

**EFFECT OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS ON PERFORMANCE OF
CONSTRUCTION ARTISANS IN JALINGO, TARABA STATE**

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Abstract

Stress is frequently considered as the most common disease of the modern age. It is a pattern of negative physiological states and psychological responses that occur in an individual. When stressed, an individual feels that his wellbeing is menaced but is at the same time unable to cope with it. The aim of the study is to characterize the pattern of occupational stress among construction Artisans in Taraba state with a view to suggest coping or management system. The objectives are to identify the sources of occupational stress among construction Artisans in the study area, to examine the criteria used to evaluate performance of Artisans in the construction industry, to examine the stress management strategies used by construction Artisans to overcome stress, to analyze the effect of stress on the effectiveness of their performance. This research is descriptive in nature as it involves the distribution of questionnaire. The approach to be adopted for this research is quantitative approach. This study adopted the use of descriptive statistics techniques such as deviation of such items was determined and ranked. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software version 22 was used for data analysis and the result presented in table. The finding of this study revealed that the major sources of occupational stress are lack of necessary or appropriate tools and equipment required to function in the job, poor relationship with colleagues and supervisors, feeling incapable to cope with work or be constructive and unfriendly physical working environment. The study reveals that the major criteria used to evaluate performance of artisans in skills and job expertise, being on time and on budget, leadership capabilities and level of creativity. The result reveals that the major pattern of stress among artisans are lack of job, security, exposure to dangerous working conditions, lack of opportunity to learn new skills, unsatisfactory salary and poor communication with supervisors. There is need for poor communication with supervisors. There is need for collaboration with occupational with supervisors. There is need for collaboration with occupational health professionals and counselling services for artisans, construction industry, should create more openness in acknowledging and addressing the problem of occupational stress.

Key Words: Construction, Occupational stress, Coping, Evaluation, Performance, Artisans.

INTRODUCTION

Occupational stress has been defined by Cox *et al.*, (2019) as the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope. Stress is frequently considered as the most common disease of the modern age. It is a pattern of negative physiological states and psychological responses that occur in an individual. When stressed, an individual feels that his wellbeing is menaced but is at the same time unable to cope with it (Lazarus & Folkman, 2020, Hill, 2010). Occupational stress has its umbilical cord in the middle 19th century where Friedrich Engels first described in detail the physical and psychological health problems suffered by workers in many trades in his book entitled *The Condition of the working class in England (1845/1987)* (Barling & Griffiths, 2011). Karl Max was also to follow suit with his book *Das Kapital (1867/1999)*. With time through the mixing of ideas from continent to continent, occupational stress became widely recognized especially in the developed nations. A person under stress may experience sleep or eating disorders, one's relationships with colleagues can worsen, conflicts at work may become more frequent and aggressive, passive behaviours as well as more errors when performing tasks may occur, and the ability to concentrate may decrease. (Giedre *et al.*, 2023).

There are three main stages in the development of stress.

- i. The first stage is the alarm/acute which involves adrenaline being produced in order to bring about the fight. Every part of the human organ experiences minor changes (Ekundayo, 2014).
- ii. The second stage is the resistance stage where the body has to decide to fight or flight. The body will try to add resources to help it cope through maximum adoption and hopefully, successful return to equilibrium for the individual. The exhaustion stage is the third and final stage. At this point, all the body's resources are eventually depleted and the body is unable to maintain normal function because elastic limit is exceeded. The repercussions are serious nervous or psychological and physical breakdown.

There are four major types of stress as explained by Taylor (1995). There is acute stress where by the individual knows exactly why he is stressed. Normally, the body rests when these

stressful events cease and life gets back to normal because the effects are short term. Acute stress is known to cause only temporary damage to the body. There is also traumatic stress which is a severe stress reaction that results from a catastrophic event or intense experience such as natural disaster, sexual assault, life-threatening accidents, or participation in a combat.

Construction Artisans is an umbrella term that covers a wide variety of hands-on, service based jobs done by skilled workers in the construction industry. These jobs include plumbing, electrical work, painting, carpentry etc. Artisan according to Oxford Learners Dictionary (2006) is a person who does skilled work and makes things with his hands. With this definition, artisans in the construction industry are carpenters, joiners, masons/bricklayers, electricians, plumbers, painters, plant operators, crane drivers, steel fixers and tile settlers. While some level of stress can be beneficial for productivity, excessive stress can have detrimental effects on individuals. It can have an emotional impact on artisans, causing them to become agitated, irritable, and moody, among other things (Luvara, 2017). You merely need to visit a building site and interact with the artisans to see these characteristics. Many of them are quickly enraged at the least provocation. Consequently, this can strain their interpersonal relationships with colleagues, leading to physical altercations or the use of harsh language. Such conflicts can negatively affect productivity, especially in construction projects that rely on teamwork for success.

Methodology

The analysis of data acquired through questionnaire distribution was processed using descriptive statistics techniques such as percentages and tables. This is in line with Kamya et al (2010) assertion that analytical surveys are recommended for descriptive studies to be involved in establishing the opinion of the respondents. The mean and standard deviation of such item was determined and ranks were assigned to them. SPSS version 22 was used in the analysis. The mean score method as stated by Odusami (2007) was adopted to establish the mean score of the variables used.

This paper presents and analyzes the data collected for this study. Duly filled questionnaires were received, data edited, coded and the findings were presented in form of tables. The data gathered from questionnaire was in line with the objectives of the study. Descriptive statistics were used to select data of interest and these included frequencies and mean, standard deviation and regression.

Analysis

The paper administered 108 questionnaires to the study respondents in the order shown in table 1. The distribution yielded 98 valid responses representing 95% response rate. According to Moser & Katon (1971) as cited by Usman *et al.*, (2012), the result of a survey is considered as biased and little value if the response was less than 30 – 40%.

Table 1: Questionnaire response rate

Respondents	Distribution	Returned	% Response Rate
Carpentry	18	17	96
Mason	18	18	100
Plumber	18	16	92
Tiling	18	16	92
Painter	18	15	92
Others	18	16	92
Total	108	98	94

Source: Field work 2023

Demographic Information

Table 2: Works pecialization type

Specialization type	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Tiling	13	13.3	13.3	13.3
Mason	35	35.7	35.7	49.0
Carpentry	18	18.4	18.4	67.3
Plumbing	15	15.3	15.3	82.7
Painter	7	7.1	7.1	89.8
Others	10	10.2	10.2	100.0
Total	98	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field work, 2023.

The table shows the work specialisation type of the respondents which reveals that majority of the respondents are mason with the highest frequency and percentage of 35(35.7%) followed by carpentry with frequency and percentage of 18(18.4%), plumbing with frequency

and percentage of 15(15.3%), other respondents with specialization type are having the frequency and percentage of 10(10.2%) and painter with frequency and percentage of 7(7.1%).

Table 3: Highest level of educational qualification attained

Educational qualification	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Primary	19	19.4	19.4	19.4
SSCE	26	26.5	26.5	45.9
Trade test	18	18.4	18.4	64.3
Diploma	26	26.5	26.5	90.8
Others	9	9.2	9.2	100.0
Total	98	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field work, 2023.

The table shows the highest level of educational qualification attained by the respondents which indicates that majority of the respondents have SSCE and Diploma as their highest qualification with the highest frequency and percentage of 26(26.5%) followed by respondents with primary certificate with frequency and percentage of 19(19.4%), respondents with trade test have frequency and percentage of 18(18.4%) and others with frequency and percentage of 9(9.2%).

Table 4: Period been involved in the construction industry

Period in construction industry	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 5 years	9	9.2	9.2	9.2
5 – 10 years	9	9.2	9.2	18.4
11 – 15 years	53	54.1	54.1	72.4
Over 15 years	27	27.6	27.6	100.0
Total	98	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field work, 2023.

The table shows how long the respondent is involved in the construction industry which reveals that most of the respondents have been in the construction industry for about 11-15 years with the highest frequency and percentage of 53(54.1%) followed by respondents with over 15years with frequency and percentage of 27(27.6%), respondents between 1 – 10 years frequency and percentage of 9(9.2%).

Table 5: Years of experience

Experience	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 – 5 years	17	17.3	17.3	17.3
6 – 10 years	10	10.2	10.2	27.6
11 – 15 years	36	36.7	36.7	64.3
16 – 20 years	27	27.6	27.6	91.8
20yrs and above	8	8.2	8.2	100.0
Total	98	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field work, 2023.

The table shows the years of experience of the respondent which indicates that majority of the respondents 11-15 years of experience with the highest frequency and percentage of 36(36.7%), 16-20 years with frequency and percentage of 36(36.7%), 6-10 years with frequency and percentage of 10(10.2%), 1-5 years with frequency and percentage of 17(17.3%) and respondents with 20years and above with frequency and percentage of 8(8.2%).

Table 6: Sources of occupational stress among construction artisans in Taraba state

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Lack of the necessary or appropriate tools and equipment required to function in the job	98	3.673	1.3143	1 st
Poor relationship with colleagues and superiors	98	3.602	1.4904	2 nd
Feeling incapable to cope with work or be constructive	98	3.582	1.2429	3 rd
Unfriendly physical working environment	98	3.541	1.1502	4 th
Absence of opportunities to further in career prospects within the organization	98	3.388	1.4261	5 th
Lack of empowerment in the workplace	98	3.102	1.2962	6 th
Rules and processes are too strict	98	3.020	1.6559	7 th
Lack of social support at home or from friends	98	3.000	1.2014	8 th
Unclear instructions to and expectations from individual	98	2.602	1.4340	9 th

Source: Field work, 2023.

The table shows the sources of occupational stress among construction artisans which indicates that the major causes of occupational stress are lack of the necessary or appropriate tools and equipment required to function in the job with the highest mean score of 3.673 and ranked as the first followed by poor relationship with colleagues and superiors with mean score of 3.602 and ranked as the second, feeling incapable to cope with work or be constructive with mean score of 3.582 and unfriendly physical working environment with mean score of 3.541.

Research within an educational setting by De Bruin and Taylor (2005) suggest that there are several sources of work stress, namely role ambiguity, feeling incapable to cope with work or be constructive, relationships, workload, autonomy bureaucracy, tools and equipment, physical environment, career advancement job security and work/home interface, lack of the necessary or appropriate tools and equipment required to function in the job, Poor relationship with colleagues and superiors. Similar sources of work stress have been identified by Cartwright and Cooper (2002), Coetzer and Rothmann (2007), De Bruin & Taylor (2006), Labuschagne, Bosman and Buitendach (2005), Martin (2005) and Rollinson (2005).

This study explores the sources of work stress as measured by the sources of work Stress Inventory (De Bruin & Taylor, 2005) which is based on the job-demand-control model as

presented by Robert Karasek (1979). The job-demands-control model has been used as a theoretical foundation for research and has been subjected to empirical testing. As the job-demands-control model is an occupational stress model, it is designed to predict negative outcomes or strains (Perrewé & Ganster, 2010).

Table 7: Performance assessment among construction artisans in Taraba state.

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Skills and job expertise	98	4.816	.3892	1 st
Being on time and on budget	98	3.857	1.1753	2 nd
Leadership capabilities	98	3.653	1.0365	3 rd
Quantity of work	98	3.652	1.2022	4 th
Level of creativity	98	3.541	1.1502	5 th
Punctuality	98	3.439	1.4436	6 th
Teamwork	98	3.388	1.4261	7 th
Accountability	98	3.102	1.2962	8 th
Communication abilities	98	3.020	1.6559	9 th
Responsiveness to feedback	98	3.000	1.2014	10 th
Reliability	98	2.776	1.3511	11 th
Work quality	98	2.602	1.4340	12 th

Source: Field work, 2023.

The table shows the criteria used to evaluate performance of artisans which indicates that the major performance assessment among the artisans are skills and job expertise with the highest mean score of 4.816 and ranked as the first followed by being on time and on budget with mean score of 3.857 and ranked as the second, leadership capabilities as third with mean score of 3.653, quantity of work with mean score of 3.652 and level of creativity with mean score of 3.541.

In a similar study, Smith *et al.*, (2000) found that pattern of occupational stress was most rampant in the 41-50 years old category and this also concurred with the findings of Jacobson *et al.*, (2001) who established that higher levels of stress were associated with older ages as work demands also increased. Smith *et al.*, (2000) found work stress in Bristol to be the lowest in the 18-32 years category which however deviates from the findings of Jonas (2001) who established

that in educators, work stress was more rampant in the younger ages and they include lack of job security, poor relationship with colleagues, problem with application of ability, lack of promotion opportunity and low recognition of effort. In terms of gender differences, several studies have found out that in the education sector, work stress is more rampant in women than in men (Hawe *et al.*, 2000; Ngidi & Sibaya, 2002; Makasa. 2013). However, Smith *et al.*, (2000) findings contradict with the above as they found no significant differences between the prevalence of occupational stress and gender.

Table 8: Strategies used by construction Artisans in Taraba state to cope with stress

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Resorting to hobbies/ exercise	98	3.750	1.0365	1 st
Flirting	98	3.698	1.2022	2 nd
Drugs ingestion	98	3.653	1.0365	3 rd
Talking / listening to friends	98	3.621	1.2022	4 th
Smoking	98	3.541	1.1502	5 th
Planning ahead	98	3.388	1.4261	6 th
Drinking alcohol	98	3.102	1.2962	7 th
Confrontation	98	3.020	1.6559	8 th
Clubbing	98	3.000	1.2014	9 th
Setting target	98	2.602	1.4340	10 th

Source: Field work, 2023.

The table shows the different strategies used by construction artisans to cope with stress in the construction industry which reveals that the major strategies used by them are resorting to hobbies/ exercise with the highest mean score of 3.750 and ranked as the first followed by flirting with mean score of 3.698, drugs ingestion with mean score of 3.653, talking / listening to friends with mean score of 3.621 and smoking with mean score of 3.541.

Coping is one of the most important concepts in research on stress (Nell, 2005). There are generally multiple ways to cope with stress (Lewis, *et al.*, 2009) and a person can make use of a number of different coping resources when experiencing a stressful situation (Nel, 2005). Consequently, coping resources are rarely, if ever, used in isolation (Gardner & Fletcher, 2009;

Taylor & Stanton, 2007). Hung (2011) suggests that the use of coping resources is essential in coping with stress.

Coping resources affect coping processes, that is, the specific intra-psychic or behavioural actions that people use for managing stress (Taylor & Stanton, 2007). According to Lewis, et al. (2011), specific coping resources are neither inherently universally good nor bad, because different situations call for different responses.

Lewis, *et al.*, (2011), refer to coping as the cognitive and affective responses used by a person to deal with problems encountered in everyday life. It seems that coping has been conceived in research in several ways. Research were conducted suggesting that coping could be seen as a personality trait and a situational-determined response; as a dynamic process and a static construct; as a strategy that is mature, adaptive and flexible, but also a reaction that is neurotic, maladaptive and rigid; and as a global, generally dichotomous concept, but also an intricate, hierarchically structured, multi-levelled concept (Rothmann, Jorgenson & Hil, 2011). However, Lewis, *et al.*, (2011) proclaims that the choice of these resources can to some extent be influenced by the situational context of the stressor.

Table 9: Effect of stress on the effectiveness of their performance

Linear regression was used in achieving this objective, and the results of this analysis are presented in the following stages:

Stage 1: Model Summary and ANOVA: Effect of stress on the effectiveness of their performance.

Table 9a: Model Summary and ANOVA

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.838 ^a	.701	.696	.22485	.701	121.367	3	94	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), motivation sheds away and workers start losing interest in their work, unable to cope with the amount of work allocated, inadequate zeal to carry out tasks will decrease the staff productivity

b. Dependent Variable: Construction Artisans

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18.407	3	6.136	121.367	.000 ^b
	Residual	7.836	94	.051		
	Total	26.243	97			

a. Dependent Variable: Construction Artisans

b. Predictors: (Constant), Motivation sheds away and workers start losing interest in their work, Unable to cope with the amount of work allocated, Inadequate zeal to carry out tasks will decrease the staff productivity.

Simple linear regression was carried out to determine the effect of stress on the effectiveness of their performance in the study. The R value (0.838) shows a strong relationship between the dependent and independent variables while the R square value shows how much the variance on the dependable variable is explained by the independent variables. In this case, the value $R^2 = 0.701$, $F(3, 94) = 121.367$, $P < 0.001$, shows that the effectiveness of their performance is influence by motivation sheds away and workers start losing interest in their work, unable to cope with the amount of work allocated, inadequate zeal to carry out tasks will decrease the staff productivity by 83.8% with significant value of $p < 0.000$.

Table 9b: Coefficient Table

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.158	.252		.627	.532		
	Unable to cope with the amount of work allocated	.047	.044	.047	1.059	.291	.985	1.015
	Inadequate zeal to carry out tasks will decrease the staff productivity	.053	.033	.071	1.579	.116	.959	1.042
	Motivation sheds away and workers start losing interest in their work	.857	.048	.813	18.031	.000	.947	1.056

a. Dependent Variable: Construction Artisans

However, to further evaluate the level of impact between the predictor and dependent variables, the coefficient table indicates the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable. The standard coefficient variable with the largest beta value in the coefficient table indicates the most influence variable and in this case is resource mobilization strategy with 0.813 for effectiveness of their performance provided the variance explains by other variables in the model controlled.

On the other hand, the inadequate zeal to carry out tasks will decrease the staff productivity has a beta value of .071 making a statistically insignificant ($p < 0.000$) contribution to the equation. In addition, the unable to cope with the amount of work allocated has the lowest

beta value of 0.047, and making an insignificant ($p=0.291$) contribution in explaining the effectiveness of their performance (dependent variable) in the study area.

Similarly, Sparks (2001) stress that effect of stress can lead to decreased concentration and attention to detail, inadequate zeal to carry out tasks will decrease the staff productivity, unable to cope with the amount of work allocated. Stress can impair an artisan's ability to make sound decisions, which is crucial in construction projects that often require quick thinking and problem-solving. Prolonged stress can lead to physical health issues, affecting an artisan's ability to perform physically demanding tasks. Stress can hinder effective communication and collaboration among construction team members, which can lead to misunderstandings and delays. Stress may reduce an artisan's overall productivity and efficiency, resulting in delays and cost overruns in construction projects. Stressed artisans may be more prone to accidents and safety lapses, posing risks to themselves and others on the construction site.

Several researchers have attempted to side-step the inter-relationship between direct and indirect effects by relying on descriptions of workload alone, ignoring potentially related psychological stress (Kendall *et al.*, 2000). In doing so, they have circumvented a direct discussion of stress and its role in performance degradation or enhancement. However, in leaving this issue unaddressed, these authors have left the reader to infer a stress effect in many instances correctly or not. The studies have not attempted to resolve this issue but to make the reader aware of it.

To mitigate the negative effects of stress, it's essential for construction companies to create a supportive work environment, provide stress management resources, and promote work-life balance for their artisans (Labuschagne *et al.*, 2005). They indicated that this variable, being theoretic observed but must be inferred from change purpose of workload as a construct was provided by Lewis *et al.*, (2011) who suggested that workloads are very similar to early conceptions of stress as interaction between demands and resources (the stimulus-based approach).

Summary of Findings

The aim of the study is to characterize the pattern of occupational stress among construction Artisans in Taraba state with a view to suggest coping or management system.

The study reveals that the major sources of occupational stress among construction Artisans in the study area. The study reveals that the major sources of occupations stress are lack of the necessary or appropriate tools and equipment required to function in the job, poor relationship with colleagues and superiors, feeling incapable to cope with work or be constructive and unfriendly physical working environment

The study also reveals that the major criteria used to evaluate performance of Artisans are Skills and job expertise, Being on time and on budget, Leadership capabilities, Quantity of work and Level of creativity.

The result reveals that the major pattern of stress among artisans are lack of job security, exposure to dangerous working conditions, and lack of opportunity to learn new skill, unsatisfying salary and poor communication with superiors.

The study shows the effectiveness of their performance is influenced by motivation sheds away and workers start losing interest in their work, unable to cope with the amount of work allocated, inadequate zeal to carryout tasks will decrease the staff productivity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the characterization of occupational stress among construction artisans is a complex and multifaceted area of study that has a significant impact on the construction industry and the well-being of its workforce. Research in this field has revealed some of the major sources of occupations stress as lack of the necessary or appropriate tools and equipment required to function in the job, poor relationship with colleagues and superiors, feeling incapable to cope with work or be constructive and unfriendly physical working environment.

Understanding these stressors and their effects on the mental and physical health of construction artisans is crucial. It allows for the development of targeted interventions and policies to mitigate stress, improve job satisfaction, and enhance overall productivity in the construction sector. As the construction industry continues to evolve with technological advancements and global challenges, future research should adapt to address emerging issues.

Recommendations

- Measures such as confidential support mechanisms should be implemented so that those suffering from stress can receive assistance without the concern that it will have a negative impact on their current or future career.
- Construction industry should aim to create more openness in acknowledging and addressing the problem of occupational stress.
- An industry-wide programme of awareness, including stress awareness training needs to be implemented so as to prevent artisans from drugs ingestion, smoking, clubbing and flirting.
- Artisans at work to should avoid stress-inducing condition such as excessive noise, inadequate safety measures, or poor task organization.
- There is need for collaboration with occupational health professionals and psychologists to provide mental health assessments and counseling services for artisans.
- There is need for longitudinal studies to track stress levels over time, enabling a better understanding of the chronicity and fluctuation of stress in the construction industry.
- Establish mechanisms for artisans to anonymously report stress-related concerns and incidents, fostering open communication.

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