



Assessment of the Knowledge and Risk Perception of Occupational-Stress Among Security Staff of Babcock University

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Abstract:

Introduction: Occupational Stress is caused by an existing stress-causing factor or “stressor”. It is a situation in which some characteristics of the work situation are thought to cause poor psychological or physical health, or to cause risk factors making poor health more likely. This study assessed the relationship between risk perception and Knowledge of occupational-stress reduction practices among security staff of selected private universities in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Methods: A cross-sectional survey was conducted in February 2023 in utilizing a pretested 68-item questionnaire (Cronbach’s alpha of 0.96) among 40 randomly selected security staff from two private universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. The data was analyzed using IBM SPSS version 21 with significance level set at $p < 0.05$. Informed consent was sought from all respondents who accepted to participate.

Results: Results indicated that 12 (30.0%) females and 28 (70.3%) males with a mean age of 35.5 ± 7.31 years participated in the study. Self-reported perception of risk resulting from poor occupational-stress management practices which was measured on a 57-point aggregated scale, revealed that the participants in this study scored a mean of 18.48 ± 6.62 (95% CI: 11.86 - 25.10). Similarly, on a 14-point aggregate scale measuring Knowledge of occupational-stress management practices, the participants scored a mean of 10.00 ± 2.96 (95% CI: 7.04-12.96).

Conclusion: The findings suggest the knowledge and attitudinal disposition of the participants in this study is sub-optimal and needs serious improvement through well designed cost-effective and targeted health literacy interventions to improve occupational-stress management practices among this population.

Introduction

Occupational Stress is caused by an existing stress-causing factor or “stressor” (Marine et al., 2006). Work stress is a chronic disease caused by conditions in the workplace that indirectly affect an individual’s performance and overall health. In fact, an employee’s stress is negatively correlated to work performance, the more the level of stress, the lower the output (employee performance) in an

organization. Today it is believed that even a little bit of stress will slow down employee's "work performance (Singh & Jain, 2013). Work stress is "a situation in which some characteristics of the work situation are thought to cause poor psychological or physical health, or to cause risk factors making poor health more likely". Work stress arises when demands exceed abilities, while job-related strains are reactions or outcomes resulting from the experience of stress (Amigun & Von, 2010). Work stress is a chronic disease caused by conditions in the workplace that negatively affects an individual's performance and or overall well-being of his body and mind (Clark & Cooper, 2000; Asaolu & Agbede, 2022). In some cases, work stress can be disabling. In chronic cases a psychiatric consultation is usually required to validate the reason and degree of work-related stress.

Like every other worker, the BUSS experience stress at their various duty post daily, a situation regarded as occupational stress. It is defined, as the harmful physical and emotional response that occurs when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker (NIOSH, 1999). This stressful condition is said to occur when there is disequilibrium between the demands of the workplace and an individual's ability to carry out and complete these demands (Ayinde et al., 2022). Often a stressor can lead the body to have various disturbances, which in turn will result in physical and mental strain of a person. Occupational stress is often caused by an increased workload without the enhancement in the number of employees to take on that additional work as witnessed recently during the Naira scarcity that led to the rioters burning of Banks in Sagamu, necessitating the extra hours of work to curb the crowd tramping into the University to access the Bank (Olasukanmi, Premiumtimes, Feb 20, 2023). Instead, the increased amount of work is given to the current employees to finish in the same time span that they would be asked to finish their regular or standard workload, a condition that has further increased since the onset of COVID-19, as many staff were either laid-off or had to resume in batches (BU, HR mail, March 26, 2020).

The devastating effect stress has on health, physically and emotionally and its pervasive and insidious part of everyday life in the work environment is why the WHO has labeled it as the "Health Epidemic of the 21st century". As it cost businesses in America up to \$300billion a year (Al-Makhaita et al, 2014; AIS, 2019; Ojedokun et al, 2014; Ojewumi & Asaolu, 2016).

Research Questions

1. What is the baseline level of knowledge of Babcock University, Security Staff towards occupational-stress reduction?
2. What is the baseline perception level of Babcock University, Security Staff towards occupational-stress reduction?
3. What is the baseline attitudinal disposition of Babcock University, Security Staff towards occupational-stress reduction?

Specific Objectives

1. Assess the baseline level of knowledge of Babcock University, Security Staff towards occupational-stress reduction.
2. Assess the baseline perception level of Babcock University, Security Staff towards occupational-stress reduction.
3. Assess the baseline attitudinal disposition of Babcock University, Security Staff towards occupational-stress reduction.

Methodology

This is a descriptive cross-sectional study carried out in February 2023 among Security Staff between age 20-59 years currently working in Babcock and McPherson Universities. The two higher institutions were purposively selected as they have similar demographics of Security Staff personnel in Ogun State. The 68-item pretested questionnaire (Cronbach's alpha of 0.96) was used to collect information about knowledge of occupational stressors at work, perception on occupational-stress reduction and attitudinal disposition. Informed consent was sought from all respondents who accepted to participate.

Data Collection

Forty eligible Security Staff between ages 21-59 years currently employed in one of the two universities were purposively selected and were enrolled for the study. To be eligible, staff of the departments should be recognized on the payroll, have at least one (1) year working experience and must be an adult from the age of 21 year and above. Excluded from the study were those on sick leave-staff who may be bed ridden, staff on special duties, all 'Subject Men'/All armed men on night duties, pregnant, and breast-feeding mothers, those with medical report of known illnesses and those who may not be medically fit. The participants were then approached by a trained interviewer to complete a structured questionnaire which lasted between 40 to 50 minutes. The instrument was a semi-structured questionnaire that sought information on the socio-demographic characteristics, knowledge of occupational stressors at work, perception on occupational-stress reduction and attitudinal disposition.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics such as means, and standard deviation were used to summarize quantitative demographic characteristics while correlation coefficient was used to measure association between perceived risk and willingness. The results were presented in appropriate tables. The data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS version 23. The significance level was set at ($p < 0.05$) for all statistical procedures.

Results

The study was designed to measure levels of knowledge and perceived risk of seriousness of occupation-stressors among security staff presently employed in higher institution in Ogun State Nigeria. The result showed that 12 (30.0%) females and 28 (70.3%) males with a mean age of 35.5 ± 7.31 years participated in the study (see Table 1). Most of the participants 36 (90.0%) completed at least high school while only 5 (10.0%) had primary education. Self-reported perception of risk resulting from poor occupational-stress management practices which was measured on a 57-point aggregated scale, revealed that the participants in this study scored a mean of 18.48 ± 6.62 (95% CI: 11.86 - 25.10). Similarly, on a 14-point aggregate scale measuring Knowledge of occupational-stress management practices, the participants scored a mean of 10.00 ± 2.96 (95% CI: 7.04-12.96). Attitudinal disposition towards occupational-stress management practices in this study translates to 51.7%. There was no significant difference in perceived risk of complication resulting from poor occupational-stress management between males and female participants in this study ($p = 0.51$). Also, there was no significant difference in the means scores of knowledges of occupational-stress management between males and females in this study ($p = 0.17$).

Table 1: Summary of descriptive statistics for major variables in the study among Security Staff surveyed

Variables	Maximum Point	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Age in years	-	35.5	7.31
➤ Males	-	36.9	7.51
➤ Females	-	32.3	5.93
Knowledge	14	10.00	2.96
Perception	57	18.5	6.62
➤ Perceived Seriousness	18	5.3	3.61
➤ Perceived Susceptibility	9	3.5	1.47
Attitudinal disposition	18	9.3	2.92

Discussion

This study presents baseline data on the risk perception, knowledge, and attitudinal disposition of security personnel which can inform any intervention that would be developed to stimulate optimal occupational-stress management. In this study we report knowledge of occupational-stress management practices among the respondents of 71.4% which is well below what is considered sufficient in an efficient and conducive workplace.

Perceived risk of participants towards complications arising from poor adherence to medications measured on a maximum aggregate scale of 57-points showed that the participants scored a mean of 18.50 with a standard deviation of 6.62 suggesting that they perceived themselves at some risk but not sufficiently high to bring about very significant impact on occupational-stress management, as can be observed in this study. The attitudinal disposition towards occupational-stress management practices mean score on a maximum of 18 points was 9.3 with a standard deviation of 2.92 translates to 51.7%, well below the recommended knowledge level suggested by other researchers (Bamgboye, 2020; Ayinde et al., 2022)

In conclusion, the knowledge and attitudinal disposition of the participants in this study is sub-optimal and needs serious improvement through well designed cost-effective and targeted health literacy interventions to improve occupational-stress management practices among this population. The public health education intervention also needs to have components that would improve risk perception among security personnel. The present study has implications for future research, as data from this study would serve as baseline for any intervention planned to stimulate optimal occupational-stress management practices in the workplace.

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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