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Health Implications of Long-Working Hours among Bank Employees in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State

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ABSTRACT: This study was aimed at assessing the health implications of long-working hours among bank employees in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. This study was a descriptive cross-sectional study. The source of data was a primary data. Well Structured self-administered questionnaires with close ended questions were used. Multi-stage sampling technique was used in collecting data from the respondents for this study in order to appropriately apply the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Data collected from the respondents were analyzed using statistical package for social science (SPSS). Results were generated and presented in tables depicting frequency and percentage. From the findings, the prevalence rate of long working hours among bank employees is above 60%. The study output reveals headache 97%, fatigue 95%, high blood pressure 89% and back pain 85% as the significant health problems associated with long working hours in the banking sector. Coping mechanisms towards long working hours seemingly look positive and it ranges from taking a walk 91%, listening to music 90% and exercise 59%. Majority of the respondents (88%) are in the time of their youths, for youths to be having back pain and other health problems is already setting problem for old age. Hence, this study advocates for health agencies and government to develop strict policies that protect and promote employee health.

KEYWORDS: Longworking hours, banking sector and employees

I. INTRODUCTION

The increased rate of death as a result of stress related diseases which in turn leads to low productivity in terms of the quality of performance of employees in the banking sector calls for attention. As such, the concept of long-working hours among employees in the banking sector is a critical academic issue which has become a thing of concern to lecturers, occupational health personnel, employees, human resources managers, researchers and the society at large. The word long-working hours is defined as working for more than the normal internationally accepted 8 to 10 hours because of the huge work load, which in turn produces the negative unexpected outcome of work which is commonly measured in relation to what is attained during working hours through time [2]. Presently, the word long-working hours is used in the formulation of business policies and practices which is routinely used by organizations and companies where the length of time spending on work is too long and detrimental to the health of the employees directly or indirectly. Long-working hours involves the degree to which employees possess certain specific behavioural characteristics related to work attitude, job satisfaction and occupational health implication [11].

Long-working hours provides insight into why bank employees behave the way they should not behave, the attitude of customers' patronage and rate of ill health which makes them absent themselves from work and affects the business profit making. Bank employees who engage in long-working hours are expose to health hazards over time and these lead to more sick leave been taken thereby increasing medical cost, reducing the quality of job, lower performance and job commitment and high turnover. Long-working hours increases accident rate and likelihood for occupational injuries. Most employees work for long hours to make profit for their organizations and meet up with the customers' demands due to lack of personnel.



II. RELATED WORK

Long-working hours is perceived by the society as being stressful especially among bankers. Studies available to the researcher suggest that long working hours adversely affect the health and wellbeing of employees [14]; [12][5]. According to [3] the prevalence of long-working hours was examined in the third European survey on work conditions. Results showed that about 17 percent of fulltime employees work 45 hours or more per week. In Sweden, about 30 percent of the working population work overtime every week but the prevalence varies between occupational groups [10]. Work schedules differ in many ways, and more than 10,000 schedules are in use worldwide [6]. Hence, long-working hours exist in different forms.

In our society today, the banking sector is faced with the issue of long working hours. In Nigeria, banking job has been identified as a very stressful occupation owing to long-working hours, stiff competition, unstable banking policies, regulatory bottlenecks and difficult customers [4]. A study conducted by [1], revealed that bank workers notice symptoms indicating high stress level among them and these symptoms if not treated in the early stage, can lead to serious health problems such as depression, heart problems, diabetes and other chronic illnesses. Long-working hours has numerous health implications ranging from contraction of protracted illnesses like cardiovascular diseases, diabetics mellitus, high blood pressure, stroke, insomnia and hypertension among others; which may affect employees' performance. Furthermore, [12] reported that long working hours are also linked to headaches, nausea, insomnia and exhaustion. Despite these demerits associated with working long hours, there are some pros which can also be attributed to it and these include: a more flexible workforce, the ability to deal with bottlenecks, busy periods, cover of absences and staff shortages without the need to recruit extra staff, increased earning for employees and mutual employer benefit, avoidance of disruption to jobs where the workload is more difficult to share, example transport and driving and the ability to carry out repair and maintenance which has to be done outside normal working hours

[7] indicated that regular exercise such as jogging, aerobics, swimming, tennis, and walking reduce stress; improve cardiovascular functioning and enhanced well-being. [4] expressed that female employee in banks adopted personal coping techniques in dealing with occupational stress such as colleague's assistance, muscle relaxation. exercise example walking around when stressed, drinking much water, watching television, listening to music, chatting with colleagues and laughter. The impact of long working hours has necessitated the enacted of a few laws to help moderate it. Notable among these law in Nigeria is the Nigeria Labour Act 1990 section 13, subsection (2) which restrict working hours in order to optimize health and safety among workers.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study was a descriptive cross-sectional study. This study was conducted in Obio/Akpor local government area in the metropolis of Port Harcourt. The study population consisted of male and female white-collar (professional, operational, administrative, or managerial) employees, driver, cleaner and security who are within the age bracket of >18 to <60 years, presently working in different selected banks in Obio/Akpor local government of Rivers state at the time of study. The populace comprises bank workers with a minimum of two years working experience and must be operational / non-management staff members including security, drivers and cleaner while the interns, members of the National Youth Service Corps, employees on maternity and sick leave were excluded from the study. 91.7% prevalence rate was adopted for this study and based on this rate; the sample size was determined using Fischer formula.

The minimum sample size for the study was 117. A 10% allowance was given and the minimum sample size of the study was 129 respondents. A multi-stage sampling technique was used in collecting data to appropriately apply the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Four banks were sampled. That is, two first-generation banks and two new-generation banks. All the first-generation banks were tied and two banks were randomly picked by simple balloting. Likewise, all the new- generation banks were tied and two banks were randomly picked by simple balloting. Then, the researcher visited four branches from the first-generation bank and four branches from the new- generation banks chosen.



To select the number of respondents for each branch visited, the sample size 129 was divided by 8 which is the total number of bank branches visited, this gave approximately 16 respondents for 7 bank branch and 17 respondents for one branch. Well-structured questionnaires with close ended questions were used for data collection. Reliability of the questionnaire was determined by pretesting in one of the community banks. Ethical approval was sought from the bankers Union.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The prevalence of long working hours among bank employees in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State

Table One: Prevalence of long working hours in banking sector

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Do you usually work overtime	1	1%
Do you work more than 8 hours per day in your workplace	6	6%
Do you take unfinished office work home	6	4%
Are you available at your workplace outside your normal working hours	7	4%
Do you feel your targets and deadlines are unrealistic	5	3%

The table one showed that the prevalence of long working hours in Obio/Akpor local government area of Rivers state is above 60%. The results in table one collaborated with [9] who in their research indicated that the prevalence of work-related stress among bankers was 91.7%. Furthermore, [13] indicated that 203 cases of karoshi (196 men and 7 women), where the worker suffered a fatal cardiovascular attack, linked the illness to the amount of time worked. Two thirds of those who dies from karoshi regularly worked more than 60 hours per week, or more than 50 hours of overtime per month. Therefore, the prevalence of long working hours is high which increases the health implications of employee.

Table Two: Health problems associated with long working hours

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Fatigue	10	95%
Headache	13	97%
Body ache	4	81%
Back pain	9	85%
Blood shot eyes	8	76%
High B. P	03	89%



Ulcer	2	28%
Diabetes	2	28%

This results in table two collaborated with [12] who indicated that long working hours are also linked to headaches, nausea, insomnia and exhaustion. This result as opposed [8] affirmed a negative relationship between diabetes mellitus and working hours.

This table two showed results that some health issues were more dominant than the others. The study output reveals that fatigue 95%, headache 97%, body ache 81%, back pain 85%, and high blood pressure (B.P) 89% are the significant health problems associated with long working hours in the banking sector. Results showed moderately high responses among respondents.

Table 4.6 How do you cope or react to long working hours.

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Listen to music	04	0%
Exercise	8	9%
Drinking alcohol	2	8%
Smoking tobacco	8	6%
Watching television	2	3%
Take tranquilising drug	2	0%
Take a walk/stroll	06	1%

The table three showed result on behavior of bank employees in regards to how they cope or react towards long working hours seemingly look positive. In contrast to this result, a study carried out by [4] shows that listening to music while at work did not significantly reduce occupational stress. Furthermore, he reported that coping strategies for occupational stress by employee are exercise or relaxing the muscles. This result collaborated with [7] who found that regular exercise such as jogging, aerobics, swimming, tennis, and walking reduce stress; improve cardiovascular functioning and enhanced well-being. On the other hand, [4] indicated that female employees in banks adopted personal coping techniques in dealing with occupational stress such as colleague’s assistance, muscle relaxation. exercise example walking around when stressed, drinking much water, watching television, listening to music, chatting with colleagues and laughter. [9] revealed that tobacco smoking, alcohol consumption, overeating, aggressiveness, and withdrawal are among stress coping techniques employed by bank workers.



V. CONCLUSION

The surveyed banks in Obio/Akpor local government area of Rivers state exhibit high rate of long working hours and the bank employees cope positively to long working hours. Hence, the researcher recommended that health agencies and government should attend to the issues of long working hours by developing strict health-related policies that protect and promote employee health; healthful coping techniques should be organized by employer and employee should undertake a periodic stress assessment.

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