

Work Hazards and Job Satisfaction Among Public Servants in Cross River State Nigeria and Counselling Interventions

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Abstract

This research study investigated work hazards and job satisfaction among public servants in Cross River State Nigeria and counselling interventions. To achieve the objectives of this study, one null hypothesis was raised to direct the study. Literatures related to the variables under study were reviewed. A sample of 800 public servants were selected from three senatorial districts of the population through stratified random sampling technique. Ex-post-facto design was adopted for the study. Questionnaire titled “work hazards and job satisfaction among public servants (WHJSPS)” was used for data collection. The hypothesis was tested using independent t-test, at 0.05 level of significance. The result obtained from the findings revealed that the level of job dissatisfaction among public servants in Cross River State is significantly high, showing that they are not job satisfied. Attitude to work has significant influence on job satisfaction; public servants with positive attitude to work were more satisfied with job than their counterparts with negative attitude to work. There is a significant inverse relationship between physical/mechanical work hazards, biochemical work hazards, ergonomic work hazards, psychosocial work hazards and job satisfaction. It was recommended among other things, that adequate and regular worker salaries and wages should be made by the government as workers will be happy to perform efficient job. Government should empower workers for career advancement, adequate prevention of work hazards through provision of safety devices, modern buildings, good roads and education of workers on the use of modern equipment, will greatly energize public servants for efficient work and job satisfaction.

Keywords: Work hazards; Job satisfaction; Public servant; Counselling interventions.



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1. Introduction

The essence for which man search for jobs, attend interviews and get employment is to meet personal needs and to achieve job satisfaction. An employee gets job satisfaction when he or she receives good feelings in performing jobs. One of the aspects of job satisfaction that gives good feelings to a person is reward a person gets for doing job well. This could be in form of monetary reward or the prestige that an employee gets when doing a job that helps the public. Locke citing in [Sari and Judge \(2004\)](#) defined job satisfaction as pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from appraisal of one’s job or job experience. Job satisfaction is viewed as a positive attitude by an employee toward his job as well as his personal life. [Abiodun and Gbodebo \(2012\)](#), described job satisfaction as a type of attitude that people have about their jobs and the organizations in which they perform these job. It also refers to the extent to which people like or dislike their jobs. These definitions clearly show that job satisfaction describes activities within and outside the workplace. However, work setting has direct and indirect impacts on how employees live in their society.

There are many factors which may influence Job satisfaction of public servants. Among others are career type, attitude to work and work hazards. Career type refers to a particular career of one that makes one to be more passionate and excited in performing job to the best of one’s knowledge. A career of one’s interest makes a person to perform job without complaining, goes to work early and would love to work even till late hours, because she values her job as more important. Super citing in [Asuquo \(2007\)](#), defined career to incorporate work and non-work related variables as the sequence of important positions, occupied by an individual all through his or her pre-occupations, occupational and post-occupational life including work-related roles such as those of employee and pensioner. This definition shows that career includes all the experiences from time of training, to the time an individual actually engage in work and progresses to the period of retirement.

Attitude to work as a factor that influences job satisfaction of public servants is viewed in two dimensions. A positive attitude and a negative attitude to work. [Sari and Judge \(2004\)](#), pointed that attitude and belief of a worker may cause a person to work harder or not to achieve job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction. An employee’s job satisfaction influences his general wellbeing as one spends good time at work. Inversely, if a person is dissatisfied with a particular job, this could lead to dissatisfaction in other areas of one’s life. [Herrel \(2005\)](#) stated that attitude to work can be powerful tool for positive action or a poison that cripples one’s ability to fulfil potentials.

Work hazards are some of the factors that cause problems to job satisfaction of public servants. Work hazards are things that threaten the wellbeing of a person or health and cause danger to live or death in the work place. Such

hazardous things exist at place of work and affect public servants at work. The hazardous things are waste materials, chemical substances, air polluted environment, long distance to work, heavy duty machine, sharp objects and many others that threaten life and cause job dissatisfaction (Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2010).

There are different classes of work hazards. International Labour Organization (2012) classified work hazard into biological and chemical hazards, psychosocial hazards, physical and mechanical hazards and ergonomic hazards. Biological hazards come from working with people, animals or infected plant materials. Examples are blood or other bodily fluids bacteria and viruses, insect bites, animal and birds dropping found in farm and laboratory and nursing homes that cause threat to life at work places.

Chemical hazards occur when one is exposed to any chemical substance in form of solid, liquid or gas in the work place. These include cleaning products and solvents, vapor and fumes, carbon monoxide or other gases, gasoline or other flammable materials. Both biological and chemical hazards could be called biochemical hazards.

Psychosocial hazards are related to the way work is designed, organized and managed as well as the economic and social context of work and are associated with psychiatric, psychological and or physical injury or illness that are directly or indirectly related to work place. Linked to psychosocial risks are issues as occupational stress and work place violence which are recognized internationally as major challenges to occupational health and safety of employees at work place.

Physical and mechanical hazards are common sources of injuries at work place. They are unavoidable in certain industries and ministries. They are the unsafe conditions of things that cause injury, illness and death at work. They are electrical materials, unguided machines, constant loud noise, exposure to sun lights, pins, ultra violet rays, heat of cold conditions, working on high ladders or roofs, working with mobile equipment, bad roads, vehicles in bad conditions and many others that cause danger, fear and even death to some public servants at work.

Ergonomic hazards occur when working conditions, type of work and or body position put strain on the body. They are difficult to identify because they do not cause harm immediately. Short term exposure to ergonomic hazards may affect the muscles the next day and long term exposure may lead to serious injury. Causes include poor lighting, improper chair, poor posture, awkward movement, especially if they are repeated, using force to work repeatedly and many other activities that cause strain and stress on the body.

A public servant is generally a person who is employed by the government either through interview as civic servants and politicians elected or appointed to serve the public. A public servant is someone who does something that is in the best interest of the people. (The Federal Republic of Nigeria Civil Service Manual Hand Book, 2013) (The Federal Republic of Nigeria Civil Service Manual Hand Book, 2013) stated that a public service is a service which ranks for the purpose of pension. Degoke (2016) defined public services as an organized body consisting of public servants: civil servants and elected or appointed officials that provides essential services for the citizens of a country. Public service is to improve quality of lives in the public sector and not necessary for profit making.

Generally, most public servants are not satisfied with their jobs most often, they complain of irregular and inadequate salary payment, lack of working facilities and equipment at work place, poor road linking to work and pollution at work places causes a lot of worry and depression to public servants.

Public servants' attendance records show that majority of employees go to work late, sign attendance register with false information on time they arrive at work place and some may leave the place of work to do private business while the job they were employed to do remain undone or delayed. In some area, files may be hidden in some offices. Public servant's job dissatisfaction borders non-Governmental organizations and Government and they device means to improve the state of job satisfaction of public servants. Individuals have suggested ways to solve this problem but the problem still persist.

2. Related Literature

Work hazards (ergonomic) and job satisfaction among public servants centred on things that threaten health and causes danger to life at work and how public servants work to get job satisfaction. Kanen-Age (2006), explains that accident is a sudden occurrence that results to an employee being injured while performing his/her normal duty to employer or government. It is enforceable in the law court that compensation should be paid to any employee who has permanent incapacitation. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) (2014) reported that Bureau of Labour statistics U.S. hospital's record show that 253,700 employees suffered work related injuries and illness in 2011, which is 6.8 work related injuries and illness for every 100 full time employees. It was reputed that workers employed in mining and oil and gas extraction industries had high rates of hazardous chemicals. Workers also had high prevalence of exposure to physical and chemical hazards. In 2010, 30% of workers had frequent skin contact with chemicals, 28% of those in mining oil and gas extraction industries had frequent exposure to smoke at work. About two-third were exposed to vapors, gas, dust or fumes at work. These issues cause public servants serious problem, inefficient work, poor health, absence from work, incapacitation and even death at work.

Workplace violence is and physical assault, threatening behaviour or verbal abuse that occurs in the work setting. Hodgetts and Hergar (2008) reported a study by the north western National life insurance company that workplace violence affects one in every four employees, sometimes the violence results in homicide which is the third leading cause of fatal occupational injury in the states. Most common violence was assaults. 1.5 million are affected in a year, followed by rapes and sexual assaults and robberies. Other examples of workplace violence include:

Verbal threats with attempt to cause harm, by striking, pushing to inflict bodily harm, including vague or covert threats attempt to cause physical harm, other aggressive physical act against another person. Verbal harassment, abusive or offensive language, questions or other discourteous conduct toward supervisors, fellow employees or the

public. Disorderly conduct, such as shouting, throwing or pushing objects, punching and slamming doors, making false, malicious statement against co-workers, supervisors or subordinates which tend to damage their reputations or undermine their authority. Inappropriate remarks such as making delusive statements. Using gun or other weapons into the workplace, these acts can be extremely upsetting to those who feel that their rights in the workplace are being violated.

Bimbola (2010) reported that there is no gain saying that only the living can work and earn wages; hence the event of fire outbreak was a part of global strategy and health directed at advocacy awareness. It was revealed that about 2 million occupational fatalities occur annually while more than 100 occupational fatalities occur and some billions of capital losses were reported in Nigeria between 2009 and 2010. It was reported that over 200 cases of industrial accidents occur in the workplace in Nigeria daily with high rate of fatalities. Some of the victims that suffered major injuries such as loss of hands, and legs were dismissed after the companies gave a token compensation to families of victims for both death and permanent disabilities. The study noted that adequate and efficient programme of safety and health at work should be provided. Organized labour should be more involved in the processing of accident and prevention of occupational health hazards.

2.1. Statement of the Problem

Job satisfaction of public servants has been a subject of concern among Nigerians. The problem that led the researchers into this study is the level of job satisfaction of employees. Most often they complain about their jobs and irregular payment of salaries and wages, lack of facilities and equipment, bad roads linking homes to workplaces, polluted environment and high cost of living. Coupled with fear of being kidnapped on the way to work and on the way back from work causing job dissatisfaction among workers.

Public servants who are not satisfied with their jobs and salary payment are discontent, frustrated and depressed. They go to work late, sign attendance register with false information about arrival time, leave the workplace early before schedule time to do private business, absent from work, demand money for services rendered to people, hide files in offices, and embezzled government money made for public development.

Government and non-governmental organizations have tried to solved these dreadful situations by ensuring that workers are happy through provision of some amenities, convicted and imprison offenders and payments of salary are made to solved workers' problems and to give public servants job satisfaction. In spite of all these attempt, the problem of job dissatisfaction still persists. These problems gave the researchers worry and want to investigate if the problem was caused by work hazards.

2.2. Research Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was raised to guide the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between physical / mechanical work hazards and job satisfaction of public servants.

3. Methodology

Ex-post-facto design was used for the study. The population of the study consisted of eight hundred public servants from eighteen local government areas of Cross River State, Nigeria. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select the number across the state ministries/ departments therein, hence, 415 were male and 385 females. Public servants career type and job satisfaction questionnaire (PSCTJSQ) was designed and used for data collection.

Table-1. Sample of Respondents Selected from Three Senatorial Districts of Cross River State, Nigeria

S/N	Senatorial Districts	Teaching Staff	Medical Staff	LGA Staff	Total
1	Cross river south:				
	Calabar south	53	22	17	92
	Akpabuyo	48	20	22	90
	Biase	46	23	22	91
2	Cross river central				
	Abi	49	30	18	97
	Obubra	49	27	18	94
	Boki	38	19	20	77
3	Cross River North				
	Obudu	50	23	15	88
	Bekwara	35	22	23	80
	Ogoja	44	25	22	91
	Total	412	211	177	800

Table-2. Cronbach’s alpha Reliability Result of the Instrument and its Sub Scale

S/N	Subscales	No of Items	SX ²	∑X ²	a
1.	Attitude to work	8	18.12	6.55	0.72
2.	Physical/mechanical	8	18.57	6.92	0.73
3.	Ergonomic work	8	19.33	6.25	0.77
4.	Biochemical work	8	17.26	5.83	0.75
5.	Psychosocial work	8	20.05	7.11	0.74
6.	Job satisfaction	8	18.16	5.71	0.78

Key: no. of items, SX² = item variance; ∑X² = sum of item variance; a = reliability coefficient.

Table-3. Summary of Descriptive Statistics for Continuous Variables

S/N	Variables	N	X̄	SD
1.	Attitude to work	800	19.72	4.36
2.	Physical/mechanical work hazards	800	17.88	2.67
3.	Biochemical hazards	800	18.52	6.59
4.	Ergonomic hazards	800	18.88	7.24
5.	Psychosocial hazards	800	18.64	6.62
6.	Job satisfaction	800	20.38	2.62

Table-4. Summary of independent t-Test Analysis for The Influence of Attitude to Work on Job Satisfaction Among Public Servants

Attitude to work	N	Mean	SD	t
Negative attitude to work	316	19.51	2.66	
				9.063*
Positive attitude to work	484	21.25	2.60	

P<0.05; df=798; critical t-value=1.96

3.1. Hypothesis one

This hypothesis in its null form states that there is no significant relationship between physical/mechanical work hazards and job satisfaction of public servants.

Table-5. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Relationship Between Physical/Mechanical Work Hazards and Job Satisfaction of the Public Servants. (N=800)

Variable	∑x ∑y	∑x ² ∑y ²	∑xy	rx _y
Physical/mechanical work hazard (x)	14304	291328		
			324528	-544
Job satisfaction (y)	18560	435680		

This hypothesis was tested using Pearson product moment correlation statistic. The result is presented in table 5.

The result in table 5 showed that calculated r-value of -544 is in absolute sense greater than the critical r-value of 0.062 at 0.05 level of significance, using 798 degree of freedom. The calculated value is negative and thus implies that there is a significant inverse relationship between physical/mechanical work hazard and job satisfaction among public servants. That is, the more the physical/mechanical work hazard faced by public servants, the less satisfied they were on their jobs. Based on this result, the null hypothesis was rejected.

4. Discussion of Findings

In the above hypothesis as analysis showed that the calculated r – value was in absolute sense greater than the critical r – value which means that the calculated value is negative and it implies that there is a significant relationship between physical / mechanical work hazards and job satisfaction among public servants. The result also revealed that the more the physical/mechanical work hazards faced by public servants, the less satisfied they were on their jobs. As opined by Bureau of Labour Statistics (2010) on injuries, illness and fatalities report that physical hazards were the common unsafe conditions that cause injuries illness and death to workers at work places and in 2010 mechanical related injuries were responsible for 64,170 injuries that workers obtained permission for treatment from work. In the ministry of Agriculture, more reports were given about injuries from vehicles from farm activities, injuries from falls and death remain major hazards from farm workers. This result is also in line with Okereke (2016) result findings, which revealed that Nigerian workers are exposed to a lot of occupational hazards at work.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated work hazards and job satisfaction among public servants in Cross River State. From all indications it was realized that there is significant inverse relationship between physical/mechanical work hazards and job satisfaction of public servants. That is the more the physical/mechanical work hazards faced by public servants, the less satisfied they were on their jobs. Based on this result, the null hypothesis was rejected.

From the above, it is recommended that, provision and education of employees on safety devices and use of equipment like: safety shoes, coveralls and other personal protective equipment (PPE) and proper security of equipment will save lives and machines at workplace. Also adequate prevention of work hazards can be ensured by the government through implementation of laws that guide against mismanagement of machines and waste products in all facets of working environment will greatly reduce harm to lives and job satisfaction.

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