INFLUENCE OF JOB STRESS AND MARITAL STATUS ON JOB ATTITUDE AMONG NIGERIAN MEDICAL DOCTORS

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ABSTRACT
This study investigated the influence of job stress and marital status on job attitude among Nigerian medical doctors. Forty (40) medical doctors randomly drawn from five hospitals in Enugu state of Nigeria participated in the study. Grey-Tofte and Anderson (1981) Doctor Stress Scale (DSS) validated in Nigeria by Enukorah (2010) was used to assess job stress, while Lodahl and kejner (1965) Job Attitude Scale (JAS) validated in Nigeria by Mogaji (1997) was used to assess doctors job attitude. A survey design and a 2-way ANOVA were used for data collection and analysis respectively. The result indicated significant main effect of job stress on job attitude $F (1, 156) = 69.1, p<.05$. Doctors with low job stress had positive attitude to their jobs. Also a significant main effect of marital status on job attitude was found $F (1, 156) = 63.1, p<.05$. Single doctors showed more positive attitude towards their jobs than their married counterparts. There was no significant interaction effect of job stress and marital status on job attitude among Nigerian medical doctors. It was concluded that job stress and marital status are among the variables that have significant effect on job attitude of medical doctors. Both individual and governmental organizations should reorganize their work environment and make policies that will modulate stress and be family friendly.

Keywords: Job stress, Marital status, Job attitude and Medical doctors.
INTRODUCTION

Human beings belong to different professions, such as teaching profession, Engineering profession, legal profession, medical profession, etc. Profession is a type of job that requires special training or skill especially one that needs a high level of education such as the medical profession. People in different professions differ in their attitude to their jobs. Some demonstrate high (positive) attitude to their jobs, while some exhibit low (negative) attitude to their jobs. Attitude is the feeling of like or dislike. The feeling of like or dislike of one’s job can be caused by stress emanating from the job or work – family conflict. The medical profession irrespective of the special training involved, may not be exempted from these challenges. Stress is a pressure or worry caused by the problems in somebody’s life, while work-family-conflict refers to a situation where one’s work commitment interferes with his/her family commitment or where one’s family commitment interferes with his/her work commitment. Therefore, based on the above development, the variables of interest in this study are job stress (stress emanating from the job) and marital status (how being single or married interferes with one’s job), and how they influence medical doctors’ job attitude. Job attitude has emerged an important variable in organizational research. It has drawn attention of management scientist and organizational psychologist. This variable is being studied from different perspectives in the organization. It has great importance and significance in organizational development. In theory, job attitude is necessary for medical doctor’s professional growth. It is assumed that the higher the level of positive job attitude, the higher the degree of professional growth (Elloy & Everet, 1995). However, given that the current medical work force experiences a relatively unstable medical practice in the profession, it is possible that these challenges may have negative effects on the medical doctors and how involved they are in their jobs (Morrow, 1993).

Lodahl and Kejner (1965) believe that the main determinant of job attitude is a value orientation toward work learned early during the socialization process. An individual, who internalized the work ethics well, will probably have positive job attitude regardless of the context within which he/she might be employed. Bass (2007) points out that job attitude is a representation of the employee’s ego involvement in his/her job and is thus related to performance. Lodahl and Kejner proposed two types of job attitude, self-esteem and self image, while the self-esteem refers to the real essence of job attitude; self-image refers to the concept of internal motivation. Lawless and Hall (2003) refer to internal motivation as the degree to which a job holder is motivated to perform well because of some subjective rewards or internal feelings they expect to experience as a result of performing well. Thus intrinsic motivation is correlated with personal performance. Job attitude rather represents personal concentration or emotional commitment to one’s job. However, job attitude does not always correlate with personal performance (Blau, 1985). Blau proposed that job attitude involves only a single aspect, namely, the degree to which a person feels about the total work situation to be an important part of life, and to be central to their identity, because of the opportunity to satisfy one’s important needs.

Critical observations show that job attitude and job involvement go simultaneously in every organizational management irrespective of the fact that they have generally been considered as different concepts. Job attitude is the emotional state of liking or disliking one’s job, while job involvement is one’s psychological attachment to his or her job (Lawler & Hall, 2003). Therefore, work attitude reflects one’s feeling of like or dislike about his/her job which determines the level of his/her involvement in his/her job (Lawler & Hall, 2003).

Moreover, research has shown that stress generally has influence on job attitude. That is, researchers have overtime observed that when workers experience a high degree of job stress, it affects their overall health, which also triggers off negative job attitude from the workers.

According to Matteson (1997) the word stress means so many different things to so many different persons. That it has been described as the most imprecise in the scientific dictionary. There are literally hundreds of definitions of stress to be found in the research and professional literatures. However, stress can be defined as either a stimulus or a response. Kahn (1992) pointed out that stress is used to refer to damaging stimulus in the environment, and to be used to describe either a force that causes stress or the response to a stressful stimulus. Research has found that organizational structure is linked to job stress (Lambert & Horgan, 2006). Furthermore, perceived danger emanating from the job appears to be a salient antecedent of job stress. Stress is a normal part of human life in the modern world, and everyone has to cope with it. It has a harmful impact on the human life including workers. Braaten (2000) defined job stress as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occurred when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources or needs
of the workers. In addition, demographic variable such as age, psychosocial attributes, and marital status may be directly associated with job attitude. Braaten (2000) study on influence of job stress on job attitude among employees showed that employees who were under stress were found to show negative job attitude towards their work.

In addition, critical observations have shown that marital status and job attitude are positively related. This was made possible by couples juggling both work and family commitments to enable them meet up with their responsibilities. Gupta (1985) study on influence of age and marital status on work attitude among airport workers in New-York, USA, found that married workers showed more positive attitude to their work than their single counterparts. This could be that the married workers had more responsibilities than their single counterparts, and because they do not want to lose their jobs to enable them meet up with their responsibilities, they combine both the work and family commitments. The singles on the other hand, may not care if they lose their jobs because they seem not to have many responsibilities as their married counterparts. Work and family tension bring about depression, life stress, etc (Kahn, 1992). Barnet and Baruch (1995) pointed out that perceptions of insufficient time and energy to successfully perform work and family roles (work-family-conflict) have been associated with job and family dissatisfaction and stress.

Some theories were used to explain the job attitude of employees, such as Kanugo (1982) motivational approach theory contends that individuals develop belief that a job’s context potentially provides an opportunity for them to satisfy their most important future needs. Consequently, job attitude depends on employee’s needs (both extrinsic and intrinsic) as well as their perceptions of the job’s potentials to satisfy these needs. In addition, shore and shore (1995) organizational support theory helped to explain employee’s job attitude and other forms of commitment to their organization. This theory holds that in order to meet socio-emotional needs and to assess the benefits of increased work effort depends on the employees’ general perception or feeling concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. This theory further states that favourable opportunities for reward convey a positive perception of employees’ contributions and these contribute to perceived organizational support, which in turn enhance positive job attitude. Accordingly, opportunities for recognition, pays, and promotion have been found to be positively associated with job attitudes (Luttans, 2002).

Empirically speaking, numerous factors have been found to be associated with job attitude such as job stress and marital status. For example, Jamal (1984) examined the relationship between job stress and employee’s performance and withdrawal behaviour among 60 doctors in two hospitals in a metropolitan Canadian city on the coast. Job stressors assessed were role ambiguity, role overload, role conflict, and resource inadequately. Multiple regressions and correlation coefficient were computed to test the nature of the relationship between stressors and variables of the study. Data were more supportive of the positive relationship between stress and performance. Kontos and Riessen (1993) examined three aspects of family day-care provider’s job attitudes (Job stress, satisfaction and commitment) as they relate to providers personal characteristics, programme characterizing, and child-rearing preference. Eighty family day-care providers responded to a questionnaire on job attitude. Result showed that personal characteristics, personal programme characteristics predicted job attitude. Providers who perceived more social support, less job stress, were more likely to be satisfied with their job. On the other hand, Roberts (2002) investigated the impact of marital status on job attitude. A total of 100 representatives sample of the U.S adult population were used.

The result indicated a clear positive correlation between marital status and job attitude. Single workers showed more positive job attitude to their jobs than their married counterparts. Weaver (2010) after correlation between marital status and job attitude posited that single workers showed positive job attitude more than their married counterparts. However, Patel (1995) found that marital status had no significant influence on job attitude among workers. The difference in the results of the studies could be as a result of cultural differences of the places the studies were conducted.

Many studies have shown that in some countries of the world, job stress and marital status were found as variables that have significantly influenced job attitude of workers, while in others, the variable factors were found to be non significant on workers’ job attitude.
Critical observations have also shown that in the olden days particularly in Nigeria, when wives were “housewives” and the husbands were the “go-getters”, neither the wives nor the husbands was doing their works under pressure (stress). The wives were handling only the domestic works like washing, cooking, cleaning, caring for the children, etc, while the husbands were doing the works outside the home, such as the office and other forms of work done outside the family. The wives did not have any pressure from only the works done at home which gave them enough time and space for relaxation. Also, the husbands did not have any pressure (stress) from doing only the works outside the home. Then it was like division of labour between husbands and wives, where women were in-charge of the family works and the husbands were in-charge of the works outside the home. Those practices seemed to be some of the reasons why both men and women faced less stress in the past.

But in recent times, both singles, husbands and wives juggle or combine both family works and other works outside the home, thereby putting themselves under pressure (stress) while trying to meet up with their responsibilities both at home and at work outside the home (work – family conflict). The cause of this “mad-rush” in combining work and family commitments could be as a result of level of exposure, level of educational attainment, social responsibilities, women’s crave for gender equality, etc. Following this development, Nigerian medical doctors based on the nature of their jobs, may not be exempted from this challenge in their jobs as health workers. Job stress and marital status seem to impose a lot of challenges on Nigerian medical doctors thereby influencing their attitude to work.

Therefore, in view of the above development, the researcher was moved to verify whether such factors like job stress and marital status have significant influence on job attitude of Nigerian medical doctors. Thus, the following question was addressed, “will there be a significant influence of job stress and marital status on job attitude among the Nigerian medical doctors”?

Aim of study
In line with the above development, therefore, the aim of this study was to determine the influence of job stress and marital status on job attitude of Nigerian marital doctors.

Hypotheses
1. There will be no significant influence of job stress on job attitude of medical doctors.
2. There will be no significant influence of marital status on job attitude of married and single medical doctors

METHODOLOGY
Participants
A total of forty (40) medical doctors (Gynaecologists only) from the Igbo ethnic group participated in this study. Out of the forty (40) doctors, (Gynaecologists) sampled, twenty-six (26) were married, while the remaining fourteen (14) of them were single with a mean age of 44.00 and standard deviation of 8.24. They were randomly drawn using available sampling method from the population of the following hospitals as follows, Enugu State University Teaching Hospital, Enugu, - Ten (10) doctors, Bishop Shanahan Hospital, Nsukka-five (5) doctors, Oji River Medical Centre –Three(3) doctors, University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital (UNTH), Enugu –Fourteen (14) doctors, and University of Nigeria Medical Centre, Nsukka –five (5) doctors, all in Enugu state. Both male and female Gynaecological doctors were sampled. Twenty-eight (28) of the participants were Catholics, while the other twelve (12) were non-Catholics.

Instruments
Two instruments namely, Grey-Tofte and Anderson (1981) Doctors Stress Scale (DSS) and Lodahl and Kejner (1965) Job Attitude Scale (JAS) were used in collecting data from the participants.

Grey-Tofte and Anderson (1981) which has 20 –item questions was used to measure job stress of the doctors. The item questions on the DSS measure such stressors as death and dying, conflict with physicians or supervisor, inadequate preparation in dealing with the emotional need of patients, lack of support concerning treatment of patients and excessive work-load. The item questions were scored as “never” – 1 point, “occasionally” – 2 points, “Frequently” – 3 points and “very frequently” – 4points. The 20 – item questions in the scale were all directly scored. The DSS was validated by Enukorah (2010) for use in Nigeria. Enukorah (2010) obtained a test-retest reliability coefficient of .52 which was corrected with Spearman Brown
Correlation that gave .70 and validity of .84 which compared favourably well with Grey-Tofte and Anderson coefficient of .70.

Another instrument used was Lodahl and Kejner (1965) Job Attitude Scale (JAS). JAS is a 20-item inventory with Likert response format with 4 options and their scoring pattern of Strongly Agree -1 point, Agree -2 points, disagree-3 points, and Strongly Disagree 4 points. JAS used direct scoring and reverse scoring pattern for positively worded items and negatively worded items. Lodahl and Kejner (1965) provided the psychometric properties for American, while Mogaji (1997) validated this instrument for use in Nigerian context, and reported a reliability coefficient of .72, and a Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of .80.

**Procedure:**
A total of forty-six (46) copies of the inventories were administered to the participants in their private offices in their various hospitals in Enugu State. The copies of the inventories were filled and returned on the spot through individual testing. The whole copies were returned, but only forty copies were correctly filled and used for this study, while the remaining six copies that were wrongly filled were discarded.

**Design/Statistic:**
The design of this study was a survey design, while a 2 (Job Stress: Low vs high) x 2 (Marital Status: Single vs. Married) analysis of variance (ANOVA) F-test with unequal sample size was used to analyze the data generated.

**RESULTS**
Table 1: Table of means (X) and standard deviation (SD) of job stress and marital status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Stress</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>43.76</td>
<td>6.34</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>43.06</td>
<td>8.76</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>42.84</td>
<td>7.38</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>41.96</td>
<td>15.30</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Result in Table 1 indicated that participants with low Job Stress had higher mean score of Job attitude (M=43.76, SD = 6.34) than those with high job stress. Also single doctors obtained higher mean score on job attitude (M=42.84, SD = 7.38) than married doctors (M=41.96, SD =15.30)

Table II: ANOVA summary table of differences of job stress and marital status on job attitude.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of variance</th>
<th>Sum of square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P&lt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job stress (A)</td>
<td>8043.90</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8043.90</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status (B)</td>
<td>59.56.90</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5946.90</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AxB</td>
<td>85863.4</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>240.5</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error (S/AB)</td>
<td>77070.2</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>176924.4</td>
<td></td>
<td>159</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table II: The results showed significant influence of job stress on job attitude F(1,156) = 69.1,  p<.05. Doctors that showed low job stress had more positive job attitude to their jobs than those that showed high job stress. Thus, the first hypothesis was rejected.

Also the marital status had significant effect on job attitude F(1,156)=63.1, p<.05. Thus, the second hypothesis of no significant influence of marital status on job attitude was also rejected. However, the result showed no significant interaction effect of job stress and marital status on job attitude of the medical doctors.
DISCUSSION

The result showed that job stress had a significant influence on Job attitude. The doctors that had low job stress had positive attitude to their jobs more than the other doctors that had high job stress. The result of this study is in harmony with the studies of Lambert and Hogan (2005), Abualrub (2004), and Kantos and Reissen (1993) who observed that less job stress led to increased positive job attitude, while high job stress led to increased negative job attitude which may lead to workers’ low performance. This could be as a result of the influence of stress which we generally observed as one of the causes of people’s low performance. This result also seems to be consistent with the result of Jamal (1984) who observed that low job stress led to high performance, and high job stress led to low performance. Researchers have observed that when workers experience a high degree of stress, it affects their overall health which also has implications for job attitude of workers. The result of this study also agrees with the result of study of Jamal (1990) who observed that low job stress is related to job satisfaction.

Furthermore, the second hypothesis which says that there will be no significant influence of marital status on job attitude was rejected, which means that marital status had a significant influence on job attitude of the medical doctors. The result showed that single doctors showed more positive attitude towards their jobs than their married counterparts. This result was supported by Robert (2002) who reported that single workers showed more positive job attitude to their jobs than their married counterparts. Also weaver (2010) study is in harmony with the result of this study. Weaver (2010) reported that single workers showed more positive job attitude to their jobs than their married counterparts. This could be that the singles are less burdened than the married ones in terms of work-family commitment, and as a result, are not under any pressure or stress in doing their jobs. However, Patel (1995) found that marital status had no significant influence on job attitude of workers. This study disagrees with the result of the current researcher. This could be as a result of cultural differences in the places the studies were carried out. It could also be differences in the personality characteristics (such as age, level of education, exposure to environmental stimulations, etc) of the participants.

Implication of the finding

The fact that job stress and marital status were found to have significantly influenced job attitude, and that stress is inevitable in human life, both individual and governmental organizations should organize their work environment and work schedules to suit or match the capabilities or abilities of their employees so that they (employee) will not be under any pressure (stress) doing their work.

Furthermore, knowing full well that people should be getting married to one another, the employers of labour should design their work environment and work schedules to ensure that when people get married, they should not be juggling both work and family commitments under a very tight schedules or programme that will eventually put them under pressure (stress).

This, if implemented will go a long way reducing job stress among the medical doctors and increase their positive job attitude that will eventually improve their job performance.

Summary and Conclusion

In summary, the outcome of this study shows that job stress and marital status are among the variables that influence the job attitude of Nigerian medical doctors. Doctors with low job stress had positive attitude to their jobs more than those with high job stress. Also, single doctors showed more positive attitude towards their jobs than their married counterparts. There was no significant interaction effect of the variables of study on job attitude of the doctors.

Conclusively, having observed that job stress and marital status have significant main effect on job attitude of Nigerian medical doctors, both individual and governmental organizations should reorganize their work environment and make policies that will modulate stress and be family friendly.
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