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JOB STRESS AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN A NIGERIAN BEVERAGE MANUFACTURING FIRM: EVIDENCE FROM SEVEN-UP BOTTLING COMPANY LTD., EDO STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between job stress and employee performance in Seven-Up Bottling Company Ltd, Edo State, Nigeria, with performance operationalized as employees' quality of work and efficiency. The study was motivated by growing concern that excessive workplace stress may reduce employees' ability to sustain quality, efficiency and productivity in manufacturing organizations. Anchored on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory, the study adopted a descriptive survey design. A census sample of 96 employees of the firm's Benin City operation completed a structured questionnaire; data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Spearman's rho correlation in SPSS. Results showed that job stress had a statistically significant negative relationship with employees' quality of work ($r_s = -.942, p < .01$) and with employees' efficiency ($r_s = -.909, p < .01$). Both null hypotheses were therefore rejected. The findings suggest that unmanaged job stress arising from workload, role pressure, time pressure and inadequate organisational support substantially weakens employees' concentration, accuracy and productive capacity in manufacturing settings. The study recommends that management improve workload distribution, strengthen supervisory support, institute stress-management programmes, improve communication, ensure adequate staffing, and reward employees who take on additional responsibilities. The study contributes context-specific evidence on job stress and performance from a Nigerian manufacturing setting, a context underrepresented in the extant literature.

Keywords: *job stress; employee performance; quality of work; efficiency; Job Demands-Resources Theory; manufacturing; Nigeria*

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Introduction

Job stress has become a major concern in contemporary organisational behaviour and human resource management because of its implications for employee wellbeing, work quality, efficiency, productivity and overall organisational performance. In modern workplaces, employees are increasingly exposed to rising performance expectations, technological change, work intensification, production deadlines, role demands and competitive pressures conditions that are particularly salient in manufacturing organizations, where employees must maintain speed, accuracy, discipline, safety consciousness and consistent output quality. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH, 2024) explained that job stress occurs when job requirements do not adequately match a worker's capabilities, resources or needs, producing harmful physical and emotional responses; stress is therefore not merely a personal weakness but an organisational condition arising from the structure, demands and environment of work.

This concern is reinforced by global evidence on psychosocial risk. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2024) identified excessive workloads, understaffing, inflexible hours, and limited control over work design, unsafe conditions, unclear roles and weak supervisory or peer support as major risks to mental health and performance. The WHO and International Labour Organization (WHO & ILO, 2022) further noted that safe, healthy working environments improve performance, productivity, retention and workplace harmony. The relationship between work pressure and performance is nonetheless complex: the Job Demand-Control Model holds that stress becomes more harmful when high demands coincide with limited decision authority (Karasek, 1979), while the Job Demands-Resources Model explains that demands such as workload, time pressure and emotional strain erode performance only when they are not offset by adequate resources supervisor support, autonomy, equipment, rewards and participation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Empirical evidence links work stress to reduced performance through psychological strain, fatigue, poor concentration and weakened engagement. Chen, Wang, Li and Liu (2022) found that work stress affects performance through its effect on mental health, while Saleem, Malik and Qureshi (2021) found that stress weakens task and contextual performance, though a strong safety culture can attenuate this effect. In manufacturing specifically, Kaur and Haque (2024) found that occupational stressors workload pressure,

role conflict, lack of autonomy, emotional strain and work-life imbalance commonly affect performance, though their relative weight differs by industry. Nigerian evidence corroborates this pattern: Obi (2020) found that workplace stress significantly reduced employee productivity in South-East Nigerian manufacturing firms, while Tojue, Audu and Nnamani (2023) found that stress-management techniques significantly improved employee performance in Nigerian manufacturing firms.

Despite this growing literature, context-specific research on job stress and performance remains limited for Nigerian manufacturing firms, and particularly for beverage manufacturing in Edo State. Much existing work concentrates on banking, healthcare and education, where stressors differ from those of manufacturing environments shaped by production targets, shift schedules, machine-paced operations, safety demands and quality-control expectations. Seven-Up Bottling Company Ltd, operating in the fast-moving consumer goods and beverage sector, requires employees to work with accuracy, speed, coordination and consistency; excessive job stress in this setting may directly compromise quality of work and efficiency, with consequences for production continuity and competitiveness. This study addresses that gap by examining the relationship between job stress and employee performance measured as quality of work and efficiency among employees of Seven-Up Bottling Company Ltd, Edo State.

Research Objectives

The main objective of the study was to examine the relationship between job stress and employee performance in Seven-Up Bottling Company Ltd, Edo State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the relationship between job stress and employees' quality of work; and
2. examine the relationship between job stress and employees' efficiency.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses, stated in the null form, were tested:

H01: There is no significant relationship between job stress and employees' quality of work in Seven-Up Bottling Company Ltd, Edo State.

H02: There is no significant relationship between job stress and employees' efficiency in Seven-Up Bottling Company Ltd, Edo State.

Literature Review

The Concept of Job Stress

Stress has its intellectual origins in the biological and medical sciences before its adoption in psychology and organisational behaviour, most notably through Selye's (1950, 1974) general adaptation syndrome. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) later reframed stress as a person-environment relationship appraised by the individual as taxing or exceeding available resources a view that helps explain why two employees facing identical workloads may experience stress differently depending on skills, support, health and personality. NIOSH (2024) defines job stress specifically as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when job requirements do not match a worker's capabilities, resources or needs, while the WHO (2024) situates workplace stress within broader psychosocial risks including excessive workload, understaffing, inflexible hours, unsafe conditions, unclear roles, bullying and discrimination. The ILO (2022) similarly frames psychosocial hazards as features of work design and management job demands, control, workload, work pace, organisational culture, job security and work-home interface that elevate the risk of work-related stress.

Stress may be distinguished as eustress, or manageable pressure that stimulates effort and motivation, and distress, or excessive pressure that damages health, morale and performance (Selye, 1974). It may also be acute, arising from short-term pressures such as urgent deadlines or equipment failure, or chronic, arising from sustained pressure without adequate recovery or support the latter being more strongly associated with fatigue, emotional exhaustion, absenteeism and declining performance (O'Connor, Thayer, & Vedhara, 2021). In manufacturing settings specifically, stress carries a distinct operational character shaped by production targets, quality-control requirements, safety procedures, machine-paced operations and shift schedules, with unmanaged stress associated with production errors, wastage, reduced concentration and workplace accidents (Schulte et al., 2024).

The Concept of Employee Performance

Employee performance reflects the extent to which employees contribute to organisational goals through work-related behaviours, outputs and results. Contemporary literature treats performance as multidimensional, encompassing task accomplishment, work quality, efficiency, adaptability, cooperation and avoidance of counterproductive behaviour (Koopmans et al., 2011, 2014). Task performance concerns the technical core of a job for

manufacturing employees, operating machines correctly, meeting production targets, maintaining quality and observing safety procedures (Koopmans, 2015). Contextual performance concerns behaviours that support the social and organisational environment surrounding technical tasks, such as cooperation, commitment and rule compliance, while adaptive performance concerns employees' capacity to adjust to new tasks, technologies and procedures increasingly salient given technological change and market competition (Anakpo, Nqwayibana, & Mishi, 2023).

This study operationalises employee performance through two dimensions particularly relevant to manufacturing contexts: quality of work, or employees' ability to perform tasks accurately, consistently and in line with organisational standards; and efficiency, or employees' ability to complete assigned duties with minimum waste of time, effort, materials and organisational resources. Zhenjing, Chupradit, Ku, Nassani and Haffar (2022) found that the workplace environment significantly influences task performance through employee commitment and achievement-striving ability, supporting the view that performance is jointly a function of employee capability and the quality of the environment within which employees work.

Job Stress and Employee Performance

A growing body of evidence links job stress to reduced performance. Chen, Wang, Li and Liu (2022) found that work stress reduces performance through its effect on mental health, while Saleem, Malik and Qureshi (2021) found that stress weakens task, contextual and adaptive performance in the absence of adequate organisational support and safety culture. Kaur and Haque's (2024) systematic review across competitive sectors found that occupational stressors workload pressure, role conflict, limited autonomy, emotional strain and work-life imbalance consistently undermine performance, though the dominant stressors vary by industry. In Nigeria, Obi (2020) found a significant negative effect of workplace stress on productivity among South-East Nigerian manufacturing employees, attributing this to work-family interaction, organisational climate and role ambiguity, while Tojue, Audu and Nnamani (2023) found that structured stress-management techniques significantly improved job performance in Nigerian manufacturing firms. International evidence on long working hours (Pega et al., 2021) reinforces the broader argument that excessive work demands carry serious consequences for both employees and organisations, underscoring the need to monitor workload and stress-related factors before they erode performance.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory, originating from the Job Demands-Resources Model developed by Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner and Schaufeli (2001). The model classifies work characteristics into job demands aspects of work requiring sustained physical, emotional or mental effort and job resources, or aspects of work that help employees manage demands, achieve goals and sustain wellbeing. Bakker and Demerouti (2017) later expanded the model into JD-R Theory, arguing that high demands produce strain, burnout and reduced performance when adequate resources are lacking, while resources such as supervisor support, autonomy, training, feedback, staffing and fair reward systems improve motivation and buffer the harmful effects of demands. Bakker, Demerouti and Sanz-Vergel (2023) note that JD-R Theory has been widely applied to explain burnout, engagement and performance outcomes across organisational settings.

JD-R Theory is well suited to this study because it explains job stress as arising when employees face excessive demands workload pressure, shift duties, production deadlines, quality-control requirements, machine-paced operations and safety demands without sufficient organisational resources to offset them. Employee performance, measured here as quality of work and efficiency, is theorized to decline as job stress increases because stress depletes the physical, mental and emotional energy required for effective performance; conversely, where job resources such as adequate staffing, supportive supervision and fair reward are present, the negative effect of stress on performance may be attenuated. The framework's basic assumption that job stress bears a significant negative relationship with employee performance directly informs the study's hypotheses.

Methodology

Research Design and Sample

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design using primary data collected through a structured questionnaire, consistent with the empirical, cross-sectional nature of the research problem (Asika, 2002). The population comprised all 96 staff of Seven-Up Bottling Company Ltd's Benin City, Edo State operation. Given the manageable population size, a census approach was adopted rather than probability sampling, with an additional 10% of questionnaire copies distributed to allow for non-response attrition. In total, 106 copies were administered and 96 valid

copies were returned and used for analysis, a response rate of 90.6%.

Measures

The questionnaire comprised two sections. Section A captured respondent demographic characteristics (gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, length of service and professional qualification). Section B measured the study's constructs: job stress (the independent variable, assessed through items on workload, pressure, role stress and work demands) and employee performance, operationalized through two dependent-variable dimensions quality of work (items on accuracy, consistency and adherence to work standards) and efficiency (items on timely completion, resource use and productivity).

Model Specification

The study specified two models corresponding to the two performance dimensions:

Model 1: $QOW_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 JSi + \mu_i$

Model 2: $EFF_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 JSi + \mu_i$

where QOW_i is the quality-of-work score of respondent i ; EFF_i is the efficiency score of respondent i ; JS_i is the job-stress score of respondent i ; β_0 is the constant term; β_1 is the coefficient of job stress; and μ_i is the error term. The a priori expectation was $\beta_1 < 0$ for both models that is, job stress was expected to relate negatively to both quality of work and efficiency.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages) were used to summarise respondent characteristics and item-level responses. Given the ordinal nature of the survey items, Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was used to test the two hypotheses, using IBM SPSS. Correlation coefficients range from -1.00 to +1.00, with 0.00 denoting no relationship; the sign indicates direction and the magnitude indicates strength.

Results

Sample Characteristics

Table 1 summarises the demographic profile of the 96 respondents. The sample was predominantly young, with 36.5% aged 20-25 years and a further 31.3% aged 26-30 years. Slightly more respondents were male (55.2%) than female (44.8%). Married employees formed the largest marital-status group (43.8%), and the sample was well educated, with 43.8% holding a B.Sc./HND and 26.0% holding an M.Sc./MBA. In terms of tenure, the largest group (25.0%) had 7-8 years of service, while 7.3% had more than 10 years.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 96)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	53	55.2
	Female	43	44.8
Age	20-25 years	35	36.5
	26-30 years	30	31.3
	31-35 years	18	18.8
	36-40 years	13	13.5
Marital status	Married	42	43.8
	Single	23	24.0
	Widowed	19	19.8
	Divorced	12	12.5
Education	B.Sc./HND	42	43.8
	M.Sc./MBA	25	26.0
	OND/NCE	16	16.7
	WAEC	7	7.3
	Ph.D.	6	6.3
Length of service	7-8 years	24	25.0
	5-6 years	23	24.0
	3-4 years	18	18.8
	9-10 years	13	13.5
	2 years or less	11	11.5
	More than 10 years	7	7.3

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Descriptive Findings on Job Stress

A large majority of respondents (76.0%) reported experiencing work stress in their work environment, against 24.0% who did not. On the extent to which job stress affects efficiency, 67.8% of respondents indicated a large or very large extent (36.5% "very large extent"; 31.3% "large extent"), with a further 18.8% indicating a fairly large extent; only 13.5% indicated a little extent, and none indicated a very little extent. A similar pattern held for quality of work: 62.7% of respondents indicated a large or very large extent (30.2% "very large extent"; 32.5% "large extent"), while 30.2% indicated a little or very little extent.

For productivity, 51.0% of respondents indicated a large or very large extent, with the remainder more evenly spread across fairly large, little and very little extent categories. Collectively, these descriptive results indicate that most respondents perceive job stress as a substantial influence on their work outcomes.

Correlation Results and Hypothesis Testing

Spearman's rho correlation was used to test the two null hypotheses. Table 2 presents the correlation matrix for job stress, quality of work and efficiency.

Table 2: Spearman's rho Correlations among Job Stress, Quality of Work, and Efficiency (N = 96)

Variable	Job Stress	Quality of Work	Efficiency
Job Stress	1.000	-.942	-.909
Quality of Work	-.942	1.000	.944
Efficiency	-.909	.944	1.000

Source: SPSS Output, 2026.

Job stress correlated negatively with employees' quality of work ($r_s = -.942$, $p < .01$) and with employees' efficiency ($r_s = -.909$, $p < .01$), with both coefficients significant at the 0.01 level. Given the strength and significance of these coefficients, the first null hypothesis (H01) that there is no significant relationship between job stress and employees' quality of work is rejected; there is a strong, statistically significant negative relationship between the two variables. Similarly, the second null hypothesis (H02) that there is no significant relationship between job stress and employees' efficiency is rejected; there is a strong, statistically significant negative relationship between job stress and efficiency. Substantively, these results indicate that as job stress rises among employees of Seven-Up Bottling Company Ltd, both their quality of work and their efficiency decline markedly, confirming job stress as an important determinant of employee performance in this setting.

Discussion

The results indicate that job stress is significantly and negatively associated with both dimensions of employee performance examined in this study. This finding is consistent with Kamalakumati and Ambika (2013), who reported a negative relationship between stress and performance, and with Okeke, Echo and Oboreh (2016), who found that stress hinders effective employee performance. It also aligns with Kyeremeh, Enyonam and Adu-Gyamfi (2017), who found a significant negative relationship between stress and job performance, and with Fonkeng (2018), who observed that excessive stress often driven by managerial pressure to increase output negatively affects performance. Dar, Akmal, Naseem and Khan (2011) offer a plausible mechanism: job stress produces subjective effects such as feeling undervalued, workplace victimisation, role ambiguity, work-home conflict, fear of job loss and economic insecurity, which in turn manifest as poor concentration, mental block and weakened decision-making outcomes consistent with the strong negative correlations observed here.

The findings are also consistent with the study's theoretical framework. Under JD-R Theory, the high job demands characteristic of manufacturing work workload, production deadlines, shift schedules and quality-control pressure are expected to translate into strain and reduced performance where job resources are insufficient to offset them (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2017). The very high proportion of respondents (76.0%) reporting stress, combined with the strength of the observed correlations, suggests that job resources available to employees at the study firm may currently be inadequate to buffer the demands they face. This interpretation is consistent with Nigerian evidence from Obi (2020) and Tojue et al. (2023), both of which point to organisational climate, role clarity and structured stress-management interventions as levers that can weaken the stress-performance link in Nigerian manufacturing settings.

Two features of the results merit particular attention. First, the magnitude of the correlations ($r_s > .90$ in absolute value for both hypotheses) is notably strong relative to much of the cross-sectoral literature, which may reflect the operational intensity of beverage manufacturing machine-paced production, strict quality standards and shift-based scheduling relative to the service-sector contexts more commonly studied. Second, quality of work and efficiency were themselves highly positively correlated ($r_s = .944$), suggesting that in this setting the two performance dimensions move together rather than representing distinct responses to stress, which is consistent with a single underlying strain pathway rather than dimension-specific effects.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between job stress and employee performance, measured as quality of work and efficiency, among employees of Seven-Up Bottling Company Ltd, Edo State. Guided by JD-R Theory, the study found that job stress has a strong, statistically significant negative relationship with both quality of work and efficiency, leading to rejection of both null hypotheses.

The variables associated with job stress in this context inadequate financial reward, work overload, inflexible hours, limited control over the work environment and weak organisational structure align closely with the demands-resources imbalance identified in the theoretical literature. The study concludes that job stress is a substantive organisational issue in this manufacturing setting, with clear implications for production quality, efficiency and, by extension, competitiveness.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed for management of Seven-Up Bottling Company Ltd and comparable manufacturing organizations:

1. Improve workload distribution and staffing levels to reduce the burden associated with production targets and shift demands, and recruit additional hands where workload consistently exceeds capacity.
2. Institute a structured, transparent reward system that recognizes and compensates employees who take on additional responsibilities or work extra hours.
3. Strengthen supervisory support and communication, and continuously monitor the working environment for stress-related factors rather than treating stress management as a one-off intervention.
4. Introduce structured stress-management programmes addressing working hours, interpersonal relationships and supervisory practices, aimed at building a working environment that supports efficient performance.

Contribution to Knowledge

The study contributes to occupational stress literature by reframing job stress as both a health-related and a performance-management concern, rather than treating it solely as a wellbeing issue. It further contributes context-specific evidence from Edo State, Nigeria a setting underrepresented relative to Western, Asian and broader African studies on job stress and performance offering local empirical evidence to inform managers, researchers and policymakers addressing workplace stress in Nigerian manufacturing firms, where organisational stressors are shaped by distinct local economic, cultural, managerial and institutional conditions.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study is limited by its cross-sectional design, which precludes causal inference, and by its focus on

a single firm and location, which may constrain generalizability. Social-desirability bias in self-reported responses is also a possible limitation. Future research should extend this line of inquiry to other manufacturing and non-manufacturing sectors including tourism and banking and incorporate a broader range of job-stress factors and potential moderating variables, such as organisational support or coping resources, to build a fuller picture of the stress-performance relationship in the Nigerian context.

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