

WORK RELATED STRESS, JOB SATISFACTION AND DUE PROCESS IN NIGERIAN PUBLIC SERVICE

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Abstract

Most workers feel some sense of purpose and accomplishment about their jobs especially when it is rewarding and self satisfying. However, poor work conditions can also pose tremendous burdens and contradictions of purpose. Issues like low motivation, underpay and consequent strike actions, work-overload, difficult superiors or co-workers, job burnout, family problems, etc can all place serious pressures and strain on the worker. This may resultantly constitute stress. Therefore, this paper discusses the effects of work-related stress on employees' work attitude in the public sector; its relationship with job satisfaction and consequent impact on observance of due process in Nigerian public service. Utilizing relevant data generated from secondary sources and the Range of Affect theory, the paper establishes that the situations that give rise to work related stress impinge negatively on how workers enjoy their job and that this has far reaching implications on public service performance in Nigeria. The paper recommends that work conditions in Nigerian public service must be improved to cushion the effects of work-related stress, and consequently, contain pervading breaches of due process.

Keywords: Work, Stress, Job Satisfaction, Due Process, Public Service

Introduction

There is increasing evidence that attitudes about one's job such as stress and job satisfaction are critically important to the efficient and effective functioning of work organizations such as the public service. The economic problems which Nigeria experienced from the late 1970s and which has persistently been affecting the psyche and morale of workers in the public service has created such feelings that are likely to create stress and

consequently affect job satisfaction and performance. Attitudes that give rise to stress affect not only the individual work but the whole organization, likewise, attitudes that give rise to job satisfaction which is the opposite of worker stress may not occur or yield the desired objectives especially when the worker feels over taxed or threatened in his/her job or position, and this has certain implications for the performance of the worker.

The foregoing suggests that, regardless of the approach adopted in the consideration of job satisfaction and overall performance of the public service, it is still important to bear in mind that work related stress may bear positively or negatively on the level of satisfaction a worker may derive from his job and that this has certain implications for the public service in its effort to perform creditably well in its functions. Links between work related stress and job satisfaction have been provided by various scholars such as Beehr and Bhaget (1985), Gherman (1981), Hart and Cooper, (2001), and *Hart Field*, (1990). However, the construct of stress is quite complex so much so, in that researchers cannot agree on a single definition (Kahn and Boysiere, 1992). There is no doubt that a public official under stress may not perform optimally and may not derive the necessary satisfaction in his job. However, with the adoption of the Due Process mechanism in Nigerian public service, it was expected that issues that give rise to stress in the work place and affect job satisfactions should reduce to enable public servants perform up to expectations. Unfortunately, things have turned out the negative side. With demeaning work conditions and low job motivations, due process itself is further breached by the rank-and-file in the Nigerian public service.

The focus of this paper therefore is to examine how work-related stress, which consequently reduces job satisfaction, undermines due process regime in the Nigerian public service.

Conceptual Explanations

Stress

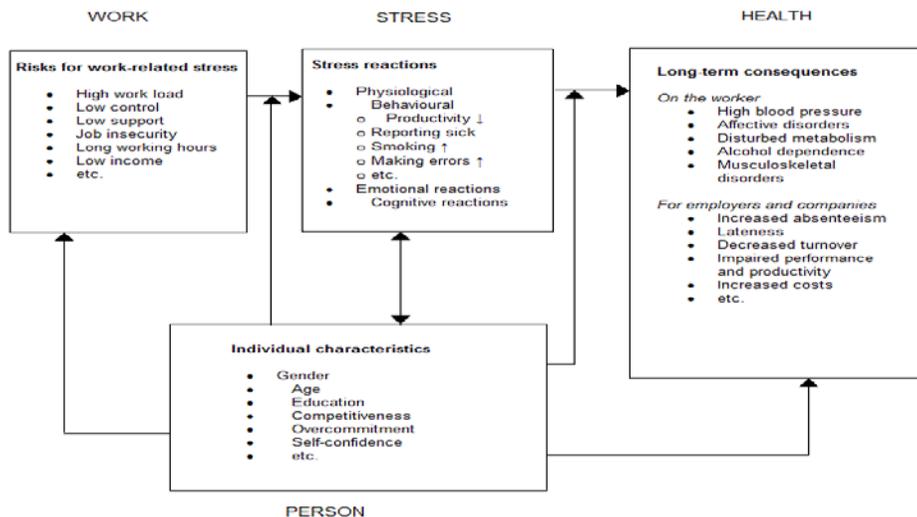
Stress is one concept that is complex that researchers cannot agree on a single definition for it. Consequently, there are many different explanations of the concept (Ivancerich and Matteson 1990). For instance, Hans Seyle (1976) defines stress as primarily “a psychological reaction to certain threatening environmental events.” For him, work related stress would simply refer to the stress caused by events in the work environment. Riggio (2003) sees stress as “the physiological and/or psychological reactions to events that are perceived to be threatening or taxing.” While Lazarus (1991) went further to opine that work related stress are reactions resulting from a worker’s perception that a certain environmental event is a threat or a challenge. It is believed that stress places physical and psychological on the worker and make demands that not only tax the worker but makes him/her to

exceed the worker’s adjustive capacity. As such it is the physical, mental and psychological response of an individual to pressure from the worker’s environment which results in behavioural patterns and attitudes that are deviance from expectation (Obiora, 2007; Lazarus and Folkman, 1984).

Importantly, Cohen (1980) believes that “stress is also related to poor job performance.” While buttressing on the impact of work-related stress of work performance, Cohen observes that stress can have positive impact on employee performance as some people perform more under stress but its negative impact seems likely to outweigh its positive impact. It is in view of this that the due process mechanism is imperative in any organization but especially in the public service since it creates room for individuals to behave normal and as such derive positive feelings about their job. When there is due process, it will reduce worker stress and engender job satisfaction.

More practically, scholars have attributed worker stress to various factors which occur on or away from the place of work. For instance, Riggio (2003) believes that there are two sources of work related stress; the environmental-(situational stress), or from an individual personal characteristics-(dispositional stress). Situational stress are caused by all aspects of one’s live called stressors which can occur at home, at school or in our places of work. However, the stress at home can spill over to work situations and vice versa because researches have realized while studying the causes of stress that it is important to look at the broad picture of an individual’s total stress life. Fig.1 illustrates the causes and consequences of work-related stress.

Figure 1: Model of Causes and Consequences of Work-Related Stress



Source: Adapted from Kompier and Marcelissen, 1990

However, for the purpose of this paper, we focus more on the stress that comes from work place. As we had earlier stated situational stress are that arise from certain conditions that exist in the work environment or in the worker's personal life. Other likely causes of worker stress include the nature of the occupation as some jobs are believed to be more stressful such as doctors, bankers, nurses, police officers, academicians etc. (Krakowski, 1982; Mohler, 1983; Riggio, 2003). Individual source of stress are caused by the behaviourable pattern, and dispositions of the individual such as his psychological and/or emotional reactions to events. Work related stress can also be grouped into organizational and individual sources. Organizational sources of work related stress include such situational stressors we had earlier mentioned which occur in the environment under which the work is done and the tasks and demands of the job such as (work over load, under utilization etc), and work role stressors such as (job ambiguity, physical work conditions, lack of control, harassment). Individual sources of work related stress can also be caused by the characteristics of the workers themselves through behavioural patterns like anger, hostility, impatience, aggression etc. (Obiora, 2007)

Job Satisfaction

The concept of the job satisfaction consists of the feelings and attitudes one has about one's job. These attitudes includes all aspects of negative or positive feelings about a particular job which are likely to contribute to the development of feelings of satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) Riggio, 2003). It can also be referred to as an employee's overall sense of well being at work (Ang, 2003).

Job satisfaction describes how content an individuals is with his or her job. It incorporates issues like, how does the worker feel about a job or task. Perhaps this may have influenced the views of Locke (1976), who described job satisfaction as "a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job; an affective reaction to one's job, and an attitude formed towards one's job." Weiss (2002), believes that such attitudes formed towards one's job are normally based on feelings, beliefs and behaviours. Several factors can influence a persons level of job satisfaction and apart from the demands on him/her which may psychologically make a worker not to be comfortable on a job, such as issues of pay level and benefits, the perceived fairness of the promotion system within the organization, the quality of work conditions etc. The important fact about the whole factors are that the can make a worker to be satisfied or not in an organization. It is widely accepted that job satisfaction is a function of work-related rewards and values (Vroom, 1964; Kalleberg, 1977).

Due Process

Due Process is a mechanism introduced for ensuring strict compliance with the openness, competition and cost accuracy, rules and procedures that should guide contract award within the Federal Government of Nigeria (FMINO, 2004). Due Process is all about strict compliance to rules and regulations. In the Public Service, due process is doing the right thing at the right time; following instructions and making things to work; discharging public duties in an open and transparent manner and ensuring that rules and regulations are adhered to strictly without fear or favour. Due process encompasses issues of rule of law and constitutionalism, since it is all about adherence to rules and regulations (Obiora, 2007:41). Due process as a mechanism aims at achieving the set objectives of ensuring transparency and accountability in the management of Nigeria's public resources. At the Federal, State and Local Government level, due process goes further than the above and includes adherence to rules and regulations in the Public Service through openness and transparency in official affairs. Nowadays, most discourse on governance and management of the public revolve around the need for efficiency and effectiveness. This can only occur when there is due process in public service because when there is due process, the affairs of a public organization shall be conducted according to rules and standards and there will be less stress and those in public office can derive more satisfaction on their jobs.

Theoretical Nexus

While stress generally has been a subject of disagreement among social scientists due to the difficulties associated with defining it precisely or measuring it, theories have been proffered by several scholars towards explaining it. However, theories of stress cannot ignore its relationship with job satisfaction since in some ways, satisfaction and stress can be opposite sides of a coin. The Range of Affect Theory, associated with Edwin A. Locke is arguably regarded as one of the most famous job satisfaction models. The theory believes that satisfaction is determined by a discrepancy between what one wants in a job and what one has in a job. The theory posits that "how much one values a given facet of work" (for instance, the degree of autonomy and level of control in a position) moderates how satisfied or dissatisfied one may become when expectations are met or not met (Locke, 1976). Range of Affect Theory believes that when a person values a particular fact of a job, his satisfaction is more greatly appreciated both positively (when expectations are not met) compared to one who does not value that fact.

Essentially, when a worker is stressed, he will not be satisfied and when one is satisfied in a job or position, he is not likely to be stressed. One of the major causes of workers stress is worker role such as job ambiguity.

Workers know what they want in a job and when they don't get it, they become stressed and dissatisfaction sets in. Most people in the public service experience job ambiguity especially when there is conflict in schedule of duties. Apart from this, some positions and tasks in Nigerian public service are given based on nepotism, tribalism etc. while promotions are hardly done on merit and this most at times creates stressful environment for some workers. The best option thus becomes that the practice and use of due process in all public service dealings should be adopted as it can be a better way to ensure that conditions that give rise to stress are avoided, while job satisfaction will be promoted in the public service.

Work Related Stress and Job Satisfaction:

Although, worker stress may impact either negatively or positively on the worker, the negative impact outweighs its positive impact. Work related stress impacts more negatively on the worker's job satisfaction as it may affect his health. Riggio (2003) has observed that "work related stress leads to poor health as it is believed that one-half of all physical illness is stress related." As an ailment which can be self induced, worker stress is a silent killer which has been responsible for many other illness suffered by mankind. Stress can also have negative impact on the psychology of the worker as it can lead to depression, anxiety and chronic fatigue. It has also been associated with alcoholism and drug abuse which may lead to accidents, unnecessary aggressive behaviour etc. Based on this, decreased work performance, and increased absenteeism may likely occur in a place of work if it is not well managed.

As earlier observed, work related stress occur as psychological reactions to events that are perceived to be a threat to job satisfaction, while lesser job satisfaction may lead to work related stress. Again, work related stress has also been identified as a major cause of lack of performance or low productivity by workers. Cole (1997) has observed that this negative effects of stress has serious implications for both the worker and the organization. As he states, "when an organization's employees suffer from stress, the results are likely to take one or more of the following forms;

- High levels of sickness and absenteeism;
- Reduced productivity, and failure to meet targets;
- Increased number of internal conflicts between individuals;
- Undesirable high rate of staff turn-over; and
- Low moral, health and job complaints (Cole, 1997).

He went further to note that assuming that these over manifestations of stress are not well managed by the organization very well, it is likely to be faced with a range of factors that indicate dissatisfaction. Riggio (2003), believes that prolonged exposure to stress such as unresolved interpersonal conflicts, lack of clearly defined work tasks and responsibilities, extreme

over work, lack of appropriate rewards etc. by the organization may lead to job burnout – which is the opposite of job satisfaction.

Stress, therefore, is a major factor in ensuring whether there will be job satisfaction or not in public service. Stressors are problems to the organization and when workers are not satisfied, it shows in their attitudes towards the organization and the individuals around them.

Sources of Stress in the Nigerian Public Service

Practically, there are certain basic work situational realities that significantly contribute to stress. Put differently, the conduciveness of work environment largely determines the level of stress burden on an employee. In this sense, Kohun (1992) defines work environment as an entirety which comprises the totality of forces, actions and other influential factors that are currently and, or potentially contending with the employee's activities and performance. Work environment is the sum of the interrelationship that exists within the employees and the employees and the environment in which the employees work. By logical underpinning, a healthy work environment not only projects job satisfaction but reduces work stress. In fact, the need to provide a safe work environment for employees has had a long history in human resource management. Spector and Beer (1994) contend that work systems cannot only affect commitment, competence, cost effectiveness and congruence but also have long term consequence for workers' wellbeing. There are some evidences to indicate that work systems designs may have effects on physical health, mental health and longevity of life itself. Conducive work environment, thus, ensures the well being of employees which invariably will enable them exert themselves to their roles with all vigour that may translate to higher productivity (Akinyele, 2007; Yusuf and Metiboba, 2012).

First amongst the work environment related stress-causative factors is the issue of poor motivation. On this, Echu (2001:158) notes that:

Effective employee motivation has been one of management most difficult and crucial responsibilities since the turn of this century. Success in this endeavour is becoming a more eluding challenge in light of managing a diverse work-force with multidimensional characteristics... In public sector such as Nigeria... Administrators and Managers... are not adequately meeting these emerging challenges. It has become a common phenomenon for public/government employees to spend as much as twenty out of the forty working hours per week (on the average) at home in the

name of strike actions or other excuses. Instead of motivated employees, our institutions are filled with demotivated and frustrated working force. The consequence of this is decline in productivity, creativity, involvement and satisfaction of employees. More often than not, these abnormal behavior of individuals or groups take its root from motivational problems.

More critically, it should be noted that in the Nigerian public service there is little or no form of incentives apart from the monetary rewards for the job done. Only an insignificant percentage of some 3% of workers have access to non-monetary incentives such as achievement, power, affiliation, job security, growth and development and the like. Placing the Nigerian public servants in Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, it could be found that a mere 12 % of the Government workers has been found within the "Safety Needs bracket," which translates most directly into a concern for short and long-time job security. While as much as 85% of Nigerian workers in the public sector perennially remain in the "physiological needs." Physiological need is at the lowest ebb of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, implying therefore that most Nigerian public servants are not enjoying satisfaction in their present cadre, and as such likelihood of frustration and stress is inevitable. The other remaining 3% is made up of individuals who desire affectionate relationship and regular interaction with others (Echu, 2001).

In as much as the Nigeria Labor Act of 1990 addressed employment issues, including health and safety and conditions of work, there is no indication attention was shown to workplace flexibility (United Nations, 2009). However, there are general provisions for work hours that are set through collective bargaining. For work exceeding six hours a day, workers are entitled to at least one hour rest. Workers who work above the normal work week are entitled to overtime pay. The law allows for employers to change work hours during "unforeseen circumstances." In practice however, hardly are Nigerian public employees compensated for extra-hour jobs performed.

Second to poor work environment issue is the lingering question of underpay or no pay for actual work done by Government employees. Nigeria has witnessed a good number of strikes and lock-outs which are either in protest to wages or general work conditions. Obviously, Nigeria still suffers from a proliferation of strikes and lock-outs, even though it is believed to have ratified both Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and Convention No. 98 on Collective Bargaining in 1960 (ILO, 2008). These laws gave workers the right to join or form trade unions. However, the right

to organize is not extended to workers in certain essential services, or to workers employed at companies of 50 people or less (Okene, 2007).

However, after a bill was passed in October 2003 and signed in March 2005, it further weakened the Nigerian Labor Congress (the major trade union) and curbed the right to strike. The new legislation ended automatic trade union membership and introduced a general strike ban that includes workers in essential services. Therefore, employees of the Customs and Excise Department, the Immigration Department, the Prison Service, and the Central Bank of Nigeria, are some of those classified as essential services. This means that there are no provisions for formal dissemination or relief of aggression for this group, which could be not only culminated to serious stress but lead to abnormal roles and poor job out. Additionally, the Labor Act, which prohibits anti-union discrimination by employers, only covers those classified as unskilled workers. Further, both the right to collective bargaining and the right to strike come with certain restrictions that make it difficult for the workers to exercise. For collective bargaining, the restrictions imply that every agreement on wages has to be registered with the Ministry of Labor; the Ministry decides whether the agreement becomes binding.

Generally, trade unions in Nigeria intended to address certain work issues, including employment security, work conditions, wages, relationships with employers, justice, and equality, but hardly achieved this task. Workers and representatives often have to deal with oppression and aggression from the government and the employers alike. The implication is that employment law tends to favor employers over employees. As a result, wages, work hours and other conditions of employment continue to remain an issue (Onyejeli, 2011). It is further contended that the major problem with employment practices in Nigeria is that workers are regarded as “capital resources” rather than “human resources” and, as a result, employers place more emphasis on the capital implications rather than the human implications. This perspective stems from the general situation of the government and the economy. The country appears to be operating on a democratic regime where the ‘people’s voice’ is supposed to matter, but that is only in theory. In practice, employment equity is far from the case (Ayiede, 2002). Therefore, all these factors help to mount serious stress situation and job dissatisfaction on Government employees with consequent negative impact on due process. This we shall succinctly examine hereunder.

Due Process in the Nigerian Public Service

Essentially, public procurement and due process in Nigeria’s public finance management was promoted in the second lap of Obasanjo’s presidency. The Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit (BMPIU), referred to as due process, was created to enforce standards in the area of

public sector procurement. It provides among others, for open and competitive tender arrangement for government contracts, to detect and punish over-invoicing of government contracts. This mechanism aims at ensuring that tenders are made open to all bidders and that contract awards also undergo a process of rigorous review, oversight and certification by the BMPIU. The whole idea of the due process regime tilts towards curtailing 'looting' of public funds and ensuring value-for-money in all government transactions (Ezeibe and Iwuoha, 2011).

Importantly, the BMPIU focuses on the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) which are public institutions through which government implements its policies and programmes. The MDAs constitute the body of career public and civil servants who are burdened with the responsibility of giving meaning to public policies and programmes for the wellbeing of the people and the achievement of the objectives and goals of government. The following document provides basic information on the guidelines contract procurement in the Nigerian MDAs/parastatals.

Circular on New Policy Guidelines for Procurement and Award of Contracts in Government Ministries/ Parastatals

The first step towards enthroning transparency in conducting government business therefore was the issuance of Circular No. F. 15775 of 27th June, 2000 on "New Policy Guidelines for Procurement and Award of Contracts in Government Ministries/ Parastatals". The Circular spelt out in great details the procedures and levels of approvals for the award of contracts to meet international best practice. The main provisions of the Circular are as follows:-

- a) Establishment of a Steering Committee and Procurement Reform Implementation Unit (PRIU) to prepare the ground for the establishment and proper take-off of a Public Procurement Commission (PPC) which would be the apex policy making body on all procurements and award of contract matters in the public service;
- b) Abolition of Federal and Departmental Tenders Boards;
- c) Permanent Secretary to approve contracts of works, services and purchases up to N1,000,000.00 (approximately U.S. \$7,937.66);
- d) Establishment and strengthening of the Ministerial Tender Boards;
- e) Strict prohibition of Contract Splitting;
- f) Open competitive tendering procedures;
- g) Advertisement of tenders in at least, two national dailies, and or government gazette and at least, six weeks before deadline for submitting tenders;
- h) Opening of tenders in public with or without press coverage;

- i) Clearly defined bid criteria;
- j) Committee of professionals to evaluate bids;
- k) Officials involved in the tendering process to declare conflict of interest and exclude themselves;
- l) Publication of major contract awards above N20 million in two national dailies;
- m) Bid security not less than 2% for contracts valued at N10 million and above from a reputable Bank;
- n) Performance Security for all contracts valued at N10 million and above to attract performance security in an amount of 10% of bid price. Performance Guarantee to be issued by reputable banks;
- o) Interest on delayed payment by Government Ministries/ Extra-Ministerial Departments to suppliers/ contractors not settled on or before 60 days from submission of invoice or certificate of job completion;
- p) Final payment of contracts over N5 million to be co-signed by the Auditor-General or his representative in Ministries or Agencies and the contract officer;
- q) All contracts valued at N50 million and above to be approved by the Federal Executive Council (FEC) (Ekpenkhio, 2003).

The Role of Public Procurement Commission (PPC)

When the Public Procurement Commission comes on stream, it will among others perform the following vital roles:

- a) Act as an oversight body independent of the Tender Boards; ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of procurement functions across the public sector. It is a permanent oversight body, which would guide and monitor purchasing entities.
- b) Developing Government Procurement at Macro level;
- c) Monitoring of the procurement environment;
- d) Act as instrument of administrative review;
- e) Serve as a regulator;
- f) Provide coordination services; and
- r) Monitor and review periodically the Procurement Law based on the United Nations Commission for International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) model (Ekpenkhio, 2003).

Ethics of Work for Public Servants

Particularly, more to the specificities of public procurement and award of contract guidelines which have been well highlighted, there are also other important work ethics in the public service which also speak volume of the expected conduct of a public servant. They are as follows:

- A public officer shall not put himself in position where his interest conflicts with his duties and responsibilities

- He shall not receive or be paid emoluments of any public office at the same time as he receives or is paid the emoluments of any public officer. The proviso is that he shall be free to participate in farming or participate in running a farm, etc

- Operating a bank account in a foreign country is prohibited for certain categories of people, such as governors, the president, vice-president, etc

- After retiring a public officer shall not while receiving public pension accept more than one remunerative job as Chairman, Director or employee in an establishment owned and funded by the State

- A public officer shall not ask for or accept any property or benefit of any kind on account of anything done or omitted to be done while discharging his duties and responsibilities (from commercial firms, business enterprises or persons who have contracts with the government) ☒ Only “culturally” defined personal gifts are permitted under this provision!

- The President, Vice-president, Governor, Deputy-Governor, Minister of the Government of the federation, State commissioners, or any public officer who holds office of Permanent Secretary/Director-General, or head of any public corporation, University or other parastatal organization shall not accept (a) a loan, except from government or its agencies, a bank, building society or any financial institution recognized by law, and (b) any benefit of whatsoever nature from any company, contractor or businessman or the nominee or agent of such person; provided that such the head of such corporation or of a University ..., may, subject to the rules and regulations of the body, accept a loan from such body

- No person shall offer a public officer any property, gift or benefit of any kind as bribe or inducement for the granting of any favour or the discharge in his favour of any public officer’s duties.

- A public officer shall not do or direct to be done in abuse of his office an arbitrary act prejudicial to the rights of any persons knowing that such act is unlawful or contrary to government policy

- A public officer shall be a member of, belong to, or take part in any secret society and or any society the membership of which is incompatible with the functions and dignity of his office

- Asset/liability declaration is 1) within 3 months of taking office 2) Thereafter every 4 years and 3) a written declaration of all assets and liabilities of self, spouses and all unmarried children under the age of 21 years. Acquired property or assets after this declaration that is not fairly attributable by appropriate sections on loans and gifts approved by the Code shall be deemed to have been acquired in breach of this code unless the contrary is proved (Smah, 2006).

The Impact of Stress Related Factors on Due Process in Nigerian Public Service

Two issues confront us at this stage; whether due process can occur in a situation where stress makes a worker not to enjoy job satisfaction; and the role of due process in ensuring that public servants utilize stress free work environment to obtain job satisfaction. On the first issue, due process may not likely occur or be carried out effectively in a situation where the worker or employee feels threatened (stressed). In the first place, a stressed worker may not be physiologically and psychologically balanced to carry out his or her official functions. As we have demonstrated, stress has been associated mostly with underperformance by workers in public service.

Fundamentally speaking, work-related stress compounds the corruptive tendencies of public servants, and such can have cataclysmic impact on due process in government business. The public servants in Nigeria, who operate in a very harsh work environment with little or no motivation, are consequently and dangerously corrupt to the extent that threatens Nigeria's economic survival. Year in- year out, the poor budget conception and implementations particularly, the capital components are squarely blamed on the incompetence and lack of diligence on the part of ministries, department and agencies of government whose role it is to implement government's policies and programmes. In other words, low motivation impinges on general work attitude and levels to productivity. On the other hand, and in most cases, those government workers who have formerly experienced severe poverty, as a result of poor working conditions and low motivations, but now suddenly find themselves steering the flagship of the MDAs breach important due processes for award of contracts out of frustration and quest to amass wealth both for "the rainy days" and for their children's children as they would probably not want them to face the realities of poverty, job insecurity as with the case in Government service (Iwuoha, 2012). In fact, the nature of Government work today has rationalized the insidious philosophy of "opportunity comes but once," in public service, which, expectedly, should be tangibly utilized to empty government's coffers. In essence, in Nigerian public service breach of due process itself tends to have become the actual "due process." This has become a given.

The Director General of the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP), Chief Emeka Eze, while receiving Steering Committee members of the National Procurement Watch led by Mr. Chibuzo Ekwewuo on the 30th of November 2009, states that MDAs are to blame for the poor budget implementation of national budgets in Nigeria. According to him, out of the 518 projects submitted for review by Ministries, Departments, Agencies, Bureau for Public Procurement (BPP) issued 490 certificates of no objection. Of this number, the Federal Capital Territory submitted 52 projects, out of

which 39 were issued certificates, while the ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources had all 24 projects it submitted certificated. The Ministry of Works forwarded 140 projects and received certification for 137; Transport put forward 26 projects and received certification for 24; while all the 53 projects proposed by the Ministry of Petroleum Resources were issued Certificate of No Objection. Engineer Eze said that “if the MDAs are going to implement these projects as they are, Nigerians will not be complaining”.

Of course, with an unsatisfactory and unacceptable “20 to 40% implementation recorded by the Executive for 2009, it becomes obvious that the Government employees in the MDA’s who are entrusted with budget implementation of government programmes have failed in the area of technical competence and capacity needed for the effective implementation of the annual budgets. Hence, during the 2010 budget defence sessions of the Ministry of Information and Communications and their Agencies, Senator Ayogu Eze who serves as the Chairman of Senate Committee on Information and Media warned that Ministries, Departments and Agencies should stop asking for funds for projects they lack capacity to execute. A situation he said is largely responsible for the poor implementation of the budget. Again, Ministries, Departments and Agencies of government are the most culpable when the issue is procurement abuses. From Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) through the Ministry of Health, to Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) the story is the same of the violations of the Public Procurement Act 2007 by either the total embezzlement and sharing of funds for the execution of the capital component of their annual budgets; over inflation of actual contract costs or award of huge contracts through poor procure procurement processes.

The Public Procurement Acts 2007 has spelt out clearly modalities for the award of public contracts; therefore any procurement that failed to meet the standards set out in the procurement law constitutes an abuse of due process in the new procurement regime. The scandal in the Nigerian Televisions Authority (NTA) award of contract to the tune of N8.9 billion for the upgrading of their facilities and Outside Broadcast Vans for the last Under-17 World Cup Championship in Nigeria in 2009 is a case in point on violation of due process. The idea that the Director-General of NTA forwarded the names of 3 contractors to Professor Dora Akuyili who then forwarded the names of the contractors to the Federal Executive Council for approval; without recourse to the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) and no open or international competitive bidding is a clear abuse of the procurement process (Jim-Nwoko, 2010). That the Director General of the Television House paid the contractors in advance, the counter-part funds for the project using their internally generated revenue, when this project had not been earlier appropriated for in the 2009 national budget was a faulty

procurement step. By forwarding, the names of the contractors to the Minister of Information and Communications, the NTA Director-General erred and violated Section 16 (20), (21) 18, 19, 20(1) and 20(2) of the Public Procurement Act 2007. There was poor estimation of the procurement budget based on the approved threshold for the Agency; inability to determine the best procurement method based on the estimated value and situation of International Competitive Bidding. The Fiscal Responsibility Act 2007 also made provision for all government Agencies to remit 80% of their operating surplus to the Treasury; therefore, one wonders how the NTA was able to raise the amount they paid to the contractors, if they had been acting in compliance with this public expenditure law. This was the situation in the Ministry of Health as it involved then Minister, Adenike Grange, a pediatrics professor; who shared millions of capital project funds among his officers in the ministry, instead of returning it to the Treasury (Jim-Nwoko, 2010).

More so, several laid down work ethics in the Nigerian public service have are constantly violated by workers in a bid to augment their financial and living standard in view of the poor work conditions and absence of adequate motivation. This has become so to the extent that work ethics are irrationally and enviously breached by public servants for selfish ends, all sacrificed in the alter of poor work conditions. Yet, such stress-induced frustration mounts more on public servants especially as they face poor working conditions and at the same time having the very keys to government coffers on their desks. Of course, there are numerous cases of bribery and financial corruption among public servants (see Iwuoha, 2012; Ezeibe and Iwuoha, 2011). In a nutshell however, the public servants have been found culpable and guilty of the following misconduct in breach of the offences under the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and those enunciated by the Public Service Code of Conduct Bureau:

- Giving and accepting gratification
- Concealing corruption offences
- Fraudulent acquisition of property
- Deliberate frustration of investigation by ICPC
- Making false statements or returns with intent to mislead the Commission
- Bribing public officers
- Using public office or position for gratification
- Bribery in relation to auctions
- Bribery for given assistance in regard to contracts
- Attempts and conspiracy to commit acts of bribery and corruption
- Failure or negligent attitude of an officer of a bank or other financial institutions or designated non-financial institution in not authenticating statements submitted by customers

- Willful provision of funding or support for terrorist activities
- Attempt to commit, participate in, facilitate and commit acts of terrorism
- Criminal engagement in the acquisition, possession or use of property
- Management, organization or financing of criminal activities listed under the EFCC Act
- Criminal engagement in the conversion or transference of property knowing that it is the proceed of crime
- Concealment or disguising of the true nature, source, location, disposition, movement, rights to and ownership of property knowing that such property was derived from an offence under the EFCC Act
- Concealment, removal from jurisdiction, transfer to nominees or otherwise retaining the control of the proceeds of an economic and financial crime on behalf of another person knowing that the proceeds are the results of criminal conduct by the principal
- Acquisition, use and possession of any property in whole or in part, directly or indirectly representing another person's proceeds of an economic and financial crimes
- Giving of false information in the discharge of a person's duties in materials particular to a public office or any person who is to take decisions or do any other act in relation thereto (Smah, 2006).

Yet poor work conditions and low motivations must never in any situation be taken as an alibi for breach of due process and ethical standards in public service. Hence, while noting and establishing the linkage between the accidents of poor work conditions and low motivation as key stress-causative factors that could contribute to gross violations of due process in the Nigeria public service, it is nobody's intention to rationalize or justify these offences. However, it is our view that the Nigerian workforce has continuously suffered protracted crises that have had negative impacts on the country's economic wellbeing and living standard. As a result of poor performance of the public service, the country faces high unemployment, poor living standards, dilapidated infrastructure, a weak industrial base, political instability, and the collapse of public health and educational institutions (Adewumi, 2007). These shortcomings have often been attributed to the political governance and policies in the country yet we must have to look underneath within the public service to identify important debilitating factors and their relevant syrup.

Conclusion

Stress is not good for somebody occupying public office as it may influence him or her to make mistake that are not only costly but also harmful to the office and the public good. However, stress can be managed by the individual through various strategies like regular exercise, balance

diet, relaxation, meditations medication, work planning etc. At the organizational level, training and orientation, giving workers a sense of control over their jobs, eliminating punitive management styles, removing hazardous work conditions, and improving organizational communication are some of the strategies that can be adopted towards coping with worker stress.

There is no doubt an enduring job satisfaction cannot be enjoyed under situations that create undue stress or when the public servant official is undergoing stress. The best option therefore, becomes ensuring that public servants are placed under a satisfactory working conditions and adequately motivated in order to reduce the incidences of work-related stress. More importantly, the entrenchment of improved work conditions would go a long way in reducing the likelihood of breach of due process in all public service affairs. In fact, it is a believed that when there is standard work condition, work related stress can be potentially reduced and workers at various levels of the public service can enjoy their jobs satisfactorily, thus minimizing the tendency and disposition toward financial corruption and breach of due process and other ethical standards in public service.

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