

PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARD AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG PUBLIC SERVANTS IN RIVERS STATE

Osaro, Christiana Apa-Ago (Ph.D)
Department of Educational Psychology Guidance and Counselling, Ignatius Ajuru
University of Education, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

Email: osarochristiana@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study investigated psychosocial hazard and job satisfaction among public servants in Rivers State. To achieve the aim of this study, two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to direct the study. The research design adopted for the study was ex-post-facto research design. The population of this study comprised of all public servants working in the ministries/department of Rivers State Government in two senatorial zones of the State, namely Rivers East and Rivers South-East senatorial zones. A sample of 377 public servants was used in the study. This sample size was selected through the use of the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table of sample size specification. The researcher adopted simple random sampling technique. The instrument used for the study included two instruments title Psychosocial Hazard Inventory (PHI) and Job satisfaction Questionnaire (JSQ). The reliability of the instruments was determined by Cronbach Alpha Coefficient to obtain the reliability coefficient of 0.88, indicating a high reliability estimate. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to answer the research questions and test the corresponding null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed the following: There was a strong negative correlation between excessive workload and job satisfaction of public servants in Rivers State; there was a strong negative correlation between workplace bullying and job satisfaction of public servants in Rivers State. Based on the above findings, the researcher recommends among other that State Government should develop and enforce clear anti-bullying policies within public service organizations in Rivers State. These policies should outline acceptable behaviour, consequences for bullying, and provide a confidential reporting mechanism. Regular training sessions for employees and supervisors can help raise awareness and foster a more respectful workplace culture.

Key words: Psychosocial, hazard, job satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Every employee aspires or hope to maximize satisfaction from their jobs while giving their best to the organization and managers want the employees to deploy their skills and special abilities in performing their jobs in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the organization. The job designed method is crucial to achieving employees' fulfilment (Tantua, 2022). In Nigerian society, the purpose for which individuals search for jobs, attend interviews and get employed is to meet personal needs and to achieve job satisfaction. An employee gets job satisfaction when he or she receives good feelings in performing jobs. one of the aspects of job that gives good feelings to a person is reward gets for doing job well. This could be in form of monetary reward or the prestige that an employee gets when doing a job that helps the public for sustainable development. Job satisfaction is defined by Locke in Saari and Judge (2004), as pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience. Job satisfaction is viewed as a positive attitude by an employee towards his job as well as personal life. Abiodun and Gbardobo (2012), described job satisfaction as a type of attitude that people have about their job and the organization in which they perform these jobs. It also refers to the extent to which people like or dislike their job. Khance (2010), opined attitude that job satisfaction is a positive attitude by an employee towards his job as well as his personal life. These definitions, clearly indicates that job

satisfaction described activities within and outside the workplace. However, work settings have direct and indirect impacts on how employees live in their society.

In the contemporary work environment, the psychological and social aspects of occupational well-being have garnered significant attention due to their impact on employee performance, job satisfaction and overall organizational success. This study delves into the nexus between psychosocial hazards and job satisfaction among public servants in Rivers State, Nigeria, with a focus on fostering sustainable development in the region. Job satisfaction is a critical factor influencing employee engagement, productivity, and retention, and understanding the psychosocial hazards public servants face is imperative for formulating effective policies and interventions.

Generally, a public servant is a person who is employed by the government either through interviews as civil servants and politicians elected or appointed to serve the public. A public servant is an individual who does something that is in the best interest of the people. Federal Republic of Nigeria, scheme of service (2000), stated that a public service is a service which ranks for the purpose of pension. Degoke (2016), defined public service as an organized body consisting of public servants: civil servants and elected or appointed officials that provides essential services for the citizens of a country. Public service is to improve quality of lives in the public sector and not necessary for profit making. A civil servant is a government employee and employee in a government department. Civil servants are government employees in the ministries and departments. They ensure that policies and programme of any government at any particular time are carried out. Both the public servant and civil servant are civilians in the public sector and employees working in the government department or agency.

Rivers State, located in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, is home to a diverse and dynamic public service sector, which plays a pivotal role in the State's development. The significance of the public sector in advancing sustainable development goals cannot be overstated, making it essential to investigate the psychosocial hazards that may impede the job satisfaction of public servants in this region. Psychosocial hazards cut across various stressors arising from the social and psychological aspects of work, including high job demands, interpersonal conflicts, and inadequate support systems (Leka & Jain, 2010). The exploration of these factors is crucial for identifying areas of concern and implementing targeted interventions to enhance the overall well-being of public servants.

Psychosocial hazards in the workplace refer to factors that arise from the interaction between the work environment and the individual, impacting mental and emotional well-being. These hazards can contribute to stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues among employees. They often stem from organizational, interpersonal, or task-related aspects of work and can manifest in various forms, such as excessive workload, lack of control, poor support systems, and conflicting demands. Psychosocial hazards can negatively affect employee engagement, job satisfaction, and overall productivity, highlighting the importance of addressing these factors to create a healthy and conducive work environment.

For instance, high job demands and low job control are recognized psychosocial hazards. The Job Demand-Control model, proposed by Karasek in 1979, posits that workers facing high job demands (e.g., workload, time pressure) coupled with low job control (e.g., decision-making authority, skill discretion) are at a higher risk of experiencing stress-related health issues. Karasek (1979) maintains that job satisfaction is influenced by the interaction between job demands, control, and social support. In the context of public service, job demands may arise from the complexities of bureaucratic processes and the diverse nature of tasks, while control refers to the autonomy and decision-making authority granted to employees. Social support, on the other hand, pertains to the availability of resources and assistance from colleagues and supervisors. By applying this theoretical framework, the study aims to uncover the specific psychosocial hazards affecting public servants in Rivers State and their implications for job satisfaction

Another example of psychosocial hazard is workplace bullying, which falls under the category of interpersonal hazards. Einarsen et al. (2011) define workplace bullying as persistent negative behaviours directed at an individual, creating an intimidating and hostile work environment.

Addressing psychosocial hazards requires a holistic approach involving organizational policies, management practices, and support systems to promote employee well-being and mental health. Similarly, stress is now recognized as one of the work related hazards and categorized as psychosocial hazard by the health and safety legislation (Rydstedt et al., 2006). Because the challenges of workplace related stress, and its effects on the employee's optimal productivity, performance, functionality and wellbeing, organizations, regulators, and occupational health and safety bodies have now placed a growing importance in the regard (Stebbins et al., 2005). Though, psychosocial hazards could be referred to as the mental stresses in a work place, this may equally include the sources and areas of fatigue, as well as stress which are all nearly present in all work environment in both the private and public sectors. Psychosocial hazards are vital parts of the total stress characterized by work load, work structure, work design as well as the regulations in these workplaces, and therefore psychosocial hazards are an integral part of an overall risk assessment in the work places (Kennedy, 2018).

Generally, public servants are employed to work efficiently to meet both the organizational goals and that of the government and to get job satisfaction. Johnson (2008) stated four main causes of job dissatisfaction to include; being under paid, limited career growth, lack of interest and poor management. In a research carried out by Johnson revealed that 48% of employees world-wide do not even like their jobs, more than 80% of U.S workers feels stressed at the office and only 30% engaged in their job and inspired of their careers. A total of 18% were actively disengaged. That means they were present but hated every minute of it. Those who hated every minute of their jobs do not resign because of salary received and the opportunity to leave to another job has not come. Edet (2006) carried out a study on satisfaction with compensation system, attitude to work and job effectiveness of secondary school teachers in Cross River State of Nigeria, the work showed that there was no significant relationship between compensation variables with attitude to work and job effectiveness, when taken together but when taken one after another gratuity/pension (monetary compensation staff development had significant relationship with attitude to work and job effectiveness. Fabiyi (2000) conducted a study to find lecturer job satisfaction and performance in Nigeria education. The work found that condition of service, fringe benefits staff development scheme and office accommodation accounted for 22 percent of the total variance in teaching effectiveness. The study found a strong indication that lecturers were very dissatisfied with their job conditions salaries and other welfare benefits were deprived and form the basis of job dissatisfaction.

Public servant's job dissatisfaction borders non-governmental organizations, and the government. They device means to improve the state of job satisfaction of public servants, but the problems till persist. Goldberg, Clark and Henbery (2011) defined job dissatisfaction as employee's responses to their jobs that range from feelings of apathy to depression and despair to anger, frustration and resentment. It means a desire to quit and move to something better. Job dissatisfaction is a problem among public servants in most organizations and companies in this country.

The cause of this problem is unknown. A look at what other researchers reported shown that they blamed the cause on employer or the government. Therefore, the researcher wants to find out the root of the problem so that solution will be provided to save the workforce for sustainable development.

Statement of the Problem

This study emerged from the recognition of the significant impact that work-related stressors and psychosocial hazards can have on the well-being of public servants. Public service jobs often involve high levels of responsibility, tight deadlines, and exposure to challenging situations, leading to increased stress levels among employees. Understanding the specific psychosocial hazards prevalent in the workplace is crucial for developing targeted interventions to mitigate their effects and enhance overall job satisfaction.

This study was prompted by the growing concern over the potential consequences of low job satisfaction among public servants in Rivers State. Dissatisfaction with one's job can lead to reduced

productivity, increased absenteeism, and higher turnover rates, all of which can negatively impact the efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery. Job satisfaction of public servants has been a subject of concern among Nigerians. Most often workers complain about their jobs and irregular payment of salaries and wages, lack of facilities and equipment, bad roads linking homes to work places, polluted environment and high cost of living. Coupled with fear of being kidnapped, family problems, depression anxiety, substance abuse, sexual abuse and violence, causing job dissatisfaction among workers: public servants who are not satisfied with their jobs and salary payment are discontent, frustrated and depressed. They go to work late, sign attendance register with false information of arrival time, live the workplace early before schedule time, go about private business, absent from work, demand money for services rendered to people, hide files in office, vandalize equipment's at work place and embezzled Government money made for public development.

Public servants, being integral to the efficient functioning of government institutions, often face unique psychosocial hazards such as high job demands, lack of recognition, inadequate resources, and organizational constraints. These challenges can contribute to elevated stress levels, burnout, and diminished job satisfaction among public servants, which not only affects their individual well-being but also has implications for the overall productivity and effectiveness of public service delivery in Rivers State.

The existing gap in the literature that this study aims to address lies in the limited understanding of the specific psychosocial hazards faced by public servants in Rivers State and their direct impact on job satisfaction. While general studies on workplace stress and job satisfaction are available, there is a scarcity of research focusing on the unique context of public service in this particular region. By exploring the psychosocial hazards and their relationship with job satisfaction among public servants in Rivers State, the study aims to provide nuanced insights and practical recommendations for policymakers and organizational leaders to enhance the working conditions and well-being of public servants, ultimately contributing to a more effective and sustainable public sector in Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between psychosocial hazard and job satisfaction among public servants in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives;

- 1) To determine the relationship between excessive workload and job satisfaction of public servants in Rivers State
- 2) Investigate the relationship between workplace bullying and job satisfaction of public servants in Rivers State

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between excessive workload and job satisfaction of public servants in Rivers State?
2. What is the relationship between interpersonal workplace bullying and job satisfaction of public servants in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between excessive workload and job satisfaction of public servants in Rivers State
2. There is no significant relationship between workplace bullying and job satisfaction of public servants in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for the study was ex-post-facto research design. The population of this study comprised of all public servants working in the ministries/department of Rivers State Government in two senatorial zones of the State, namely Rivers East and Rivers South-East

senatorial zones. A sample of 377 public servants was used in the study. This sample size was selected through the use of the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table of sample size specification. The researcher adopted simple random sampling technique. The instrument used for the study included two instruments title Psychosocial Hazard Inventory (PHI) and Job satisfaction Questionnaire (JSQ). The instruments were designed by the researcher and were validated by experts in measurement and evaluation. Copies of the instruments were given to 80 respondents who were not part of the main study. The reliability of the instruments was determined by Cronbach Alpha Coefficient to obtain the reliability coefficient of 0.88, indicating a high reliability estimate. The data generated from the study was subjected to Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation to answer the research questions and test the corresponding null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between excessive workload and job satisfaction of public servants in Rivers State?

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between excessive workload and job satisfaction of public servants in Rivers State

Table 1: Summary of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation of Excessive Workload and Job Satisfaction of Public Servants in Rivers State

	Job Satisfaction	Excessive Workload
Job Satisfaction	Pearson's Coefficient 1	-.422**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	377

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

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

Table 1 shows the result of a Pearson Product Moment Correlation that was run to determine if there was a relationship between excessive workload and job satisfaction of public servants in Rivers State, and to ascertain the significance of the relationship. The result was ($r = -.422, n = 380, p < 0.05$) this result shows that there was a strong negative correlation between excessive workload and job satisfaction of public servants in Rivers State. The result is statistically significant as the p-value of .000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between excessive workload and job satisfaction of public servants in Rivers State

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between workplace bullying and job satisfaction of public servants in Rivers State?

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between workplace bullying and job satisfaction of public servants in Rivers State

Table 2. Summary of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation of Workplace Bullying and Job Satisfaction of Public Servants in Rivers State

	Job Satisfaction	Workplace Bullying
Job Satisfaction	Pearson's Coefficient 1	-.498**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	377

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

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

Table 2 shows the result of a Pearson product-moment correlation that was run to determine if there was a relationship between workplace bullying and job satisfaction of public servants in Rivers State, and to ascertain the significance of the relationship. The result was ($r = -.498, n = 380, p < 0.05$) this result shows that there was a strong negative correlation between workplace bullying and job satisfaction of public servants in Rivers State. The result is statistically significant as the p-value of .000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies

that there is a significant relationship between workplace bullying and job satisfaction of public servants in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis of the study from research question one and hypothesis one as indicated in table 1 which examined the relationship between excessive workload and job satisfaction of public servants in Rivers State, and to ascertain the significance of the relationship, the result found that there was a strong negative correlation between stress and job satisfaction of public servants in Rivers State, and the relationship was statistically significant. This finding is in agreement with a study by Tantua (2022) who investigated the relationship between office job enlargement and employee satisfaction in Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions. The target population of this study encompasses all academic staff of the four (4) Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions. These institutions are: Rivers State University, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education and Port Harcourt Polytechnic, Kenule Beeson Polytechnic, Bori and Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic Rumuola. The findings of the study confirmed that there is a significant relationship between office job enlargement and employee satisfaction in Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions.

The analysis of the study from research question one and hypothesis one as indicated in table 2 which examined the relationship between interpersonal conflict and job satisfaction of public servants in Rivers State, and to ascertain the significance of the relationship, the result found that there was a strong negative correlation between interpersonal conflict and job satisfaction of public servants in Rivers State, and the relationship was statistically significant. This findings in line with Wafaa (2016) who carried out a study titled interpersonal conflict, job satisfaction, and team effectiveness among nurses at Ismailia General Hospital. The studied sample (200 nurses) was estimated based on Cochran formula. The sample was divided into 2 groups: study group (nurses with conflicts; n = 147), and control group (nurses without conflicts; n = 53). Findings revealed that there were significant negative correlations between interpersonal conflict, job satisfaction and team effectiveness, whereas, there were significant positive correlations between TEQ and job satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

This study delved into the intricate relationship between psychosocial hazards and job satisfaction among public servants in Rivers State. The psychosocial hazards investigated include excessive workload and interpersonal workplace bullying. Other psychosocial hazard identified in the literature including high workload, inadequate support systems, and organizational culture, were shown to contribute to heightened stress levels and diminished job satisfaction. The study underscores the importance of recognizing and addressing psychosocial hazards within the workplace to enhance the well-being of public servants. Ultimately, as organizations strive to create healthier and more supportive work environments, the insights gained from this study can serve as a foundation for future initiatives focused on promoting job satisfaction and enhancing the overall quality of working life for public servants in Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the finding of this study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Government should conduct a thorough workload analysis to ensure a fair distribution of tasks among public servants. Identify areas where the workload is disproportionately high and explore strategies to redistribute tasks more evenly. This could involve hiring or employing additional staff, optimizing processes, or re-evaluating job responsibilities.
2. State Government should develop and enforce clear anti-bullying policies within public service organizations in Rivers State. These policies should outline acceptable behaviour, consequences for bullying, and provide a confidential reporting mechanism. Regular training sessions for employees and supervisors can help raise awareness and foster a more respectful workplace culture.

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