

Demographic Determinants of Executive Managers Stress in Public and Private Institutions in Rivers State

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Abstract

The study investigated on demographic determinants of executive manager stress in Rivers State. This study was guided by three research questions and three corresponding null hypotheses. The demographic factors investigated included gender, age and educational qualification. The descriptive survey research design was adopted with a sample of 400 administrators drawn from the entire population of administrators in Rivers State. Data for the study was obtained using a 20 item researcher-developed instrument which was adequately assessed for validity and reliability before administration. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while independent samples t-test was used to test the corresponding null hypotheses. Result revealed that female had a significantly higher level of stress than males, that younger administrators had a significantly higher level of stress than older administrators, while administrators with graduate degrees had a significantly higher level of stress than those without graduate degrees. Based on these results, it was recommended that stress management training should be provided for administrators in Rivers State.

Keywords: Demographic Rivers State Executive Managers.

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INTRODUCTION

Closely looking, recently several reports are shown from electronic and print-medias the persistent hazards and failures associated to managers as a result of executive stress and its related impacts from emotional and physical pains. Experiences ranging from work inefficiency to premature termination of appointment, emotional difficulties or pressure through violent fight, power tussles and quarrels between managers in public or private establishments is very common place (Nmaduakonam, 1997).

Some managers in our locality may have in one way or the other faced the above consequences of stress consequences While the factors responsible for this sorry situation are varied, looking at the subject matter, experience may have shown that there is relationship between some demographic variables and the stress experience of the managers. Which has motivated the current on a study to investigate on the relationship between demographic determinants (factors) and stress among some managers in selected public and private institutions in Rivers state. The relationship between executive stress and demographic factors has received a fair amount of treatment in

research over the past few years. This study involves executive stress syndrome of managers and the demographic variables considered include gender differences, age, educational level and marital status.

Charles (1995:66) show that executive stress is "a form of stress of people occupying high position". Meanwhile, Okwandu and Okerete (2000:10) explained that demographic factors are sometimes referred to as "socio-economic characteristics" These variables may include age, sex, race, ethnicity, income, education, occupation, family size, family life, life circle, religion, home ownership, social class etc. It is a broad segmented variables that are commonly used in several disciplines.

The term stress is becoming a common usage among experts and no experts in the field of psychology and related field such as medicine. It is used to describe any state of physical and mental of emotional burden, demands or pressure, made on an individual. Different psychologist has researched on the harm caused by excess stress (Denga & Ekpo, 1991). Asagwara (1996) and Uzoeshi (1996). Excess stress as reported by Uzoeshi (1996) can lead to several illnesses such as

coronary heart attack, ulcers, headaches and death. Gender-role factor cannot be exempted in the ways stress is managed. It is expected that given same condition and situation men and women are prone to react differently to stress.

Stress in itself is not a bad phenomenon and some authorities consider stress an energizing action. A man without stress can surely be considered a lazy man or somewhat abnormal person. Without stress man cannot achieve much, but an excess of stress is bad and dangerous to health. This view is supported by Iwundu (1995) in his opinion, stress is normal for every man and woman in order to be able to actualize dreams and aspirations, but excess of it is dangerous to health.

Adding to this, Nmaduakonam (1997) reported that the advent of revolutionary awareness of equality in almost all spheres of life, on the part of an African female, has made a dramatic difference. The awareness is largely traceable to increased education, but some of it derives from the political sloganeering of the American or British females about women liberation movements.

Langner (1962) founded a significant relationship between age and stress experienced; as well, Couch and Jung (1982) studied job stress among administrators. These factorial dimensions and differential effects investigation between stress and personal characteristics at administrative levels are shown vividly by Anene (1997). Gmelch, Lovrich and Wilke (1984) pushed the assertion even further when they wrote succinctly that few scholars have actually studied the academic work place from the perspective of administrators and the few available works have been more philosophical than empirical in nature". A close examination portrait this course as a research to trace-out the sources of executive stress with specific interest on the above demographic variables.

The terms in "executive stress" is seen as that administrative burnout in the top-level administration. Denga and Ekpo (1994) posited that the term "executive" is an organizational leader at managerial level. Managers are stressed to achieve organizational success; they are bound to face some basic problems due to local challenges. Thus they defined executive stress as formational problems from non-specific responses of the elements of organization to any demand made upon an individual occupying top-level position in an organization.

It is against this background that managers are faced with different degree of executive stress directly or indirectly with some socio-economic variables being determinants. Specifically, this was part of the motivation which to look into whether there is a difference in the degree of perceived executive stress of the administrators in Rivers state public and private

organizations based on gender, age, educational qualifications and marital status.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to spot out whether there are relationships between some demographic variables and administrative stress as perceived by Rivers State administrators precisely in the public and private learning institutions. Based on the purpose above, the objective of these studies included:

1. To ascertain the extent to which gender differences determine the level of perceived executive stress among executive managers in Rivers State.
2. To ascertain the extent to which age differences determine the level of perceived executive stress among executive managers in Rivers State.
3. To ascertain the extent to which educational level differences determine the level of perceived executive stress among executive managers in Rivers State.

Research Questions

This research is based on the following four research questions:

1. To what extent does gender differences influence stress among executive managers in Rivers State?
2. To what extent does age differences influence stress among executive managers in Rivers State?
3. To what extent does educational level differences influence stress among executive managers in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

This study is further guided by the following null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between the perceived stress of male and female administrators in public and private institutions in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference between the perceived stress due to age difference of administrators in public and private institutions in Rivers State.
3. There is no significant difference between the perceived stress due to educational level of administrators in public and private institutions in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey research design was used in this study. The study was carried out in eight out of the 23 Local Government Area of Rivers State. From these areas, a sample of 400 administrators was drawn using stratified random sampling technique.

A direct structured closed questionnaires of "Strongly Agreed"; "Agreed"; "Disagreed" and "Strongly Disagreed" of four (4) points Likert scales was used as a data collection tool. The instrument was divided into two sections. The first section was on

extracting the bio-data of respondents, while the second session was aimed at establishing the experience of executive stress among the sample. To show the validity of the instrument, copies of the instrument were given to some experts to correct the items in terms of grammatical structure and item relevance. Their corrections were modified into the final version of the instrument before administration. Furthermore, the reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha technique by administering the instrument on a sample of 45 administrators who were not part of the selected sample. After administration and analysis, a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.86 was obtained which indicated that the instrument possessed suitable level of reliability. Data was collected over a period of one month. Result obtained was analyzed using mean and standard deviation, while independent samples t-test was used to test the corresponding null

hypotheses of 0.05 level of significance. To ascertain the stress level of managers, the item criterion mean of 2.50 was multiplied by the total number of items in the instrument (20) which yielded a value of 50. Any respondents who had above 50 was considered as having high stress, while those below 50 are considered as low stress. The results obtained are presented below

RESULT PRESENTATION

Research Question One: To what extent does gender differences influence stress among executive managers in Rivers State?

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between the perceived stress of male and female administrators in public and private institutions in Rivers State.

Table-1: Independent samples t-test of the influence of gender on perceived stress of administrators in Rivers State.

Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Male	173	56.71	6.75	398	7.48	0.0001	Reject Ho ₁
Female	227	61.84	6.82				

According to the result shown in Table 1 on the mean rating of male and female administrators on the perceived level of stress, male administrators had a mean value of 56.71 (SD = 6.75) while female administrators had a mean value of 61.84 (SD = 6.82) which when tested with independent samples t-test yielded a t-value of 7.48 at 398 degrees of freedom with a corresponding p-value of 0.0001 which was less than 0.05 significance level guiding the study. From this result, it therefore indicates that there is a high level of stress among male and female administrators in public and private institutions in Rivers State. Furthermore,

females administrators had a significantly higher level of stress than male administrators, thus the null hypotheses was rejected.

Research Question Two: To what extent does age differences influence stress among executive managers in Rivers State?

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between the perceived stress due to age difference of administrators in public and private institutions in Rivers State.

Table-2: Independent samples t-test of the influence of age on perceived stress of administrators in Rivers State.

Age	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Below 45	148	63.79	6.87	437	14.72	0.000	Reject Ho ₂
Above 45	252	54.76	5.29				

According to the result shown in Table 2 on the mean rating of administrators on the perceived level of stress based on their age, administrators less than 45 years had a mean value of 63.79 (SD = 6.79) while those administrators above 45 years had a mean value of 54.76 (SD = 5.29) which when tested with independent samples t-test yielded a t-value of 14.72 at 398 degrees of freedom with a corresponding p-value of 0.0001 which was less than 0.05 significance level guiding the study. From this result, it therefore indicates that there is a high level of stress among administrators in public and private institutions in Rivers State irrespective of their age. Furthermore, younger

administrators had a significantly higher level of stress than older administrators, thus the null hypotheses was rejected.

Research Question Three: To what extent does educational level differences influence stress among executive managers in Rivers State?

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference between the perceived stress due to educational level of administrators in public and private institutions in Rivers State.

Table-3: Independent samples t-test of the influence of gender on perceived stress of administrators in Rivers State.

Educational Qualification	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Non-Graduate	192	53.96	7.05	437	18.47	0.0001	Reject Ho ₃
Graduate	247	64.59	6.43				

According to the result shown in Table 3 on the mean rating of administrators on the perceived level of stress based on their educational qualification, administrators who are non-graduates had a mean value of 53.96 (SD = 7.05) while those administrators who had graduate degrees had a mean value of 64.59 (SD = 6.43) which when tested with independent samples t-test yielded a t-value of 18.47 at 398 degrees of freedom with a corresponding p-value of 0.0001 which was less than 0.05 significance level guiding the study. From this result, it therefore indicates that there is a high level of stress among administrators in public and private institutions in Rivers State irrespective of their educational qualification. Furthermore, administrators with graduate educational qualifications had a significantly higher level of stress than administrators who were non-graduates, thus the null hypotheses was rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

According to the result obtained from research question one and the corresponding null hypotheses, administrators in public and private institutions in Rivers State had a high level of stress irrespective of their gender. However, it was also shown that female administrators had a significantly higher level executive stress than male administrators. This result might not be unconnected to the reality that female administrators experience conflict arising from the home and the job. Having to juggle between multiple tasks could be area for the reportedly high level of stress experienced by female administrators. This result is similar to the findings by Nmaduakonam (1997) that majority of administrators, irrespective of their gender, experience a high level of stress.

Research question two tends to find out the possible influence and differences that can be caused by the demographic variables of age, is one of the ways of sourcing different levels of executive stress. According to the result obtained, younger administrators had a significantly higher level of executive stress when compared to older administrators. This result might be attributed to the fact that some of these younger administrators are in the most productive part of their lives and as such might be confronted with both administrative and family demands which might put increased pressure on them. On the other hand, older administrators might experience less stress because of they might be true with child rearing and the associated encumbrances with it. This result is contrary to that obtained by Denga and Ekpo (1994) who explained that majority of administrators at any given time or place

experienced stress due to age. According to their findings, an increase in age leads to a corresponding increase in the level of stress experienced.

According to the results obtained from the answer to research question three and the corresponding null hypotheses, there is a significant difference in the level of perceived stress among administrators based on their age. From the data obtained and the analysis conducted, administrators with graduate qualifications had a significantly high level executive stress than those without a graduate qualification. This result might be attributed to the fact that most administrators with graduate qualifications might have multiple jobs and consultancy they are involved in which could be what is spiking their reported stress level. This result agrees with that of Otamiri (2000) who found educational qualification to be one of the major drivers of stress level among managers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings the following recommendations are proposed: -

1. In the of line the result that majority of the managers have high percentage of stress perceived, it is recommended that campaign for stress and time management be intensified so that effective and efficient functional managers-ship is operated.
2. To support the above campaign, relevant government authorities and stakeholders should ensure to post only those with specific training on stress managers as administrators both in public and private organizations.
3. Relevant authorities should create laws and opportunities for young professional and experts in administration providing to fresh and dynamic counsellors to replace those aged managers facing great difficulties on much stress.
4. Government and private institution as well as government ministries should be encouraged to set up re-training programmes, short certificate courses and post graduate diploma courses to high administrative managers which contains elements of administrative competencies to reduce the problem of executive stress.
5. Board of directors and institutional authorities should post more experienced and qualified managers to manage organisations where the situation have been observed to be more precarious; while younger and less experience managers should be sent to more organised and less stressful environment.

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