional, cognitive and social dispositions (Okere, 2013; Wesley, 2007). These theories and their proponents are discussed in this work.

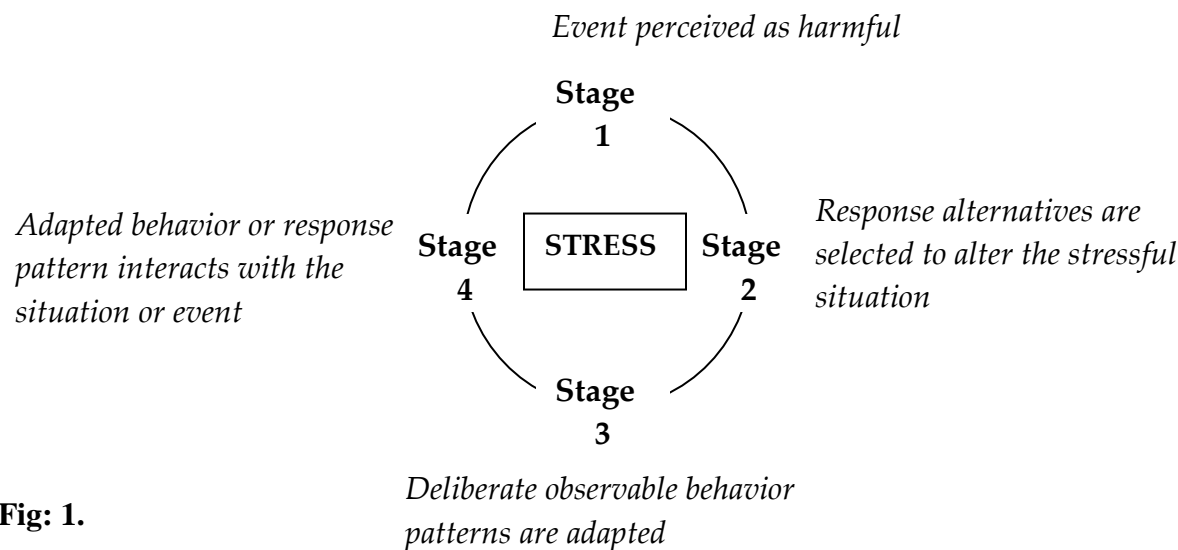
**a. The General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) Theory by Hans Selye (1950):** Hans Selye, an Austrian born scholar and endocrinologist is regarded as the father of stress research. Based on his view of stress as the non specific responses which humans make to stimulus which puts extra demand on the body, he developed a concept tagged General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS). The GAS theory according to him, suggests that when individuals experience stress, they go through three major stages of adaptation: the alarm, resistance, and exhaustion stages (Roussos, 2005). These three stages of body responses to stressful events were explained below:

- i. Alarm Stage:** This is the first stage of the GAS in which the body system goes into a short period of shock due to the imposition of external stimuli on it. As soon as this shock is experienced, the internal body mechanism begins to react by releasing body arousing hormones to withstand the shock. Spranger and Holsboer-Trachslar (2009), claim that this hormone (adrenalin) is a destroyer of the immune system, which is the reason the body at this short period becomes prone to sickness and infections, and as such starts to malfunction. Karagoz, *et al.*, (2020), disclosed that when employees start malfunctioning, it impacts negatively on their performance and the productivity of the organization. In view of this, managers need to observe when employees are malfunctioning, especially when their behaviours change, co-workers can also assist to detect abnormality in the employees' behaviours, and the employees themselves can help to open up to their superordinate and co-workers, so as to be given the necessary therapy and or referred to see a professional psychologist for adequate counseling as fast as possible.
- ii. The Resistance Stage:** This is the second stage which helps to avoid the person's risk of death due to infections, sickness and attacks. At this stage, there is the reduction of the stress impact, by so doing, the various glands in the body begin to release counter hormones that would neutralize the effect of adrenaline so as to reinvigorate the body immune system (Cavanaugh, *et al.*, 2018). If the effort to resist the stress drops and stress persists, there is need to see a professional therapist on stress to avoid the employee pushing into the exhaustion stage.
- iii. Exhaustion Stage:** This third stage is characterized by profound failure of the body-defense mechanism and explosion of stress which Selye Hans described as the "wear and tear" stage of the body. At this stage, the body develops some psychosomatic illnesses such as cardio-vascular diseases, gastric ulcer, headaches, back pains, etc (Fernandez, *et al.*, 2020). In some cases of exhaustion, affected persons may collapse and die if no quick intervention is taken (Karagoz, *et al.*, 2020). Supervisors should try to monitor and observe the behaviors of their workers to avoid exhaustion on duty. They should not only give break or leave periods to workers, but should also consistently rate their health situations before assigning them jobs. This situation should be more strictly adhered to in the production and construction companies; though employees in service firms such as schools should not be taken for granted.

**b. The Physiological Theory of Stress by Neihouse and Karen (1979):** This theory emphasized on the biological processes in human beings that help to generate stress to the body. Neihouse and Karen suggest in this theory that stress is a physiological response to environmental demands or pressures that affects the body (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2009). The theory proposes that stress is a normal, adaptive response that can be beneficial in the short-run, but may become harmful if it persists over a long period of time. Relating this theory to organizational behavior, it implies that stress can have both positive and negative effects on employees' performance and organizational wellbeing. Tim and Bakker (2018), claim that situation implies that short-run stress can help employees to be more alert and focused, leading to improved performance, which is indicated in organizational wellbeing. Conversely, when stress becomes chronic, it may lead to burnout, low employees satisfaction, decreased productivity, decreased

organizational performance, and a decrease in the mental and physical health of employees (Briner, *et al.*, 2005).

- c. **The Process–Orientation Theory of Stress by J.E. McGrath (1976):** The McGrath’s process-orientation theory proposes that stress is not a static, but a dynamic process in a continuum, with four stages. The theory is explained in the diagram below:



**Fig: 1.**

**Source:** Amadi (2007), Human stress and management

According to the McGrath’s theory , employees performance and organizational wellbeing can be affected in the following ways.

**Stage 1: Anticipation stage-** Event is perceived as harmful in this stage. Here what makes an event stressful is how the person appraises it. Thus, while some people enjoy a particular event, others may perceive it as being harmful, thus would develop stress. In this stage, employees may experience anxiety and tension as they anticipate a stressful situation, but some may be impacted positively, while some negatively. Hence, this situation is capable of leading to decreased level of productivity and low motivation (Tims & Bakker, (2018). Conversely, in a study by Parkes *et al.*, (2018), it was found that emotional intelligence plays a significant role in the management of the anticipation stage of job stress. They claim that people with higher levels of emotional intelligence are better capable of anticipating stressful situations, and able to taking proactive steps to managing stress. According to them, such people may be more productive while they are stressed.

**Stage 2: Confrontation stage-** Response alternatives are selected to alter the stressful situation in this stage. Thus, the individual involved decides whether to be deeply stuck in the situation causing the stress or to choose alternative situations that could help relieve the stress. During this situation, employees may feel overwhelmed, which can lead to lower quality work, lower morale/commitment, and high levels of absenteeism; but the stressful situation will not cause the too much harm, that may cause the organization its wellbeing. Roe, *et al.*, (2018), found that cognitive appraisal can influence the physiological stress response, by helping people to reinterpret and reframe stressful situations in a more positive and constructive way. According to them, this can lead to a reduction in the physiological stress response, including reduced levels of cortisol and other stress hormones. Perhaps, these researchers also claim that cognitive reappraisal can help employees to feel more in control of the stress, which can further reduce physiological stress response.

**Stage 3: Resolution stage-** Deliberate observable behaviours are adapted. As a way of coping, the individual at this stage develops a pattern of behavior. This pattern of behaviour may be quite different from the person’s usual behaviour, but serves as a way of fighting the stressor. The behaviour may be most times negative, as the individual tries to fight within him/her the stressor. Thus, if employees are

able to defeat the stressor, they may experience a sense of accomplishments and increased motivation; which can impact positively on the organization's wellbeing. Karagoz *et al.*, (2020), found problem-solving during the resolution stage can help to reduce the negative effects of stress, and may lead to better health outcomes. However, problem-solving can help employees to identify solutions to their stressors, which can in turn help to reduce the physical and psychological strains associated with stress. This situation can help employees not to be hindered by the stress in carrying out their routine jobs in the organization.

**Stage 4: Reintegration stage-** Adapted behavior or response pattern interacts with the situation or event. The theory holds that the individual possesses the potentials to manage his stressful situation by making a deliberate effort to choose appropriate response patterns and determining the extent to which chosen patterns could resolve the pressure. If employees are able to successfully reintegrate into the workplace routine, they may experience increase in job satisfaction and a decrease in burnout. This improvement in the employee's health status can bring about a positive impact on the organizational wellbeing. Folkman, *et al.*, (1986), found that successful reintegration into the organization after a stressful situation, can lead to better physical and psychological health balance, and performance. Relatedly, Gallagher, *et al.*, (2011) opined that social support can help employees to feel a sense of belongingness and connectedness, which can be crucial in the reintegration stage. Beside this, social support can equally provide practical assistance and guidance to an employee, which can make the reintegration process easier for the employee. Finally, social support can help employees feel relieved from a stressful situation, and also influence the overall wellbeing of the organization positively.

**d. Adaptive Model Theory of Stress by Mechanic (1962):** The theory proposes that stress is an outcome of the imbalance between environmental demands and an individual's ability to cope. It emphasizes on the importance of resilience, and the ability to adapt to stressful situations (Cavanaugh *et al.* 2018). However, this theory describes employee stress in terms of the discomforting responses that employees make in certain stressful situations. Folkman and Lazarus, (2017), found that resilience and adaptation were positively related to job performance and job satisfaction. Considerably, linking employees performance and organizational wellbeing, the theory suggests that if employees are able to effectively adapt to stress, it may lead to increased performance, satisfaction, and organizational wellbeing, but if the employees find it difficult to adapt, it may lead to decreased performance, low satisfaction/morale, and wellbeing. According to the theory, what makes a particular situation stressful to employees may depend on three basic factors as follows (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984);

**i. The ability and capacity of an employee to handle the situation:** Taking for instance, if a woman loses her husband, which is quite stressful, and considers herself capable of taking care of the children's feeding, education and other needs, her stress would be reduced. Conversely, if she considers herself unfit to bear all family needs alone, her stress would be increased; and this could impact negatively on her ability to cope with other activities. This is the same action and reaction that most employees face when they are stressed; their performance level drops drastically which impacts negatively on the organization's outcomes (Kleiman and Kelley, 2018).

**ii. Norms of the group where an employee operates:** The appraisal of an event to be stressful or not depends on how the society or organization where the employee belongs interprets such event. By this assertion, employees feel stressed when the organization they work for, other organizations, and the society at large perceive such event as stressful. White and Sandage (2018), in agreement with the above assertion, disclosed that if an individual's norms and beliefs about what is expected of them are different from the norms and beliefs of the group they operate in, such situation can lead to stress, and can impact negatively on the individual and the group.

**iii. Availability of means or approach to handle the situation:** If an employee has the means or approach of handling a stress situation by himself, he can quickly exploit the opportunity in order to pull himself out of such situations causing him stress. Besides, being in control of events that cause stress is the easiest way to manage stressful situations. In line with this, McEwen and Karatsoreos (2017), suggest that the presence or absence of resources to handle a stressful situation, determines whether an individual can effectively cope with the demands of a stressful situation.



### **Employees Productivity Performance**

Employees performance is the extent at which an employee executes an assigned job. Employees productivity performance is the extent to which employees utilize the amount of resources provided by the organization as inputs to achieve a given amount of output. According to Amadi (2020), it is the degree of responsiveness of the amount of resources (input) available in an organization to the employees to use in attaining expected target. He opines that in order to transform some certain amount of inputs into an increased output, employees must exert some degrees of efforts. Thus, productivity performance can be measured by the quantity of job done (how much work completed), and the quality of job completed (how well the work was done). Baridam and Nwibere (2008), believe that employees productivity performance is a benchmark for organizations to compete favourably in the market. Organizations work with both man and materials to create relevance in the market. They use man (employees) to turn materials (resource inputs) into finished products/services delivered to the market at expected time and specifications (Zeb-Obipi, 2015). In order to meet up with targets and specifications, organizations try to manage their employees in a way that they can enhance their productivity performance- that is the capacity to utilize resource inputs fully to their maximum potentials.

Employees productivity performance is one of the major ways an organization can evaluate its capacity to compete favourably in the market (Inyang, 2016). When productivity performance of employees are enhanced, they tend to minimize delivery time, minimize waste, and enhance quality and quantity within the market time frame (Kenton, 2019). Perhaps to enhance employees performance, management provides an enabling workplace environment such as conducive work climate and employees health/welfare. Employees are more productive when the working environment is very conducive (Armstrong, 2012). They tend to perform more effectively and efficiently when their health is in good condition and sound shape (Nwachukwu, 2009).

One of the health issues that easily affect employees' health is occupational stress (James, 2002); and this situation negatively impacts on employees' productivity performance. Another employees welfare issue that impacts negatively on their productivity performance is domestic stress. Domestic as well as job stress can significantly have a negative impact on employees productivity performance. To boost the productivity performance of employees, management must be able to manage the well-being of employees both at the work environment and various homes, so that they can be strong mentally, physically and psychologically to produce at their full capacity in the workplace. This can be achievable by setting a behavioural standard for its employees which are to be replicated within the official and domestic environments, and regulated by company polices.

### **Organizational Wellbeing**

Organizational wellbeing is the general evaluation of the health of the people in the organization and their abilities to effectively. It is a multidimensional concept that includes the physical, psychological, social, and emotional health of employees. Kivimaki, *et al.*, (2006), claim organizational wellbeing can be measured by assessing how well an organization provides employees with opportunities for skill development, and professional growth such as training and mentoring. Also, Rundell, *et al.*, (2009), disclosed that organizational wellbeing may be indicated in organizational culture, leadership styles, and workplace policies and practices that support healthy work-life balance such as flexible work hours and telecommuting.

Tooren, *et al.*, (2011), opine that positive organizational wellbeing may consist of very low rate of sick leaves, low turnover, improved productivity, and enhanced satisfaction. Research have revealed that a major factor impacting on organizational wellbeing is employee stress. Employees stress can have significant negative and positive impacts on organizational health and job performance, which in turn can impact on organizational wellbeing (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). In addition to these, other factors that can affect organizational wellbeing, and equally impact on job stress are organizational culture, leadership style, and work polices and practices.

### **Linking Employees Stress, Productivity Performance and Organizational Wellbeing**

The relationship between employees' stress, employees' productivity performance, and organizational wellbeing can not be overemphasized. Perhaps, since employees are the life-wire of organizations, whatever affects the employee affects organizational health and wellbeing. Several researches have found that stress have significant impacts on employees performance and wellbeing. Wright and Cropanzano (1998), found that job stress is negatively relatively related to job satisfaction, but positively related to job performance and organizational outcomes. Bakker and Schaufeli, (2003), opine that job stress has a positive effect on performance, satisfaction, and organizational outcomes. In their analysis, it was assumed that every stressful organizational tasks delivered, increases some levels of satisfaction on the employee, increases tasks performed, and increases organizational outcomes. Relatedly, Tooren, *et al.*, (2011), assert that low (eustress/normal) job stress is associated with a number of positive outcomes for organizations including improved productivity and satisfaction. These findings prove that eustress or normal make employees sustain some levels of stress to increase productivity, as such gain satisfaction for high-target jobs well performed, and in addition enhancing the wellbeing of the organization. Parkes *et al.*, (2018), found that higher levels of emotional intelligence can help employees cope with stressful situations in a more positive and constructive manner.

Conversely, there are evidences that employees stress have positive impacts on productivity and wellbeing. Researchers have specifically found that employees stress have negative impacts on productivity and wellbeing. Jex and Behr, (1991), conducted a meta-analysis and found that job stress is associated with lower job satisfaction, lower productivity, and increased turnover intentions. Onwuegbuzie and Jiao, (2011), found that workplace stress can lead to physical and psychological health problems, reduced job satisfaction, lower productivity, and poor organizational wellbeing. Tooren, *et al.*, (2011), found that high employee stress is associated with a number of negative impacts on the organization such as increased sick leaves, increased employees' turnover, reduced productivity, and reduced job satisfaction. Also, Naumann and Bennett (2000), it was found that job stress is related to reduced employee commitment, reduced organizational citizenship behaviour, and increased employee withdrawal behaviour. A meta-analysis conducted by LePine *et al.*, (2005), found that stress has a significant negative impact on employee performance, and that interventions aimed at reducing employees stress are capable of improving performance and wellbeing. While Qu, *et al.*, (2011) found that job stress can lead to decreased organizational commitment, by reducing employees' sense of belongingness to the organization, reducing the perceived value of the organization, and increasing the perceived cost of staying with the organization. These imply that stress can have negative impacts on employees health, commitment, job performance, satisfaction, and morale, which can in turn affect organizational wellbeing negatively.

However, Aronsson, (2014), contend that job demands, job control, and social support have significant impacts on employees stress. These studies prove that stress management is not a one-dimensional therapy; rather a multidimensional prices where the employee, the organization, and a stress therapist would be involved where need be. Several studies have worked on the link between stress, employees performance, and organizational wellbeing. One of such studies is the works of Salo *et al.*, (2017), who found that there is a significant relationship between stress and employees performance, and that this link is mediated by the organization to help improve its wellbeing. They suggest that organizations need to find possible ways to reducing employees stress, so as to help improve employees performance and overall organizational wellbeing.

### **CONCLUSION**

Stress as a physical and psychological condition resulting from attempts to adapt to one's environment is capable of obstructing the normal functioning of employees. Research findings reveal that both positive (eustress) and negative (distress) stress affect the psychological and physical states of employees. Healthy and emotionally stable employees are found to outperform stressed or worked-out employees. It is evident in this work that positive and negative stress reduce the effective and efficient performance of employees, which in effect, negatively impact on the output of organization. Stress is not in any way good on

employees because it causes frustration, depression, sickness, absent mindedness, weakness/fatigue, general body systems' malfunctioning, and even could lead to death.

The major objective of every organization is to enhance the productivity performance of its employees so as to boost output. In order to enhance productivity, employees must make use of organization's material resources effectively and efficiently. However, stressed and out-worked employees cannot make use of organization's material resources effectively and efficiently as there will be lots of resource wastages including, poor utilization of time, low quality and standard of goods/services, and reduced outputs and non-attainment of targets/goals. The above implications are evident on employees who experience stress, though moderate in eustress, but very severe in distress; resulting in low productivity and profitability of the firm, and in addition reducing the firm's competitive posture.

In order to enhance the productivity performance of employees, management must ensure that their employees are relieved of stress. To help relieve employees of stress or stressful situations, the organization should provide a friendly ground for employee voice (involving employees while making decisions/policies on issues concerning them), make good policies for employees health and welfare, make provisions for workplace social programs, amongst others. The organization should also provide an employees welfare department responsible for the evaluation of the psychological, physical, and mental states of the employees. This department could be a unit in the Human Resource department; and this can be effectively done by making a psychologist the head of this unit, with the role of observing, dialoguing with employees who seem to be malfunctioning in their roles or act abnormally from their usual manner, resulting to low productivity performance of such employees, and advising both the employees and management on prospective ways of managing the problem. The psychologist(s) should dialogue with the employees on other issues affecting them aside the job related stressors, to help proffer solutions to the HR, who in turn reports to the management, for immediate intervention to avoid the loss of a talent, decreased productivity performance and poor wellbeing.

The employees should also feel very free to open up to the psychologist(s) for adequate intervention, and on the other hand, the psychologist(s) should also keep employees problems private and confidential from other employees and the management, where necessary, unless the employee (victim) permits its disclosure to others. The psychologist(s) or stress therapist should always advise the management on how and when to give an employee some time to get relieved of stress, so as to come back sound and healthy in body and mind to carry up organizational responsibilities. Thus, the ultimate goal of stress management is to have a balanced work life, and also help employees suffering from domestic issues which could lead to stress and depressions to recover and reintegrate to the work environment successfully. Therefore, employees should be taught how to stay stress free by scheduling time for work, relationship matters, relaxation and fun; as such structuring the body and mind to be resilient to hold up under pressure and meeting life's challenges with little or no stress. This will help employees to be consistently productive in their performance, and also helping the organization to create a positive wellbeing.

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