Contributions Of Leadership Style And Occupational Stress To Burnout Among
Organizational Workers

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Abstract

This study investigated the contributions of leadership style and
occupational stress to burnout among organizational workers of
Power Holdings Corporation of Nigeria (PHCN). 243 workers
drawn from three locations (Nsukka, Enugu and Port Harcourt)
were used for the study. Three scales-Multi-Factor Leadership
Questionnaire, Role-Based Stress Inventory and Maslach Burnout
Inventory were used for data collection. Regression statistics was
for data analysis. The results revealed that both leadership style and
occupational stress significantly predicted burnout (β=18, P<.01)
and (β=38, P<.10) among workers respectively while the
interactions of both, is not a significant predictor of burnout (β=10,
P<.05) the implications of the study were discussed.

Introduction

In today's highly technological world in which everything appears to be moving too
fast, it is not surprising that many workers experience what is termed "job-burnout" in their
organizations. There works have become part of their lives, as they spend more time in the
work place than anywhere else. These works are our lifelines, we rely on them for our
financial and life emotional security. Without them, we struggle in vain and life is more
stressful. Yet, work can be and is often very stressful too. Consequently, many people seem
unable to cope with the circumstances of their jobs. The relationship that people have with
their work, the difficulties that arise when the relationship goes awry have been recognized
as a significant phenomenon of the modern age (Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter, 2001)
Burnout is the index of the dislocation between what people are and what they have to do. It
represents an erosion in values, dignity, spirit and will-an erosion of the human soul. It is a
malady that spreads gradually and continuously overtime, putting people into a downward
spiral trend from which it is hard to re-cover----- what might happen if you begin to burnout?
Actually three things happen: you become chronically exhausted, you become cynical and
detached from your work, and you feed increasingly ineffective on the job (Maslach &
Leiter, 1997). Job burnout has been found to be present in all occupations, regardless of
whether or not the occupation is a so-called high pressure (Maslach, 1997). Maslach and
Leiter (1997) in their research asserted that burnout is not a matter of weakness or the social
environment in the workplace caused by "major mismatches" between the nature of the
person doing the job and the nature of the nature of the job itself. The greater the mismatch,
the greater the potential for burnout, some of the mismatches their research has revealed are

overloaded work schedule, lack of control, breakdown of community, unfair treatment of workers and conflict of values. Several studies (Etzion, 1987, Malach & Jackson 1984) have raised the question of vagueness of the term "burnout" as well as job stress, Schulz Greenly & Brown (1995). However, several definitions and models have emerged. Burnout is defined as a syndrome or a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion as well as cynicism towards one's work in response to chronic organization stressors (Malach & Jackson, 1981, Etzion, 1987, Pines and Aronson 1988). The emotional exhaustion, one of the more extreme varieties of work related strain, manifests itself in employees as a general loss of feeling, concern trust, interest and spirit (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). Employee's emotional resources become depleted, and they no longer feel able to give of themselves at a psychological level (Pines & Aronson, 1981). Etzion (1987) relates the emotional exhaustion dimension is related to feeling weak, tired, and rundown, and it is characterized by low energy chronic fatigue, weakness, and negative attitude towards one's life, oneself and work (Etzion 1987). From an organizational point of view, burnout can lead to such things as decrease in turnover, absenteeism/lateness, greater intentions to quit and reductions in productivity (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). The outcome for organization mean greater levels of burnout will result to lower level of quantity and quality produced (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Furthermore, research conducted by (Maslach & Leiter, 1997) suggests that burnout can cause such physical problems as headache, gastro intestinal illness, high blood pressures, muscle tension and chronic fatigue. Cordes &Dougherty (1993) cited such psychological symptoms as lowered self-esteem, depression, irritability, helplessness and anxiety, Jackson (1987) found that the three dimensions of the Maslach burnout inventory to be associated with different job condition. Specifically, emotional exhaustion was strongly associated with perceived quantity of workload and role conflict, feelings of personal accomplishment were most associated with supervisors supportive behaviour and depersonalization was most strongly associated with role conflict and lack of participation in decision making. Etzion (1988), has further elaborated on the concept of the burnout syndrome by emphasizing its dynamic aspect. She views it as a process of energy depletion and deterioration of performance caused by emphasizing its dynamic aspects she viewed it as a process of energy depletion and deterioration of performance caused by continuous daily pressures, rather than discrete critical life events. In this process, enthusiasm wanes while previous involvement initiative, seriousness and sense of responsibility are gradually replaced by a pattern of routine and indifference.

There are two contributions to burnout, the individual's personality and perceived constraints in the organization environment. Burnout occurs----- when the relationship between the two is, or becomes dysfunctional. Burnout acts the same way, each of us reacts differently to the same job related stimuli. In some cases, we thrive while others end up starting down the path to burnout.

Various people have made dimensions about leadership and its impact on various aspects of work-related health. Various people have made the discussion. The discussions have suggested that leadership factors have and have had an influence of the increasing work related ill health but these suggestions have rarely been based on scientific studies (Ann, Pegg, & Tores, 2005). Leadership however, can be defined with regards to "influence" the art or process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly and enthusiastically toward the achievement of group goals (Kelloway & Barling, 2000). The leader is described as a possessor of the tools to create and change the structure and culture within an

organization (Ann et al 2005). These prerequisites will influence manager's leadership style, manager's health and also legitimate the communication process, feed back and also reward systems. According to Schein (1992), it is the middle and low level managers who primarily influence the subordinates, their stress and health outcomes. The leadership style of mangers and supervisors is often a source of stress for their employees. Poor quality leadership has been linked with high mental health consequences (eg stress, burnout, depression), whereas high quality leadership is related both to reduced evidences of these negative outcomes as well as increased health and mental well being (Julian Carson, 2007) leaders carry out their roles in a wide variety of styles eg. Autocratic Democratic, Participatory, Laissez faire (handsoff) etc. Often leadership style depends on the situation including the life cycle of the organization. Different writers have outlined different leadership style, Goleman outlined a total of six different leadership style, which include, coaching, pacesetting, Authoritative, Democratic, Afflictive and coercive leadership. Burns (1978) identified the transformational and transactional leadership style. Burns (1978) define leadership as leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent their values and the motivation-the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations of both leaders and followers. He insists that for leaders to have the greatest impact on the 'led' they must motivate followers to action by appealing to shared values and by satisfying the higher order needs of the led, such as their aspirations and expectations. Bass (1985) defines transformational leadership in terms of the leader's motivational effect on followers. They are inspired to achieve higher-order needs for their unique skills and talents. The end result of transformational leadership is empowering others to take more committed initiative in their work, inspiring them to be more committed and building their self-confidence. Transactional leadership in contrast is based on a transaction or exchange of of some thing of value the leaders possesses or controls that the follower wants in return for his/her services (Hobfoll, 2001). Transformational and transactional leadership are not at odds with one another, but complement each other as the circumstance dictates. The best leadership implicates the use of both transformational and transactional styles at the same time. Transformational leadership augments the effectiveness of transactional leadership; it does not replace transactional leadership (Bass and Yammarino, 1990). While "transaction" continues to be an effective tool and a necessary tool for leadership at all level, the goal of "transformational" leadership is to inspire followers to share the leader's values and connect with the leaders vision. Research demonstrates that a range of mental health issues can result from ineffective management/leadership styles. These issues range from feelings of helplessness and alienation (Ashforth, 1997), to stress, distress and finally to anxiety and depression. Job burnout is believed to result from combined effort of work related factors that create unrelieved work stress, which in turn, leads to generally debilitating psychological condition in individuals. It is widely acknowledged that work in the organizations are so demanding and challenging, hence organizational workers tend to work harder, putting extra time, trying hard to establish a good relationship with the leaders and going beyond their capabilities to meet with job requirement. Consequently, these challenges make them become stressed and after a long time workers may easily become burnout.

Brill (1984) claimed that burnout was the result of prolonged stress. Etzion (1987) argued that burnout was a prolonged exposure to stress. Stress is usually defined from a "demand perception-response" perspective. (Bartlett, 1998). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) integrated this view into a cognitive theory the study of occupational stress management

applied theory the study of occupational stress management (Lehrery Woolfolk, 1993). The basic concept is that stress relates both to an individual perception of the demand being made on them and to their perception of their capabilities to meet those demands. A mismatch will mean that an individual's stress threshold is exceeded, triggering a stress response (Clancy & Mc Vicar, 2002). An individuals stress threshold sometimes called stress "hardness" is likely to be dependent upon their characteristics, experiences and coping mechanisms, and also on the circumstances under which demands are being made. A single event, therefore may not necessarily constitute a source of stress (be a stressor) for all workers or for a particular individual at all times, and may have a variable impact depending upon the extent of the mismatch (Lee & Ashforth 1996). In the organizational environment, both managers and subordinates have implicated stress in the deterioration of performance efficiency. When performance efficiency suffers, the quality of the overall organizational environment and productivity deteriorates. The concept of individual differences cannot be ignored when talking about stress, this is because differences in individual personal characteristics such as personality and coping style are most important predicting whether certain jobs will results in stress-in other words, what is stressful or one person may not be a problem for some one else. Negative connotations are usually ascribed to the term "stress", yet some stress responses have positive benefits (Bartlett, 1998). It keeps us motivated and provides a great sense of achievement once we have resolved the stressful situations. Stress also increases the level of energy and muscle tension in our body improving our ability to concentrate and meet demands. It is when it gets out of control that it becomes negative. "Eustress" is a term commonly applied to those more positive responses while the term "distress" appropriately describes negative respects. "stress" therefore should be viewed as a continuum along which an individual may pass, from feeling eustress to those of mild/moderate distress to those of severe distress. Indicators or distress are recognized, but those of mild/moderate distress may not be observed collectively, or may have differing degrees of severity, and so symptoms at this level of distress are likely to vary between individuals. In contrast severe and prolonged distress culminates in more consistently symptoms of emotional "burnout" and in serious psychological disturbance. It is the transition to severe distress that is likely to be most detrimental to workers and is closely linked to staff absenteeism, poor staff retention, and ill health Mc Gowan 2001; Healy and Mckay 2000). The primary sources of stress within an organization originated form four areas: these include task demands, physical demands, role demands and inter personal demands. Any demand either of a physical nature or psychological nature, encountered in the course of living is known as "stressor". A stress response will occur as a result of an individual interaction with and reaction to the stressor (Knotts 1996). Task related stress is directly related to the specific characteristics of the job itself. This type of stress involves role ambiguity, conflicting task demand, work overload, or work meaningful participation in decision making no provision for meaningful participation in decision making and in security, among others (Knots, 1996). The result of stressors commonly associated with occupational stress tends to vary widely. Workers may simply resort to daydreaming or fantasizing. Alternatively, employees may react more actively by creating inter personal and intra organizational conflicts. Workers may also experience effects in their psychological and physical health. Physical consequences may include but are certainly not limited to, headaches, diabetes, fatigue, hypertension, chest and back pain, ulcers or even infectious disease. Psychological consequences may include anxiety, boredom, low self-esteem, forgetfulness, depression, anger and apathy or worry. Studies

show that 85% of all physical illness is stress related (Randolfi, 1996). Workers may also exhibit deviations in their behaviour. Example, of departures from normal behaviours may be over eating/loss of appetite, smoking, alcohol abuse, sleeping disorders, emotional outburst or violence and aggression (Randolfi, 1996). From organizational standpoint, stress has many consequences. Reductions in effectiveness, productivity and communication outcomes can be between the most debilitating for both the organization and for the individual. Other results may include accidents in the work place, job turnover, low morale, poor work relations, poor organizational climate, and absenteeism (Randolfi, 1996). Occupational stress is often associated with overachievers or workaholics. High level, of self-induced stress usually characterizes the individual. If one experiences stress overtime without relief one inclines to burnout. Burnout has become debilitating to both the worker and to the organization at large. This has led to the plight of determining the possible contributors to burnout. This study contributes to the literature by addressing the following questions. (1). Would leadership style have any statistically significant contribution to burnout? (2) would occupational stress have any statistically significant contribution to burnout?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether:
1. Leadership style would contribute to the burnout of organizational workers.
2. Occupational stress would contribute to the burnout organizational workers.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Leadership style: refers to the perceived transformational leadership style of a leader as measured by Multi-Factor leadership questionnaire (MLQ)
2. Occupational stress refers to role-based stress of a worker as measured by the Role-based stress inventory
3. Burnout: is the ability of a worker to become exhausted, depersonalized, and have reduced personal accomplishment as a result of work demands placed on him/her by the organization as measured by the Maslach burnout inventory (MBI).

THEORETICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Various theories have been used to explain burnout and each of these theories include: Maslach Burnout Model, pine's Burnout model and measure, and Shiron Melamed, Burnout Model and Measure (S-MBM). In summary, some theories explaining burnout were highlighted in this study. They included the Maslach burnout model, which views burnout as a syndrome, which consists of three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment. Another theory examined was pines burnout model that sees burnout as the state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion caused by long term involvement in emotionally demanding situations. Also Shirom Melamed burnout theory model was examined, and it views burnout as an affective state characterized by one's feeling of being depleted of one's physical emotional and mental exhaustion caused by long term involvement in emotionally demanding situations. Also Shirom Melamed burnout theory model was examined, and it views burnout as an affective state characterized by one's feeling of being depleted of one's physical emotional and cognitive energies. Model of stress at work and burnout were also highlighted. Among the major theoretical approaches to work related stress and its outcomes that have been applied to investigate stress and its outcomes that have been applied to investigate stress burnout relations in the research is the CORE theory. Empirical researchers conducted by different researchers were also reviewed. The

result of previous studies shows a negative relationship between leadership and the burnout. The results of previous researchers also confirmed that job stress correlated significantly with burnout.

HYPOTHESES

Two hypotheses were postulated and tested in this study, which include: (1) there will be no statistically significant contribution of leadership style to burnout of organizational workers (2) there will be no statistically significant contribution of occupational stress to burnout of organizational workers.

METHOD: participants. 254 workers comprising (154 males and 100 females) of power Holding Corporation of Nigeria (CHCN) were used for the study. The participants were randomly drawn from three locations namely, Nsukka, Enugu, and Port Harcourt. There age range was from 25-55 years, 25-34 years (38.25%) 35-44 years (39.4%) 45-55 years (22.4%).

Instrument: Three instruments were used for the stud. They include multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (1987). Role-Based Stress Inventory (1970) and Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (1983).

Questionnaires (which consisted of 2 sections) were used in the collection of data. The first section covered the demographic data such as: gander, age and marital status. The second covered measures of the variable of interest which are: leadership style, occupational stress, and burnout.

Procedure: Three hundred (300) copies of the questionnaires were distributed to the participants. Adequate rapport was established prior to administration. A convenient sampling technique was used to select participants. 260 copies were completed and returned. And out of this number, six (6) questionnaires were discarded for improper completion leaving 254 copies. This remaining were scored and subject to statistical analysis eleven (11) participant scores were further removed as univariate outliers leaving 243 participants. Statistical: Regression analysis was used to analyze the data. The study employed the cross-sectional survey design.

RESULTS
TABLE1: VARIABLE DESCRIPTIVE TABLE

S/N	VARIABLE	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	PARTICIPANT NUMBER
1	Leadership style	81.34	12.77	243
2	Occupational stress	51.18	10.55	243
3	Burn-out	51.00	15.48	243

The descriptive table shows that leadership style has a mean of (81.34) and a standard deviation of (12.77). occupational stress has a mean of (51.18) and a standard deviation of (10.55), while burnout the dependent variable has a mean of (51.00) and a standard deviation of (15.48).

TABLE 2   CORRELATIONS

	Burnout	Age	Marital status	Gender	Leadership style	Occupational
Perarson correlation-	-	.282**				
Pearson correlation	0.282**					
Pearson correlation	.186**	-.549**				
Pearson correlation	.287**	-.187**	.132*			
Pearson correlation	.212**	-.242**	-.076			
Pearson correlation	.371**	-.072	.194**	-.002	.018	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
a Listwise N = 243

      The correlation table reveal that the predictor, leadership style has, significant correlations with burnout (r=-21, p<0.01). Occupational stress have significant correlation with burnout (r=0.37, P<0.01). The demographics also revealed significant correlations with the criterion; age had significant correlations with burnout (r=-0.28, P<.01); marital had significant correlations with burnout (r = 0.19, P<0.01); gender had significant correlations with burnout (r = 0.29, P<0.01). the relationship between the predictors does not violate the assumptions of multi-collinearily; leadership style and occupational stress (r = 0.02, P>0.05).

TABLE 3: MODEL SUMMARY

Mode 1	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change statistics				
					R square change	F change	df1	df2	sig. F Change
1	0.370[a]	0.137	0.126	14.40833	0.137	12.766	3	241	0.000
2	0.543[b]	0.295	0.280	13.08204	0.157	26.672	2	239	0.000
3	0551[c]	0.304	0.287	13.02036	0.010	3.270	1	238	0.072

    a.   Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Marital-Status, Ages
    b.   Predictors: (constant), Gender, Marital-Status Ages, Occupational-Stress, Leadership-Style
    c.   Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Marital-Status, Ages, Occupational-Stress Leadership-Style, Leadership-Style x occupational-stress

The result of the regression analysis as presented in table 3 shows that the demographic variable account for 13.7% (R^2 change) variance in burnout which is significant (f change (3,241) = 1277, p< 0.001) . In the second hierarchical regression model, over and above the control variables, the predictors, occupational stress and leadership style accounted for 15.7% (R^2 change) variance increase in burnout which is significant (f

change (2,239) = 26.67, P<0.001). the interactions between leadership style and occupational stress accounted for only 1% (R^2 change) variance increase in burnout which was not significant (f change (1,238) =3.27, P>0.05

DISCUSSION

This study examined the contributions of leadership style and occupational stress to burnout. The result of this study clearly indicated that leadership style significantly predicted burnout (β = -0.18, P<0.1). This means that employees/workers who report their leaders/supervisors to be using transformational leadership style are suggested to report low burnout feelings in comparison to employees who experience a low transformational leadership style from their leaders/supervisors. That is, the more transformational a leader is, the less burnout experienced by workers and the less transformational a leader is, the more burnout experienced by workers. This is consistent with previous studies (e.g. Sosik & Goldshalk, 2000) who found that transformational leadership behaviours relate negatively to burnout. Also Vealey Armstrong, Comar & Greenleaf (1998), found perceived leadership styles/behaviours predictive of athlete burnout. The work of Densten (2005) also suggests that high levels of transformational leadership style results in lower levels of burnout. Thus, this study reveals that leadership style is a factor in burnout feelings of workers. The result also shows that occupational stress is a significant predictor of burnout (β= 0.39, P<0.001). This implies that employees who experience a lot of occupational stress are likely to experience more burnout in comparison to employees who experience low occupational stress. That is, the higher the occupational stress experienced by a worker/employee, the higher the burnout feelings, and the lower the occupational stress, the lower the burnout feelings experienced by a worker. However, this result is consistent with the work of Jarmal, & Baba (2000) whose result revealed that job stress was significantly correlated with overall burnout and its three dimensions. This result also supports the work of the Feng-Jen Tsai et al (2009) which shows that high occupational stress was associated with high levels of personal and work related burnout. Moreover, the result also showed that the interactions of leadership style and occupational stress do not show predictions to burnout (β= 0.10,P>0.05).

In addition, the demographic variables although not part of this study or stated in the hypothesis was also investigated. This result revealed that age and gender were significant predictors to burnout (β= 0.22, P<0.01; and β= 0.24, P< 0.001 respectively). The relationship for age and burnout is negative; suggesting that among the age categories sampled, older workers are likely to report less burnout feelings in comparison to employees who are younger. The reason could be that as a person advances in age in the work place, he/she adapts to the work environment thereby becoming more proficient on the job than the younger workers who might be new to the work environment and are still finding it difficult to cope with work demands. As employees advance in age at their workplace, burnout experienced is likely to reduce. Gender showed positive relationship to burnout; this means that female employees are more likely to report burnout feelings in comparison to male employees. This could be because of the roles women play in their various homes, that is combining house chores with their jobs might be stressful thereby leading to burnout, while the male counterparts might not be so interested in house chores.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research revealed that leadership style and occupational stress are statistically significant contributors to burn out experienced by the Nigerian organizational workers.

RECOMMENDATION

The researchers recommend that organizations should train their managers/supervisors on transformational leadership style, to ensure a conducive physical environment that is stress free for the workers for proper maximization of profit, high turnover and decreased burnout.

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