Perspectives on Stress and its Management for Individual Well-being and Organisational Productivity

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Abstract

All organisations are established with the aim of achieving certain goals and objectives. For these goals and objectives to be achieved, workers are employed and charged with responsibilities geared towards the achievement of goals. For organisations to be effective and efficient, the goals and objectives must be achieved within a stipulated time frame, and this brings about target for every department as well as the individual employees in the organisations. This is to keep them in their feet to be up and doing and to contribute their best in assisting the organisation to achieve its goals and objectives but this sometimes mount pressure on the employees and there by resulting to stress, when the pressure persists for too long for the individual to bear. The behaviour and the activities of the employees at the work-place can make or mar the performance of the organisation. In essence, the general health status of an individual in the organisation can be adversely affected by stress and this can in turn affect the performance of the worker towards the actualization of the organisational goals. It is in This View that this article explores stress and it's Management for Individual well-being and Organisational productivity.
Keywords: Stress, Stressor, Karoshi, Management, Organisation, Productivity, Well-being, Work Environment

Introduction

Stress is a global epidemic which cut across all classes and facets of life. Stress exists among the educated, the illiterate, the poor, the rich, the unemployed and the employed, blue collar jobs(skilled labour, semi skilled and unskilled labour) white collar jobs (professionals and non-professionals). According to International Monetary Fund and the United Nations International Labour Organisation (ILO) "Work related stress is a global epidemic, people are afraid for their jobs and quick to assume the worst". According to the report published by the Mental Health Foundation of London in 2011,

> 84% of workers feels more stressed at work today than five years ago, 65% of office workers have experienced office rage. 45% of staff regularly loses their temper at work due to stress; up to 65% of all absence from work is caused by stress.

The experience of work and life stress is certainly not new. Our cave-dwelling ancestors faced stress every time they left their caves in search of their daily bread and encounter their enemies, the Saber tooth tigers and other wild animals. The tigers and other wild animals of yesteryears are gone, but they have been replaced by other predators such as work overload, a nagging boss, time deadlines, downsizing, computer problems, marital disharmony, mergers, uncertainty, poorly design jobs, financial crisis and accelerating rates of change. These works and non-work predators interact and create stress for individuals on the job or at work place. Stress amongst workers has been a source of problem in Organisations. Stress is an unavoidable phenomenon in the life of any worker in an organisation.

The epidemic nature of stress has made the issue of stress an interesting topic of research and discussion among management scholars and social scientists. The effects of stress on workers have been devastating considering the silent and gradual killing nature of stress. A Japanese Health Ministry Report (2002) stated that Karoshi (stress from overwork) is second to Cancer. Stress has to a large extent adversely affected workers and the Organisation in which they work. Stress was first discussed by Hans Selye (1936), the

Canadian Physician who is regarded as the father of stress in the context of endocrinology, but not presented in a general available source until much later in 1950. The central idea in Selye's concept of stress was that despite the obvious detailed differences between different illness and responses to noxious events, there was a considerable degree of commonality in the somatic reactions to these events. He referred to this as the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) and argued that these reactions were responsible for the adaptive bodily responsible to threat. Selye categorizes stress into two categories which are the positive stress known as 'eustres' which is stress resulting from the reception or achievement of good things such as marriage, promotion, recognition and winning a lottery that places one in possession of much money and stress will result from the process of deciding what to do with the money. Negative stress known as distress is what is commonly referred to as stress. This include among others, excessive pressure, unreasonable demand on our time, and bad news. The above examples buttress the fact that stress can either be a good or a bad stress. If both categories of stress are not properly managed, it could result to negative effects.

The term stress was used to denote both the causes and experienced effects of these pressure. In his research work, Selye (1950) pointed out that stress has its root in medicine, and the laboratory investigation reveals that tissues damaged is non-specific response to virtually all noxious stimuli: The nature and reaction of stress was first described in 1936, as a "Syndrome produced by various noxious agents" and subsequently become known as the General Adaptation Syndrome (G.A.S) (Selye, 1990). The General Adaptation Syndrome is divided into 3 (three) stages which includes:

i. **Alarm Reactions Stage:** According to Selye (1990), this is the first stage on the body's nature to stress. During this stage there is an immediate reaction to noxious agents like rapid heart beat, increased temperature, loss of muscle tone, increased blood pressure and followed by a rebound reaction in which the adrenal context is enlarged and corticoid hormones are secreted by the adrenal. If the stress is sufficiently strong at this stage, it may result to death.

ii. **Resistance Stage:** This is the second stage in the body's reaction to stress. This stage ensures that continued exposure to the stress is compactable with the adaptation. The length of resistance period depends on the innate adaptability of the body system and the intensity of the stress.

iii. **Exhaustion Stage:** This is the final stage of the body's reactions to stress prolong exposure to stressor leads to exhaustion, thus when the resistance rises above normal, exhaustion will ensue. And because of its great practical importance, the triphasic nature of G.A.S has first implication that the body's adaptation energy finites. Hence these stages are analogous to the three stages of a man's life (childhood, adulthood and senility ending in death).

International Stress Management Association (ISMA) defined stress as "an adverse response to what an individual perceives as too much pressure". Gibson et al (1988) defined stress as "a person's adaptive response to stimulus that places excessive psychological and physical demands on that person".

Stress is the body's response to excessive pressure or demands placed upon it. A little stress is a good thing, too much can have devastating consequences for our health and relationships. Every one need a certain amount of stress to live well, it is what gets you out of bed in the morning and gives you the vitality and zest to do things. Without stress we would have no motivation for many of life chores. Stress becomes a problem-distress when there is too much or too little. Lack of stress means the body is under stimulated, leaving you feeling bored and isolated. In an effort to find stimulation many people do things that

are harmful to themselves (drugs taking, committing crimes) while too much stress can result in range of health problems including headache, stomach upset, high blood pressure, stroke or heart disease. It can also cause feelings of distrust, anger, anxiety and fear which in turn can destroy relationship at home and at work. The existence of stress and its effect is undisputable and unavoidable and as such, stress has to be properly managed to curb or minimise its effect on the organisation and the employees. Hence, this article is a contextual perspective on what stress is all about, causes, effect, theory and management for the individual well-being and organisational productivity.

Operational Definition of Terms
The following terms are defined as they are used in this article.
Corticoid: This is the cortex in the brain. It is the centre for stress response. It perceives and interprets stressors.
Employees: Are the people or workers employed to carry out specific duties or task within the organisation for the purpose of achieving the aims and objectives of the organisations. The employees render services which are paid for either in the form of salary or wages.
Epidemic: A large number of same cases of a particular disease or something bad such as crime or stress happening at the same time or increasing in frequency of occurrence in a particular community but in this case the entire world (global epidemic).
Karoshi: Karoshi is a Japanese word referring to stress from overwork which the Japanese health ministry referred to as the second leading cause of death among workers.
Motivation: Represents the forces within a person that affect his or her directions, Intensity and persistence of voluntary behaviour. It is the driving force that causes or propels one to act in a particular way.
Organisation: Organized body or system set up for the purpose of achieving certain objectives through the interaction of people. Organisation is a structured process established on which people interact for the actualization of specific aims and objectives of the organisation.
Organisational Goal: This refers to the aims, objectives and desires for which an organisation is set-up or established which upon its existence it strives to achieve.
Performance: The act or process of executing or carrying out a task or functions.
Stress: Is an adaptive response moderated by individual differences that are a consequence of any actions, situation or event that places special demands on a person. Stress can be seen as feelings tense, anxious, or worried as a result of uncertainty, work overload, striving to meet up with time and target, in the work place.

Stress: What it means, Types and Determinant
Stress is a global issue, it is wrecking so much havoc on the general health of workers, organisation and homes in our societies and communities today, stress is unavoidable it can come from the easiest and most common things we do on a daily basis.

Stress has been defined in various ways by different authors and scholars. Gibson et al (1988) defined stress "as a person's adaptive response to a stimulus that places excessive psychological and physical demands on that person". This definition is divided into two basic components, first is the notion of adaptation, which explains the fact that people or workers react or adjust to stressful circumstances in different ways. The second is the role of stimulus or stressor which is anything that induces or causes stress. For stress to result the stressor must place or induces excessive demand on the individuals and what is excessive for a person may be very light or low for another person. That means, what is stressful to one person may not be stressful for another. Stress is like beauty that lies in the eyes of the

beholder, its all depends on who is involved in the circumstances to tell if the demand is excessive or not or if stress will result or not. The term stress has been defined in different ways virtually all of the definitions can be place into two categories, which is either stress is defined as a stimulus or as a response. A stimulus definition treats stress as some characteristics or event that may result in a disruptive consequence. It is in that respect, an engineering definition of stress borrowed from the physical sciences. In physics stress refers to the external force applied to an object for example a bridge girder. The response is "strain" which is the impact the force has on the girder. In this context the external force on the girder is the waves of the sea or ocean but at the work-place the external force on the workers includes the leadership style of the boss, work over load, uncertainty, time deadlines, computer problems, mergers, financial crisis, poorly designed jobs and others stress the workers at the work place.

In a response definition, stress is seen partially as a response to some stimulus, called a stressor. A stressor is a potentially harmful or threatening external event or situation. Stress is more than simply a response to a stressor, however. In a response definition, stress is the consequence of the interaction between an environmental stimulus (a stressor) and the individual's response. That is stress is the result of a unique interaction between stimulus conditions in the environment and the individual's predisposition to respond in a particular way. Based on the response definition, stress was defined by John et al (2005) as "an adaptive response, moderated by individual difference that is a consequence of any action, situation or event that places those special demands on a person". David, Derald and Stanley (1986) defined stress as "an internal response to an external stimulus or situation".

Hellriegel, Slocum and Woodman (1989) defined stress as "a consequence of or a general response to an action or situation that places special physical or psychological demand or both on a person". Stress involves the interaction of a person and that person's environment, because stressor lies in the environment and they (stressor) creates stress as soon as the person perceives them as representing a demand that may exceed his or her ability to respond. Stress is a condition that strain one's emotions through processes and physical condition. When it is excessive it can threaten one's ability to cope with the environment. Stress is the general term applied to the pressure people feels in life. As a result of these pressures employees develops various symptoms of stress that can ruin their job performance.

International Stress Management Association (ISMA) defined stress as "an adverse response to what an individual perceives as too much pressure". Bechr and Newman (1978) defined job stress as "a condition arising from the interaction of people and their job and characterized by changes within people that forces them to deviate from their normal functions". When one has a job that is challenging that person should expect to feel some pressure at work, however, when that pressure is excessive and you suffer an adverse reaction to it, then it has become stress.

Bernard (1972) recognized two forms of stress which according to him are psychological stress and physiological stress. The physiological stress deals with the physical factors of stress. They can be categorized as acute or chronic and as external and internal to the individuals. The symptoms are burnout, accident proneness, decreased stamina or insomnia. The psychological form has to do with emotions of an individual. The manifestations of stress are aggression, mental illness, depression, anger, anxiety, hostility, restiveness and others.

Selye (1950) defined stress as the non-specific response of the body to any demand made upon it. The non-specific demand for activity is the essence of stress. In view of its stressor activity, all that counts is the intensity of the demand for readjustment or adapt to

the stressor either by manipulating the situation to alter the stressor or by accommodating the effects. One major fact about stress is that people differs in the way they response to stressful situations. What is stressful to Mr. A may not be stressful to Mr. B stress to a reasonable extent is in the eye of the beholder and this is what makes it clearly a psychological process. Events are stressful when they are regarded as such and not the other way round.

According to Lazarus 1966, Lazarus and Folkman 1994, stress is an event or group of event causing wear and tear on individuals. It is important or useful to view stress as the response a person makes and to identify stimulus conditions (action, situations events) as stressors as this introduces us to the organisational environment that are potential stress producers. Whether stress is actually felt or experienced by a particular person depends on the person's unique characteristic. Stress is the result of dealing with issues or something that places special demands on us. Our involvement in something unusual, physically or psychologically threatening or outside our usual set of experience, such as starting a new job assignment, having a flat tire, changing bosses, making a mistake at work, having a performance evaluation meeting with the boss, presenting or defending a seminar paper before Professors as a student. All of these actions or event are potential stressor, potential because not all stressor will always place the same demand on people and what is not stressful today might becomes stressful tomorrow depending on the mind set of the individual and how long the action or event persist. In order for an action, event or situation to result in stress, it must be perceived by the individual to be a source of threat, challenge or harm. If there are no perceived consequences either good or bad there will be no potential for stress. McGruth (1970), Lazarus, (1971) and Kasl (1978) had all individually defined stress as "a (perceived) substantial imbalance between demand and response capacity, under conditions where failure to meet demand has important (perceived) consequences."

Three key factors determine whether an experience is likely to result in stress. These factors are Importance, Uncertainty and Duration.

Importance: This relates to how significant the event is to the individual. For an event to be significant to an individual, the person often think or considers his/her personal benefits and he/she also consider if there are other alternatives for the same benefits that could be easier or better, the lack of alternative and having much benefits or reward attached makes the event or action more important. Education is important because ignorance or illiteracy is not an option and there is much benefit attached to education which is why it could be stressful.

Uncertainty: this refers to lack of clarity about what will happen. Not having a fore knowledge of what the future holds for us could be very stressful because most often "not knowing" place more demand on us than does knowing, even if the known result is perceived as negative.

Duration: is a significant factor because the longer that special demand is placed on us, the more stressful the situation. A distasteful job assignment that only last a day or two may be mildly upsetting, but if the same assignment where to last for six months, it could be excruciating. Most people can endure short period of strenuous physical activities without tiring, prolong the duration, however and even the most fit among us will become exhausted. The same is true of stressor. Stress of short duration is sometimes referred to as acute stress. It may last a few seconds, hours or even a few days. While long duration stress on the other hand is sometime referred to as chronic stress, it may last for months or years, take for instance the unrelenting, pressure of a job one finds no satisfaction in performing, the constant demand made by an unreasonable boss, or the never ending struggle to advance

in one's career. These three factors play a crucial role in determining whether an action or event is stressful or not.

Stress is the reactions of individuals to new or threatening factors in their work environments. Job stress can be either positive or negative. Some new work situations can bring us positive challenges and excitement, while others are very threatening and anxiety arousing.

Generally the source of stress as Selye (1956) pointed out need not be bad. Take for instance; receiving arrears, bonus or winning lottery and then having to decide what the money should be spent on can result to stress. Like wise can gaining recognition, getting a promotion, getting a new job, and similar "good" things. Selye referred to this kind of stress as 'eustress' while he referred to the negative stress as 'distress', this includes stress resulting from bad news, excessive pressure, unreasonable demand on our time, a nagging boss, poorly designed jobs and others. Individuals can have a variety of reactions to both bad (distress) stress and good (eustress) stress. They can react emotionally by feeling frustrated or anxious happy or excited, bored or depressed, aggressive or hostile, the way they view the world perceptually can also change under stress, and they may experience mental blocs, be hypersensitive to criticism or have trouble concentrating. People can respond to stress behaviourally, they may drink more, eat more, loose their appetites or stop going out socially and become isolated.

People's bodies also respond to stress physiologically. In fact, the physiological response to stress follows a fairly consistent pattern known as General Adaptation Syndrome which evolved round three (3) stages. The first is the alarm stage, where the body prepares for stress by releasing hormones from the endocrine glands. Heart breath faster, breathing quickens, blood sugar level rises, muscle tense up, pupils dilate and digestion slows. During the second stage which is the resistance stage, the body tries to repair the shock caused by the stress and to return the body to its normal state. However, if the stress continues long enough, the body's capacity for adaptation becomes exhausted, in the third stage the body's resistance level progressively weakens. The body is then more susceptible to diseases like ulcers, heart attach, headache, high blood pressure, and fatigue. This aforementioned model by Selye gives us a good look at just how damaging stress is to the body and how serious avoiding constructive coping mechanisms can be. However, Selye's theory that stress was as a result of changes was challenged by Arnold and Clifford Lazarus. They argued that stress was subjective and that the levels of stress were influenced by the way in which people view their situation (Melucci 2004). It seems both holds their truths, indeed people do deal with stress in different ways and this seems to affect the way in which the body is affected. However, just as Selye suggested the body is adversely affected and drained as a result of unattended stress, that is, if stress is not properly managed.

Causes of Stress and Stressors

The causes of stress are regarded as stressor (Moorhead and Griffin, 1995). A stressor is any thing (action, event or situation) that induce stress or serve as a source of stress. Stressors can be classified into four categories which are: individual, group, organisational and non-work.

The first three categories of stressors are work-related. The experience of work-related and non-work stresses produces behavioural cognitive and physiological outcomes. The relationship between stress and outcomes (individual and organisational) is not necessarily direct. Similarly, neither is the relationship between stressor and stress. These relationships may be influenced by stress moderators. Individual difference such as age, social support mechanisms and personality are potential moderators. A moderator is a

valuable attribute that affects the nature of relationship. Stressors are those actions situations or events that place special demands on a person. Since in the right circumstance, virtually any occurrence can place special demands on a person, the list of potential stressors is infinite.

(A) Individual Stressors: Individuals faces or experience stress when they face new or threatening factors in their work environments. While individuals vary in   what they experience as stressful, there are some aspects of work that systematically create job stress for employees. One major source of stress or stressor is the job itself, the way the job is designed, the amount of time pressure an individual faces and the amount of expectations others have of a person at work can all lead to stress. The individual stressors include the following individual roles: A role is simply the set of expectations that other people in the organisation have of an individuals in his or her job or expected behaviours associated with a particular position. Role can manifest itself in the form of conflict, overload and ambiguity as source of individual stress in the organisation.

(i) Role Conflict: is present whenever an individual's compliance to one set of expectations about the job is in conflict with compliance to another set of expectations. Kahn et al (1964) defined role conflict as the simultaneous occurrence of   two or more set of pressure such that compliance with one would make more difficult or impossible the compliance with the others. Role conflict occurs when different members or subset of the whole set holds different and conflicting expectations for focal persons behaviour. That is, role expectation conflicts with such attributes like the values, traits or moral principles of the other persons. Kahn et al (1964) point out that role conflict is associated with greater level of interpersonal tension, lower level of trust and respect for person exerting the conflicting role pressure and decreased confidence in the organisations. There are two general types of role conflict in organisations. The first type is intersender role conflict: Two different groups have expectation of an individual that are incompatible or inconsistent. The second type is intrasender role conflict: One group has different expectations of an individual that are incompatible.

(ii) Role Ambiguity: Is the uncertainty surrounding one's job definition, this may result from inadequate information or knowledge about the job and the needed skills for the job. The ambiguity may be due to inadequate training, poor communication .The deliberate withholding or distortion of information by co-workers and supervisors and it could as well be as a result of mergers and acquisition of corporations. In any event, the result of role conflict, ambiguity and overload is stress for the individual because they causes anxiety in workers and makes them prone to stress.

(iii). Life and career changes: The most pervasive individual stressor of all is the unrelenting pace of change that is part of life today. At no other point in the history of industrialized society have we experienced such rapid change in the world around us like the communication satellites, organ transplants, laser technology, nuclear power plants, intercontinental ballistic missiles, supersonic transportation, artificial hearts, climate change and its effects such as flood that is ravaging so many parts of the world and has rendered many homeless and also ruin their source of livelihood, one can only but imagine the kind of stress they are experiencing at the moment. Life changes may be slow (getting older) or sudden (the death of a close relatives). These changes are having a dramatic effect on people.

Medical researchers have verified that especially sudden life changes have a very stressful impact on people. They found a definite relationship between the degree of life

changes and subsequent health of the person. The more changes, the poorer the subsequent health, these life changes can also directly affect job performance. According to Faye Crosby a psychologist, divorce interferes with work more than any other trauma in a person's life. She said "during the first three months after a spouse walks out, the other spouse male or female is usually incapable of focusing on work. Despite all these, there are some exceptions because some people who experience a great deal of change show absolutely no subsequent health problems. For some reasons, these people are strong enough to withstand the negative effects of large doses of change while others are not. The difference between those who suffers a subsequent health problem and those that do not suffer health problem after or during life changes lies in the personality characteristic commonly regarded as hardness and the people with the hardness personality trait possess three important characteristics. First they believe that they can control the event they encounter in life or at work. Second, they are extremely committed to the activities in their life or work. Third, they treat changes in their lives as a challenge, and these character help them to cope with changes. Hardness is a personality trait that appears to buffer an individual's response to stress or offset the negative impact of change. Hardness is a factor that reduces stress by changing the way stressor is perceived.

(B) Group and Organisational Stressor: Every time people chooses to come together as group or to form a group within the organisation or even the organisation as a whole an endless list of stressor are always encountered. Few of such are:

(i). **Participation:** Refers to the extent that a person's knowledge, opinions and ideas are included in the decision making process. For some people participation is an important part of working in organisation. Groups and organisation that do not encourage or allow participation will be a source of frustration to those who value it. Others will be frustrated by the delays associated with participative decision making while others may view shared decision making as a threat to the traditional right of a manager to have final say. Participation will act as a stressor for these people.

(ii). **Intra and Intergroup Relationships**: Poor relationship within and between groups can be a source of stress. Poor relationship may includes low trust, lack of cohesion, low supportiveness and lack of interest in listening to and dealing with the problems that confront a group or group member.

(iii). **Organisational Politics:** High levels of political behaviour in organisations can be a source of stress for many employees. Office politics has constantly been a primary stressor in organisations. Political activities, game playing, power struggles can create friction, heighten dysfunctional competition between individuals and groups, and increase stress.

(iv). **Inadequate Career Development Opportunities**: Career development opportunity stressors are those aspects of the organisational environment that influences a person perception of the quality of his/her career progress. Career variables may serve as stressor when they become sources of concern, anxiety or frustration. This can happen if an employee is concerned about real or imagined obsolescence, feels that promotion progress is inadequate, or is generally dissatisfied with the match between his career aspirations and current position.

(v). **Downsizing**: This is primarily associated with the reduction of human resources by layoff, attrition, redeployment, or early retirement. As some organisations strive to reduce cost, a number of employees are either downsized or fear being downsized and this is a potent stressor. It can have negative effects for both individuals and organisation.

(vi). **Working Environment**: Working environment refers to the beliefs and value system or the rules and regulations of the organisation that is organisational culture. Scharmarhorn, Hunt and Osborn (1994) defined organisational culture as the system of shared beliefs and values that develop within an organisation and guide the behaviour of members. A number of critical variables may be useful in analyzing the impact of organisational culture on stress level in the organisation. For instance, what does the organisational culture say about openness, expression of feelings, hard work, innovation and manager – subordinates relationship, if the dominant ethos is one of internal competition for resources, reward or where a hire and fire policy operates, the stress level will be high. Also if there is no congruence between the organisational outcome and the individual personality, the level of stress will be high on the part of the individual. Jobs where temperature, noise and other working conditions are dangerous or undesirable can cause anxiety among workers thereby increasing the stress level in the organisation.

(c) **Non-work Stressors or Extra Organisational Stressor:** Non-work stressors are caused by factors outside the organisation. They are forces outside the organisation which can lead to stress among workers in the organisation. Among such factors are technological changes, family, economic and financial condition, sociological variables and others.

(i). **Technological Changes:** Modern day business organisations are dynamic. The business environment is in a state of perpetual flux. An important factor in change is technology. Technological change can cause anxiety in workers especially when their skills are threatened by the new technology and such anxiety can lead to stress. Although medical science has increased the life span of people and has eradicated or reduced the threat of man's diseases, the pace of modern living has increased stress and decreased personality wellness. The latter concept of wellness has been defined as a harmonious and productive balance of physical, mental, and social well being brought about by the acceptance of one's personal responsibility for development and adhering to a health promotion programme. Because people tends to get caught up in the rush-rush, mobile, urbanized, crowded, on-the-go life style of today, their wellness in general has deteriorated and the potential for stress on the job has increased.

(ii). **Economic and Financial Condition:** This can be another source of stress in the workplace. This is mostly the case in a period of depression when people's jobs are threatened. Also, when a person's financial commitment cannot be met as a result of the economic situation, such a person will be prone to stress. Human beings working in organisations have needs to satisfy, and the reward which they earn in the form of financial remuneration help them to satisfy these needs, when what they get in the organisation cannot meet their needs, they may become prone to stress. In multi-racial society, decision made based on racial variable can make the workers prone to stress. This can happen in a situation where such subjective factors like tribal affiliation, nepotism and favoritism form the basis of reward in the organisation

(iii). **Sociological Variables:** Sociological variable such as sex, race and class can also become stressors. Sociologists have noted over the years that minorities (Blacks) may have stressors than majority (White). Recently, research has found that women experience more psychological distress than men, but men are more prone to severe physical illness. For professional women, their particular source of stress has been

identified as discrimination, stereotyping, the marriage/work interface, and social isolation. Also people in the middle and upper classes may have particular common stressor. The same is true of local communities or regions that are having similar stressors from the condition of housing, shopping and convenience of services, neighborliness and degree of noise and air pollution as likely stressors.

(iv). **Family Factor:** This is a vital extra-organisational stressor. A person's family has an impact on personality development and can influence the mood and behaviour of people or workers from time to time. A family situation like quarrel, illness or death of a family member can make the worker to have stress in the workplace. In Holmes and Rahe (1967), such family factors like death of spouse, divorce, marital separation from mate, death of close relatives occupies high position in the scale showing that family factors are high predictors of stress in the workplace.

Effect of Stress on Individual Well-Being and Organisational Productivity

The effect of stress can be positive or negative just as there are positive (eustress) and negative (distress) stress. Positive stress can result to positive consequences like more enthusiasm, energy, and motivation. This means that stress is not automatically bad for individual employees or their organisational performance. In fact, it is generally recognized that a certain level of stress can even enhance job performance. A recent research suggest that mild stress, such as getting a new supervisor or being involuntarily transferred, may lead employees to new and better ways of doing jobs. Also mild stress may get employees' "Juices" flowing and lead to increased activity, change and overall better performance. People in certain jobs such as sales or creative fields (newspaper journalist and television broadcasters who work under time pressure), would seem to benefit from mild level of stress. While people in other jobs, such as police officers or physicians, may not benefit from constant mild stress. The negative effects of stress are the major concern for contemporary society in general and for effective human resources management in particular. The three sets of consequences or effect that can result from stress are Individual Consequences, Organisational Consequences and Burnout (Ivancevich and Matteson, 1980). These are discussed below:

1. **Individual Consequences**

Stress has different effect on different individuals and even different effect on the same individual at different times. Individual consequences of stress are those outcomes that mainly affect individuals. The organisation may also suffer on the long run either directly or indirectly, but it is the individual who pays the real price. These categories of individual consequences of stress are behavioural, psychological, and physical or medical (Moorhead and Griffin, 1995).

i. Behavioural Effect

Behavioural consequences of stress are responses that may harm the stressed person or others. One of such aspect of behaviour is smoking research (Quick and Quick, 1984) clearly document that people who smoke tend to smoke more when they suffer stress. There are other direct behaviours that may accompany stress at the individual level which includes underrating, sleeplessness, accident proneness, violence, appetite disorder, and increase in drinking and drug abuse.

There is some evidence that there is relationship between stress and absenteeism and turnover, for example, workers may experience stress and react by getting drunk and staying home from work the next day with a hangover. They then feel bad about their new drinking habit, and they may feel that they are letting every one down and eventually quit or be fired

from the job. In the mean time the absenteeism rate climbs, and subsequently the turn over rates increase, both of which are very costly to the organisation in terms of filling in for absent workers and replacing those who have left. Staying away from a job that is causing stress or quitting the job is a "flight" reaction in which the person may stay on the stress producing job and become angry and or aggressive. The behavioural consequences are often not attributed to stress by co-workers and supervisors and therefore generates little sympathy.

ii. Psychological or Emotional Effect

Psychological consequences of stress relates to an individual's mental health and well-being. The emotional effects of stress includes anger, anxiety, depression, lowered self – esteem, poorer intellectual functioning including an inability to concentrate and make decisions, nervousness, irritability, resentment of supervision and job dissatisfaction. When people experience stress at work, as it happens nowadays in Nigeria in particular and the entire world in general, they may become depressed or may find themselves sleeping too much or not enough. Stress may also lead to family problems and sexual disorders, (Quick and Quick, 1984). Considerable attention is being given to the relationship between stress and physical health, especially within the medical community, not much is being given to the impact of stress on mental health. Yet, at least, indirectly if not directly, the psychological consequences result is of much importance to day-to-day job performance than the physical consequences. The psychological consequences of stress have no regard for one's position in the organisation; the outcome of this stress can affect the leadership style and effectiveness of managers in key positions.

iii. Physical or Medical Effect

Stress can lead to medical disorders. These medical consequences of stress affect a person's physical well-being. One illness posed by stress is called "Psychosomatic illness". Psychosomatic illness is brought on by psychological or emotional distress (Melucci, 2004). It simply refers to illness such as ulcers caused by excessive stress and worry and are connected with the relationship between the mind and the body. Furthermore, psychosomatic illness that is ignored can lead to serious consequences of pre-existing condition or lead to other serious condition such as high blood pressures, stroke and cardiovascular disease. People who are experiencing stress are more likely to have headache, stomach ache, chest pain, heartburn, diarrhea or constipation and skin condition like acne and hives. Though all these diseases or ailments are not only caused or linked to stress, environmental conditions and the person's general state of health, heredity and medical history can also contribute. However, stress can and does contribute to all these diseases and ailments most often, and as such it is clear that effectively dealing with stress is an extremely important part of our lives since stress often times cannot be avoided.

(2). Organisational Consequences

Obviously, any of the individual consequences mentioned above can also affect the organisation. However, there are other consequences of stress with even more direct consequences on the organisation. One clear organisational consequences of too much stress is decline in performance, this could be caused by any of the stressors. For operating workers such a decline can translate into poor quality work or drop of productivity (Hockey, 1986). Stress has negative impact on individual's performance and this translates to affect

the entire organisation because a fall in the productivity or performance of an individual can reduce ability of the organisation to meet the daily or the day's target.

Withdrawal Behaviours can also result from stress. It increases turnover and absenteeism and possibly quitting the job. Turnover and absenteeism allows workers to withdraw from the unpleasant environment. Stress has also been associated with industrial sabotage. Workers some time create mechanical failures on the assembly line to give themselves a break from the strain of their work. People who are having difficulty in coping with stress in their jobs are more likely to call in sick or consider leaving the organisation for good.

Stress also impedes effective decision making. When people are experiencing stress, they are more likely to procrastinate and to avoid having to make decisions. They have more trouble concentrating and often forget important pieces of information. They are less likely to seek out new information that could help them make better decisions. As a result, the quality of the decisions they make suffers. This means that when managers are stressed they are likely to make faulty decisions or disruption in working relationship as people becomes irritable and hard to get along with. The manager may start missing deadline, taking longer lunch breaks or ceasing to care about the organisation and the change of attitude of the employee. This means that, job satisfaction, morale and organisational commitment can all suffer, along with motivation to perform at high levels (Moorhead and Griffin, 1995). Wrong decisions made by managers could be of high lost for the organisation, and as such, stress must be properly managed so as to avoid wrong decision making that can cost the organisation a fortune.

Theories of Stress

The theory of stress holds that it is not a particular abnormality that is inherited, but rather a predisposition to develop illness. Certain environmental forces called stressor may activate the predisposition resulting in a disorder. It is evident that stress is inevitable in organisation. Administrators cannot completely eliminate stress either for themselves or for others. In essence, a certain degree of stress is required for Psychological growth, achievement and development of new skills. In most cases, stress always involves at least some temporary degree of discomfort. It is frequently the occasion for the emergence of creative solution to personal and/or organisation problems, like it's often said; necessity is the mother of invention. However, prolonged stress can cause apathy, break down in performance and psychological or physical withdrawal from the organisation. The following are some theories on stress:

The General Adaptation Syndrome Theory

Hans Selye (1950) was of the opinion that when an individual is stressed or faced by threatening life situation, the person goes through a syndrome (sequence of behaviour) to bring the altered body system to its normal state. The stages of the body's reaction are three (Selye, 1976). The first stage is the alarm reaction stage in which an emergency signal is sent, which the body resists or defends itself against. The second stage is a stage where the bodies resists the stress pressure and regain its normal body balance. The resistance stage may continue for a long time if the stress persists, until the third stage of exhaustion surface. At the exhaustion stage, the persons break down and may be over whelmed by psychosomatic illness manifesting physiological symptoms.

Phenomenological Theory: According to Holmes and Rahe (1977), increased life events will affect a person's psychological life events; however, the effects are influenced by one's

life style and coping mechanism (Nweze, 1984). When faced with negative life events which are caused by situation beyond individual's control and not caused by the individuals, such a person is expected to be distressed (Beich and Zanta,1981).

Personality Theory
According to Friedman and Rosenman (1957), Type A personality is an action, emotion and complex that can be observed in any person who is aggressively involved in a chronic, incessant struggle to achieve more and more in less and less time, and if required to do so, against the opposing efforts of other things or persons. Type "A" employees (manager, staff specialists, file operating employees, salesperson and secretaries) experience considerable stress. They are the people who:
   a.   Work long hard hours under constant deadlines pressure, and conditions overload,
   b.   Often take work home at night or on weekends and are unable to relax.
   c.   They themselves, set high standards of productivity that they seem driven to maintain.
   d.   Tends to become frustrated by the work situation, to be irritated with the work of others, and to be misunderstood
        by superiors.
   e.   Are aggressive, ambitious, competitive and forceful
   f.   Are impatient, hates to wait and considers waiting a waste of precious time.
        The Type A person is an aggressive driver who is ambitious, competitive, task-oriented and always on the move pressing to accomplish more goals. The Type B personality is free of the type A characteristic and generally feels no pressing conflict with either time or persons. The Type B person may have considerable drive, want to accomplish things, and work hard, but he/she has a confident style that allows him or her to work at a steady pace and not race against the clock. The Type B persons are relaxed, patient, steady and even- tempered. They are more likely to extend deadline or to accept a lower standard of work from themselves in the short – run. They are likely to let things roll-off their back rather than fight every issue. The Type A personality people are more prone to stress because of their competitiveness, urgency in getting task done and always striving to win in every activities even those meant for fun, they will rather not participate than to lose. While the Type B personality people are less prone to stress berceuse they are relaxed, patient, steady, even tempered and are not always striving or struggling to beat deadline or to win in every activities.

Psychological Theory
Lazarus (1966) believed that there are three ways to look at stress. One, individual reacts differently to stressful situations. Two the way an individual perceives the situation determines his response. Thirdly, the stress experienced depends on other factors and individuals coping capability.

Management of Stress in the Work Place (Organisation)
Stress above certain level can adversely affect an organisation. This is because stress affects the individuals physiologically, psychologically and behaviourally. The quality of work performance can be negatively affected by stress in the organisation. Thus it is important for stress to be managed properly in the organisation in order to avoid the adverse effect. Stress management by individuals and organisation are usually designed to eliminate or control the sources of stress (stressors), and/or make the individual more resistant to stress or better able

Perspectives on Stress and its Management for Individual Well-being and Organisational Productivity

to cope with stress. Basically, there are two major approaches to deal with job stress. First are the individual strategies, which tend to be more reactive in nature. That is, they tend to be ways of coping with stress that has already occurred, though they include few preventive measures. The second general approach is to develop a more proactive set of strategies at the organisational level. The idea behind these organisational strategies is to remove existing or potential stressors and this, like preventive medicine, prevent the outset of stress for individual job holders.

Individual Coping Strategies
Some specific techniques that individuals can use to eliminate or more effectively manage inevitable, prolonged stress include the following:

1. **Relaxation: -** Whether a person simply takes it easy once in a while or uses specific relaxation technique such as biofeedback or meditation, the intent purpose is to eliminate the immediate stressful situation or manage a prolonged stressful situation more effectively. Taking it easy may mean curling up with a good book in front of you or watching something lights (not a violent programme or a sport programme) on television. Meditation involves quiet, concentrated inner thought in order to rest the body physically and emotionally. It helps remove persons temporarily from stressful world and reduces their symptoms of stress.

   Transcendental meditation (TM) is one of the most popular practices. Transcendental mediators try to meditate for two periods of fifteen to twenty minutes a day. Concentrating on the repetition of a word called a mantra. There are a number of similar practices with other names, such as yoga. They usually have the following common elements: a relatively quiet environment, a comfortable position, a repetitive mental stimulus, passive attitude.

2. **Exercise: -** people of all ages or sex can engage in regular exercise such as jugging, playing tennis, golf or riding a bike. People who exercises regularly are less likely to suffer heart attacks than inactive people are. It has also been suggested that people who exercise regularly feel less tension and stress, are more self – confident, because exercise bust or increases self – esteem, and they show greater optimism. People who do not engage in regular exercise, on the other hand, feel more stressed and are more likely to be depressed (Folkins, 1976). The managements of organisations should encourage their workers to engage in regular exercise by providing sporting facilities and promoting sport within and between organisations

3. **Cognitive Therapy: -** Besides Behavioural self-control techniques, a number of clinical psychologists have entered the stress file in recent years with cognitive therapy technique. Techniques such as Ellis Rational Emotive Model and Meichenbaum's Cognitive Behaviour Modification have been successfully used to reduce tension, anxiety and have recently been used as individual strategies for reducing job stress. The basic rationale for these individual approaches to stress management, known collectively as cognitive techniques, is that a person's response to stressors is mediated by cognitive processes, or thoughts. The underlying assumption of these techniques is that people's thoughts in the form of expectations, beliefs and assumptions are labels they apply to situations, and labels elicit emotional responses to the situation. Thus, for example, if an individual labels the lost of a promotion a catastrophe, the stress response is to the label, not the

situation. Cognitive techniques of stress management focus on changing labels or cognitions so that people appraise situations differently. This reappraisal typically centres on removing cognitive distortions such as magnifying (not getting promoted means my career is over, I will never be promoted in any where), and personalization (since I did not get the promotion it is clear, I am a terrible person). All cognitive techniques have a similar objective, which is to help people gain more control over their reactions to stressor by modifying their cognition. This method of stress management has been generally reported to have positive impact on employees, especially employees like nurses, teachers, athletes and or traffic controllers. The positive outcome coupled with the wide range and scope of situations and stressors amenable to such an approach, makes cognitive techniques particularly attractive as an individual stress management strategy.

4   **Networking: -** Networking in this context entails forming close association with trusted, empathetic co-workers and colleagues who are good listeners and confidence builders. It involves making friends whom an individual can share problems with and like it is often said problem shared is problem half solved and two good heads are better than one. Friends can bring out the best of an individual by making them laugh during their most difficult moment and laughter is such a huge coping mechanism to stress. Researches in social psychology show that people benefits from social support. Katz and Kahn (1978) have pointed out that supportive relationship with others seems to buffer some of the relationship between the demand of the work role and the consequences for the individual. Networking can be of much help in dealing with stress resulting from interpersonal problem between individuals in the organisation.

5. **Time Management Principle: -** Time management is an important strategy for managing stress. Many people manage their time poorly and the end result is stress. An understanding and utilization of basic time management principles can help the individual to better cope with the job demands. Such time management principles includes making daily list of activities to be accomplished, prioritizing activities by their importance and urgency, scheduling activities according to priorities set, and handling the most demanding part of the job or activities during the high part of a person's cycle when one is most alert and productive. Utilization of time management principles helps to reduce anxiety in the individual and help him organize his job in a coherent and logical manner.

Individual Proactive Strategies
There are stress preventive measures or methods that can be applied in handling stress at the individual levels. The preventive measure in this context does not mean that stress can be completely prevented or eradicated since having to wake early in the morning to prepare for work could be stressful to some individuals, but it means that some proactive measures can be taken by the individuals to reduce the occurrence of stress. These measures include the following:

1. **Role clarification:** One major way an individual can act proactively to prevent stress is by trying to clarify or change the role expectations of others. If employees feel their assignments are unclear, they can ask their supervisors for clarification of

what is expected. If they feels that they are getting conflicting signals from their managers, they can confront their manager about lose-lose situations they find themselves in. If a job is due in two days and there is no way it can be accomplished even by working twelve hours daily, it is rational to ask for more time or help when the assignment is initially given. Role clarification is a useful proactive measure because stress comes in form of role conflict.

2. **Reduced Perfectionism.** One of the biggest sources of stress in people's lives is the attempt to live up to the impossible standards they set for themselves. People expect themselves to perform consistently at high levels, even when they are trying to get too much done in too little time. They expect themselves to be efficient "machines" at work even when they are ill or preoccupied with personal problems. This places too much demand or pressure on them, so a good measure for preventing such stress is to accept less than one's very best once in a while. Not that people should become lazy or lackadaisical, but rather they should realize that every performance can be stellar, and the world will not stop turning if they are not perfect every time.

Employees have fantasies about what a perfect job or perfect manager would be like and they feel ill-used because the manager and the job are not perfect. However their managers have the same stresses they have, and expecting ideal behaviour from them inevitably leads to disappointment. If employees are able to realize that there is no perfect job nor a perfect boss and that learning to live with a little less is not compromising standards, it is dealing with the job more realistically will help them to prevent stress.

Organisational Proactive Strategies

The organisational proactive strategies are designed by management to eliminate or control organisational-level stressor in order to prevent or reduce job stress for individual employees. These strategies include:

1. **Create a Supportive Organisational Climate:** most large organisations today tend to be highly formalized bureaucratic structures with accompanying inflexibility, in personal climate. This can lead to considerable job stress. The proactive strategy would be to make the structure more decentralized and organized, with participative decision making and up-ward communication flows. In theory, these structural and process changes would create a more supportive climate for employees and would prevent or reduce their job stress.

2. **Training of Managers and Supervisors:** Supervisors and managers should always be sent on training on human relation and group dynamics. Training in human relation and group dynamics will improve the leadership skill of supervisors and managers and make them adopt instrumental behaviour in their dealing with subordinates. House (1971) note the importance of leadership in affecting the behaviour of workers when he contends that the motivational function of the leader consist of increasing personal pay-off to subordinates for work goal attainment and making the path to these pay-off easier to handle by clarifying it, reducing clock and pitfalls and increasing opportunities for personal satisfaction.

Superiors can create supportive relationship with their subordinates by buffering some of the relationship between the demands of the job and the consequences for the individual, where role ambiguity is unavoidable due to the

very nature of the job, the Manager can ameliorate the resultant stress by giving attention and guidance to those persons thought to be high in emotionality and low in tolerance for ambiguity. Managers and supervisors can do this when they are trained on basic human relations skill.

3. **Plan and Develop Career Paths and Provide Counseling:** Traditionally, organisations have shown only passive interest in the career planning and development of their employees. Individuals are left out to decide their career move and strategies on their own and at most, get paternalistic advice once in a while from a supervisor. The stress is created by not knowing what their next move is or how they are going to make it. The organisation can prevent this stressor from surfacing by acting proactively to make or lay down concrete plans for career development in the organisation and provide counseling so that at every point in time the employees will know their next move to make for their career development. Employees also need counseling from time to time to avoid stress.

4. **Enrich the Design of Tasks:** Enriching job either by improving job content factors (such as responsibility recognition and opportunities for achievement, advancement and growth) or improving care job characteristics (such as skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback) may lead to motivational state or experienced meaningfulness, responsibility, and knowledge of result. Presumably, these enriched tasks will eliminate the stressors found in more routine structured jobs. Careful managing of task design may be an effective way to cope with job stress.

5. **Job Redesigning:** Redesigning jobs to give employees more responsibility, greater participation in decision making, more meaningful work, more autonomy and increased feedback can reduce stress occurrence in the organisation. Job redesigned gives the employees greater control over job activities and less dependence on others. Good job design can help to match the worker's skills with the requirement of the job. Behling and Darrow (1984) note that people who perceive a good fit between job requirement and personal skills have a higher tolerance than those who feel les competent as a result of a personal job mismatch and this can create stressor.

   A good job design programme can help to reduce role conflict and ambiguity or individual role. Each job should have clear expectation and the necessary information support, so that the job holder with conflicting demand or an ambiguous understanding of what he or she is to do will be clarified on the expectations of his or her job. With the proper clarification of individual's roles, stress among workers will be minimised.

6. **Wellness Programme:** These are Health Promotion Programmes which focus on the employee's overall physical and mental health. They includes any activity an organisation engaged in that is designed to identify and assist in prevention or correcting specific health problems, health hazard or negative health habits. This includes not only disease identification but life style modification as well. Examples of such programmes are those emphasizing hypertension identification and control, smoking cessation, physical fitness and exercise, nutrition and diet control and stress and personal stress management. Organisations can reduce stress among

workers by deliberately encouraging wellness programmes. Kreitner (1982) defines personal wellness as a harmonious and productive balance of physical, mental and social well-being brought about by the acceptance of ones responsibility for developing and adhering to a health programme.

Organisations can also help the employees cope with stress through the organisations culture. For examples organisations can imbibe the habit of encouraging taking time off, vacation, periodic social gathering that can help show concern for individuals at all times during time of sorrow as well as time of joy. Incentives should be appropriately used and encouraged by management because, lack of incentives could be stressful especially for willing workers.

Summary and Conclusion

This article, studies the management of stress at the work-place. Stress can be defined as a person's adaptive response to a stimulus that places excessive psychological and physical demand on that person. Stress is unavoidable at the work-place since it can occur from the easiest and most common things we do on a daily basis at the work place and yet poses devastating and life threatening effect on workers' physical and mental well being hence stress must be properly managed at the work place. Causes of stress are simply regarded as stressor. Stressor is anything (action, event or situation) that induce stress by placing special or excess demand on a person. Stressors can be classified into four categories which includes; individual, group, organisational and non-work. This simply means that stressors are found in every aspect of human life.

The effect of stress can be positive or negative just as there is positive (eustress) and negative (distress) stress. The positive stress results to positive consequences like more enthusiasm, energy and motivation. The negative effective of stress are three sets of consequences or effects, which are individual consequences, organisational consequences and burnout. The individual consequences of stress refers to consequences that are directed at the individual though the organisation may suffer on the long run either directly or indirectly but it is the individuals that pays the real price and these outcomes or effects varies from person to person. The individual consequences include behavioural consequences, psychological or emotional effects and medical effects. Organisational consequences of stress includes, decline in performance, poor decision making and withdrawal behaviour which increases turnover and absenteeism.

Stress management by individuals and organisations are usually designed to eliminate or control the sources of stress (stressors), and or make the individuals more resistant to stress or better able to cope with stress. Basically, there are two major approaches to management of stress. First are the individual strategies, which tend to be more reactive in nature. The second general approach is to develop a more proactive set of strategies at the organisational level. The following are some specific techniques that individuals can use to eliminate or more effectively manage prolonged stress include: Relaxation, Regular Exercise and Cognitive Therapy among others.

Organisational strategies are also designed by management to eliminate or control stress at the organisational level. These strategies, includes creation of supportive organisational climate and develop career paths and provide counseling, enrich the design of task, and wellness programme. There are also some negative stress management techniques that some people resolve to in the process of trying to cope with stress, they are: excessive drinking of alcohol, drugs abuse, denying the problem, excessive smoking of cigarettes and angry or violent behaviour. In conclusion, stress must be properly managed so as to curb or reduce the dangerous consequences it poses on the mental and physical well-being of

workers. Stress and its management is a global issue that must be given serious attention so as to prevent it from taking away the happiness of man at home and at the work place. Similarly, when stress is properly managed in an organisation, productivity or output will increase because turnover and absenteeism will be reduced, workers or employees will be more willing to contribute their best effort because they will be happier, more energized, motivated and healthier. On the basis of the discourses in this article, there is no doubt; stress is a menace to organisations, societies and in our various homes. Thus, organisations societies or the individuals must strive hard to ensure that stress is well handled and kept under control.

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