EFFECT OF WORK ENVIRONMENT AND WORKLOAD ON EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE IN GOVERNMENT TEACHING HOSPITALS IN NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: A good work environment and a fair amount of work are important for employees to do their best. Having a reasonable workload prevents stress and burnout, making it easier to do quality work without feeling too tired or pressured. This study examines the effect of work environment and workload on employees' performance. Government Teaching Hospitals in North Central Nigeria was chosen because as public healthcare institutions, they have a high volume of patients' base from every part of the country especially for the highly specialized services, operates in unique environment, and are generic in structure and administration. A cross-sectional research design was adopted for this study with a population of 7293 and a sample size of 417 staff. Data were collected through a questionnaire and analysed using the Partial Least Structural Equation Model (PLS-.SEM). The study found that while workload had a positive and significant effect on employee performance, the work environment had no meaningful impact on employee performance. The study concluded that the work environment does not enhance employee performance; workload led to improvement in employee performance. The study recommends that the management of Government Teaching Hospitals should improve workplace conditions and maintain a balanced workload for optimal performance.

Keywords: Work Environment, Workload, Employee Performance, Government Teaching Hospitals

INTRODUCTION

The organization's work environment holds significant importance, demanding careful attention from management. Creating a conducive and enjoyable atmosphere for employees contributes to their overall performance in carrying out their job responsibilities. It encompasses the various conditions within an agency's workplace that directly affect and shape the employees' working experience in that environment (Muslih, 2022). Workloads are tasks assigned to employees to be executed at specific times, utilising the skills and potential of the workforce. These workloads can be categorised into two main types: quantitative workloads and qualitative workloads. Quantitative workloads involve a large number of tasks that need to be completed within a short timeframe, leading to the division of work into subcategories. On the other hand, qualitative workloads arise when individuals feel incapable of performing a task due to the heightened skills required for their work (Rizky & Afrianty, 2018).

Based on a pilot study conducted, Government Teaching Hospitals in North Central Nigeria have, over the years, designed some programs to aid employees in improving their performance. These hospitals have not been able to identify which of these programs is effective or responsible for employees' performance. This study, therefore, aimed to examine the effect of the work environment and workload on employees' performance. Researchers like Dibua et al. (2021), Wolor et al. (2020), and Abioro et al. (2018) have all examined the effect of the work environment and workload on employees' performance, but none of these studies used government teaching hospitals in North Central Nigeria as a case study. This study used government teaching hospitals because as public healthcare institutions, they have a high volume of patients from every part of the country, especially for the highly specialised services, and are generic in structure and administration.

 The Nigerian health sector faces numerous challenges impacting employee performance, such as the immigration of skilled healthcare workers who emigrate for better opportunities abroad, leading to staff shortages (Unachukwu et al., 2022), inadequate infrastructure, low wages, and limited career progression opportunities that demotivate employees (Osinbajo et al., 2019). Also, violence and kidnapping in some regions deter healthcare workers from working in rural areas (Ogundipe & Oladosu, 2021). Despite these challenges, there have been efforts to improve employee performance through training programs, good working environment, adequate workload and many workshops to enhance skills and knowledge (Federal Ministry of Health, 2020). These hospitals have not been able to identify which of these is responsible for employees' performance.

The following null hypotheses were formulated:

HO₁: Work environment has no significant effect on employees' performance in government teaching hospitals in North Central Nigeria.

HO₂: Workload has no significant effect on employees' performance in government teaching hospitals in North Central Nigeria.

This study was restricted to Government Teaching Hospitals in North Central Nigeria because all Government Teaching Hospitals have similar structures and are generic in terms of administration and operations. Hence, generalisations can be made. This study was also centred on the work environment and workload. It covers all employees of all Government Teaching Hospitals in North Central Nigeria as of 2024.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work Environment

The workplace environment plays a key role in employees' work life since they spend a large part of their time at work, impacting them in various ways. Studies suggest that employees who are happy with their work environment tend to achieve better work results (Kamarulzaman et al., 2011). The concept of a work environment encompasses the physical, social, and psychological

aspects of a workplace that can influence employee well-being, productivity, and overall job satisfaction. Under the work environment, we have a physical environment which includes ergonomics and design. Ergonomics and design are made up of proper furniture, lighting, and layout, which are crucial for physical comfort and reducing musculoskeletal disorders (Murphy, 2020). Accessibility is another crucial aspect of the physical environment. This ensures a work environment that caters to diverse abilities and allows for inclusivity and talent acquisition (Society for Human Resource Management, 2022). Psychological Environment: Under psychological environment, we have workload, autonomy, and skill variety influence "stress levels and employee engagement (Demerouti et al., 2020).

Technical environment refers to tools, equipment, technological infrastructure and other physical or technical elements. The technical environment creates elements that enable employees to perform their respective responsibilities and activities. Organizational environment includes systems, procedures, practices, values and philosophies. The work environment refers to day to day efficiency in work and productivity including how the work is being done, where it is being done and when was it done and all the elements associated with it which are required to do that work comes under the work environment (Jena, 2016).

Workload

Workload refers to the amount of work assigned to an individual or team within a specific timeframe. It encompasses the quantity, complexity, and variety of tasks an employee is expected to complete. Workload management is crucial for ensuring employee well-being, productivity, and job satisfaction (Demerouti et al., 2020). Factors Influencing Workload include the quantity, complexity, and intensity of tasks assigned (Demerouti et al., 2020). Time constraints and tight deadlines can create a sense of urgency and increase workload perception (Balcomb et al., 2020). Performing repetitive tasks with limited autonomy can be mentally draining, increasing workload. Ideally, some variety and control over tasks can help manage the load (Demerouti et al., 2020). Unclear role expectations or conflicting priorities can lead to confusion and increase workload perception. This model suggests that workload (demands) should be balanced by resources (control, skill variety) to avoid employee stress and burnout (Demerouti et al., 2020).

The impact of workload includes high or poorly managed workload. This can lead to stress, anxiety, and burnout. Burnout manifests as exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced efficacy (Demerouti et al., 2020). When overwhelmed, employees will experience decreased focus, leading to lower productivity and increased errors. Excessive workload can interfere with employees' ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance, impacting personal well-being (Balcomb et al., 2020). Managing work demands effectively allows for a healthy work-life balance, reducing stress and improving well-being (Balcomb et al., 2020). Previous research conducted by Priyandi et al. (2020) demonstrated that an increased workload is associated with reduced performance. Other factors that can influence performance include work stress caused by the workload. The results of research from Elsafty (2022), workload is the most influential thing on employee performance. Moderate stress is beneficial to performance as it stimulates energy resources, but excessive stress can hinder job execution. Stress can have both positive and negative effects on work performance, depending on its level. In the absence of stress, work challenges are non-existent and performance

tends to be low. On the other hand, an increase in stress tends to boost work performance, as it helps employees mobilise their resources to meet work demands. However, if stress reaches an extreme level, work performance can be impaired. In accordance with Pradoto's (2020) previous study, he assumes that work stress can negatively affect performance.

Employee Performance

Employees' performance is a leading factor for achieving business success (Utin Nina Hermina, 2019). The behaviour and/or activities executed to accomplish the objectives and goals of an organisation are known as employee performance (Yingjun, 2019). The work done by individuals and/or groups to achieve a task reflects the quality of work done to accomplish objectives, and it is called job performance (Satyvendra, 2019). This is an essential component of any organisation, which greatly influences organisational success and its sustainability in the long run. Various factors influence performance level in job of an employee which includes physical working environment, standardised operating procedures and policies, meaningfulness in work done, equipment being used for doing the work, reward in the system (good/bad), performance expectancies, performance feedback, skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours (Okasheh, 2017). Employee performance is measured by employee engagement.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a multifaceted concept that refers to the degree to which employees are psychologically connected to their work and organisation. Engaged employees are enthusiastic, passionate, and committed to their work, and they are more likely to go the extra mile to achieve organisational goals. According to the point of view of several scientists, employee engagement is primarily a person's predisposition to participate in particular labour activity, which consists of three components: knowledge, interest and performance (Meiyani & Putra, 2019). It defines and identifies what the individual does, how he behaves regardless of changes in external circumstances.

Empirical Review

Mohamed Sultan et al. (2023) explored how leadership, work environment, and organisational culture influence the teachers' competence and work performance in Indonesia. A total of 57 teachers participated in this study. Data were analysed using a descriptive analysis of questionnaires and hypothesis testing through path analysis. The research employed a saturated sampling method, with all 57 teachers serving as the sample, categorised based on age, gender, education level, years of service, and work unit. Utilising Smart PLS (Partial Least Squares), the findings indicated that leadership and the work environment had a positive but non-significant impact on teachers' competence. Furthermore, the work environment had a positive and significant influence on the teachers' performance. Antara et al. (2020) examined the effect of performance appraisal and work environment towards employee performance mediated by job satisfaction in South Africa. The effect of performance appraisal and work environment towards employee performance mediated by job satisfaction. The aim of the study was to analyse the effect of performance appraisal and work environment towards employee performance mediated by job

satisfaction. The study was quantitative with used scale measurement which had been exist previously. The study adopted a population size of 139 employees and a sample size of 108. The study adopted PLS-SEM. The result of the study showed that performance appraisal has positive and significant effect towards job satisfaction, work environment had positive and significant effect towards job satisfaction, performance appraisal had positive and significant effect towards employee performance either directly and indirectly through partial mediation job satisfaction, work environment did not have effect towards employee performance but indirectly work environment had effect towards employee performance through full mediation job satisfaction, job satisfaction had positive and significant effect towards employee performance. Though Mohamed Sultan et al. (2023) and Antara et al. (2020) adopted PLS-SEM, their findings differ because Antara et al. (2020) study was mediated by job satisfaction.

Huang et al. (2021) examined the mediating effects of perceived workload and work engagement on the relationship between workload and employee performance in the United States. The study adopted Job Demands-Resources Model. The study employed a cross-sectional research design and adopted 100 employees as the population size and a sample size of 80 employees. With the use of correlation analysis, the study showed that excessive workload can negatively impact performance due to stress and reduced motivation.

Johns and Iverson (2022) investigated the moderating effect of workload control on the relationship between workload and employee performance in Nigeria. To investigate the moderating effect of workload control on the link between workload and performance. The study adopted the Job Demands-Resources Model. The study employed a survey with self-reported measures. The study adopted a population size of 174 employees and a sample size of 132. The study adopted PLS-SEM. The study showed that positive workload control mitigates the negative impact of high workload on performance. Cross-sectional data, potential for self-report bias.

Maslach and Leiter (2020) examined Teacher burnout during the COVID-19 Pandemic in the United States: The role of communication and social support. The study adopted the Conservation of Resources Theory and adopted survey research with quantitative data analysis. The participants in this study were 262 teachers. The study showed that clear and frequent communication alongside social support mediated the negative effects of the pandemic on Teacher burnout.

Theoretical Review

Elton Mayo's Hawthorne effect

Hawthorne Effect highlights the impact of social factors on employee performance. His research at the Hawthorne plant demonstrated that an individual's productivity is shaped not only by their personal abilities but also by their work environment and interactions with colleagues. Initially, the experiments aimed to examine how physical conditions affect performance. However, the findings revealed that social influences play a significant role, often outweighing individual aptitudes. Additionally, the studies showed that the relationships supervisors cultivate with employees can significantly affect how workers respond to instructions (Mayo, 1987).

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Conflict Theory

Conflict theory was propounded by Greenhaus and Beutell in 1985. Conflict theory posits that the fulfilment and achievement in one environment of life result in sacrifice in the other environment. Conflict occurs when the demands from work and its environment and home roles are incompatible, making it difficult to meet the demands in the other domain. Inter-role conflict theory refers to what occurs when meeting the demands in one environment makes it difficult to meet the demands in the other environment. This has also been termed opposition or incompatibility theory (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). The conflict theory proposes that with high levels of demand in all spheres of life, some difficult choices have to be made and some conflicts and possibly some significant overload on an individual occur (Guest, 2002), that is, satisfaction in one environment entails sacrifices in the other due to the fact that these two environments are incompatible because each of them has own norms and requirements.

Segmentation Theory

Blood and Wolfe in 1960, were the pioneers of this theory. They applied this concept to blue collar workers and explained that for workers in an unsatisfying or un-involving job and environment, segmentation of work and home is a natural process. In this theory, work and family operate as separate entities where there is no interaction between work life and family life. Segmentation theory considers work and family as distinct entities and experiences whereby one will not affect or influence experiences in the other. Guest (2001) argues that this theory appears to be offered as a theoretical possibility rather than one with empirical support, and it is considered to be the weakest one on the relationship between work and personal life. The segmentation theory hypothesises that every domain functions independently.

This theory further postulates that the work and family environments of an individual do not influence each other and, in all cases, operate separately. This separation in time, space and function allows the individual to compartmentalise his or her life neatly. Since the industrial revolution, work and family have been inherently separated by time, space and function. The industrial world described segmentation as what occurs when people actively suppress work-related thoughts, feelings and behaviours in the family domain and vice versa. This study is underpinned by segmentation theory because the findings show that work environment and workload have separate and independent effects on employees' performance, which is what the postulators of this theory stated.

METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional research design was adopted for this study. This study used a quantitative research method, using a structured questionnaire for data collection and closed-ended questions for the targeted sample. The population of this study is made up of 7293 staff of Government Teaching Hospitals in North Central, Nigeria. This is the sum of all the staff from all the Government Teaching Hospitals in North Central Nigeria (Source: Establishment Department of the various Government Teaching Hospitals in North Central Nigeria, 2024). Written ethical approval was obtained from the ethical and research department of the various teaching hospitals studied. A letter of introduction ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of respondents was attached alongside the questionnaires.

This study used a probability sampling technique with a stratified sampling approach for data collection. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamene's statistical formula at a 5% (0.05) margin of error (ME) and 95% (0.95) confidence interval (CI). This enabled the researcher to get data about the population that can be generalized.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Margin error = 5%

Where;

N $\quad$ = $\quad$ population size (7293)

1 $\quad$ = $\quad$ is constant

e $\quad$ = $\quad$ is the Margin of error (5%)

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{7293}{1 + 7293(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{7293}{1 + 18.2325}$$

$$n = \frac{7293}{19.2325} \quad = 379$$

10% of the determined sample size was added to the number to account for those that may not properly fill the questionnaire or not return it (Israel 2013).

Therefore:

10 % of 379 = 37.9

Therefore, the sample size = 379+38= 417

Table 1: Allocation of Sample Size using Bowley's Proportional Formula

Government teaching Hospitals in North Central Zone	Number of Employees	Computation of Sample Size	Sample Size
University of Abuja Teaching Hospital, Abuja	1,695	$\frac{417 \times 1,695}{7,293}=$	97
Jos University Teaching Hospital, Jos	2,509	$\frac{417 \times 2,509}{7,293}=$	143
Prince Abubakar Audu Teaching Hospital Anyingba Kogi	341	$\frac{417 \times 341}{7,293}=$	20
Benue State University Teaching Hospital, Makurdi	935	$\frac{417 \times 935}{7,293}=$	53
University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital, Ilorin	1,813	$\frac{417 \times 1,813}{7,293}=$	104
Total	**7,293**	**417**	**417**

Source: Establishment Department of the various Government Teaching Hospitals in North Central Nigeria, 2024.

Pilot Study

To guarantee the reliability and validity of both the content and the instrument, the study was subjected to a pilot study. Reliability is a test of how consistently a measuring instrument measures whatever concept it is measuring. In contrast, validity is a test of how well an instrument that is developed measures the particular concept it is intended to measure (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). This study made use of composite reliability at a reliability coefficient of 0.7. The questionnaires were pretested by distributing 50 copies to employees of the five Government Teaching Hospitals in North Central Nigeria.

Table 2: Construct Reliability and Validity

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Employee Performance	0.767	0.824	0.893	0.808
Work Environment	0.744	0.755	0.838	0.564
Work Load	0.833	0.859	0.922	0.856

Source: SmartPLS v. 4.1.0.6 Output. (2024)

Table 2 showed the average variance extracted (AVE) of all the constructs being measured in this model scored AVE above the threshold of 0.5, indicating a high convergent validity. Convergent validity of a construct, according to Hair et al. (2014), is the extent to which an indicator correlates with other items within the same construct. Researchers determine this through Average Variance Extracted (AVE) in reflective indicators. Table 2 also shows that the reliability coefficient for all the variables for this study is greater than 0.7

Table 3: Discriminant Validity

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Employee Performance	**0.899**					
2. Work Environment	0.687	0.697	0.428	0.518	**0.751**	
3. Work Load	0.474	0.637	0.98	0.463	0.42	**0.925**

Source: SmartPLS v. 4.1.0.6

Discriminant validity as the name implies, is conducted to establish that a construct as used in a given study is dissimilar to other constructs (Henseler et al., 2014) within the same framework. Table 3 shows that discriminant validity is established since the square of the AVEs, as highlighted in the diagonal, is greater than correlations within the row as the column.

Techniques for Data Analysis and Model Specification

The researcher used a questionnaire to elicit responses from respondents. The question is designed to make the purpose of the study successful after the results have been ascertained. This gives the researcher the expected information about the recruitment and selection practices. This study was measured on a five-point Likert scale from 5 to 1, strongly agree to strongly disagree.

This study used the Partial Least Square (PLS) Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) approach, which was implemented using SmartPLS v. 4.1.0.8 application software. PLS- SEM was used in this study because it involves a tool that works better with small samples and a better tool for complex models (Urbach & Ahlemann, 2010). It is a more predictive model, and the goal

is to help researchers for predictive purposes. PLS can also be used to explain the presence or absence of relationships between latent variables.

Figure 1: Model Specification
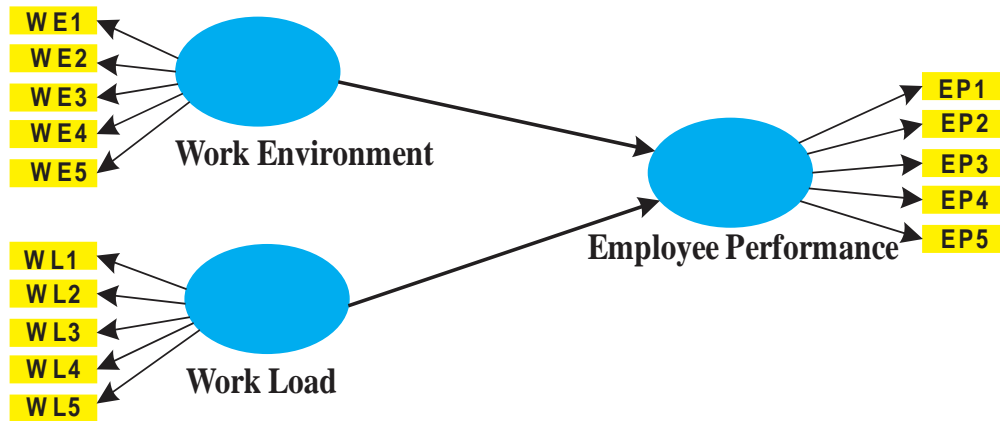
Source: SmartPLS v. 4.1.0.8

Decision Criterion: Reject the null hypothesis (HO) when p-value < 0.05 significance level, fail to reject the null hypothesis (HO) when p-value > 0.05 significance level.

DATA ANALYSIS

**Table 4: Internal Consistency and Convergent Validity Report**

Variables	Indicators	Factor Loadings	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Work Environment	WE1	0.787	0.841	0.638
	WE3	0.811		
	WE5	0.797		
Work Load	WL2	0.803	0.870	0.692
	WL3	0.87		
	WL5	0.821		
Employee Performance	EP2	0.896	0.904	0.825
	EP3	0.920		

Source: SmartPLS v. 4.1.0.8

According to the findings presented by Hair et al. (2018), composite reliability (CR) values should meet or exceed a threshold of 0.7, while the average variance extracted (AVE) should surpass a minimum of 0.5. Analysing the data in Table 4, it is evident that the variables pertinent to work

environment, workload, and employee performance all demonstrate CR values exceeding 0.7 and AVE values above 0.5. Consequently, these results affirm that all the variables in question exhibit satisfactory levels of consistency, validity, and reliability.

Figure 2: Assessing Path Structure
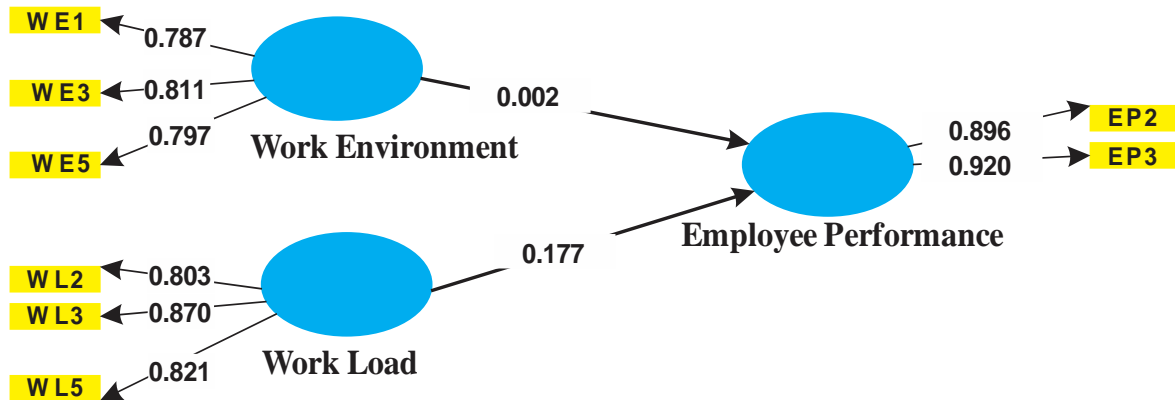
Source: SmartPLS v. 4.1.0.8

Factor loading show how well an item represents the underlying construct. According to Hair et al. (2014) indicators loading must be at least 0.708. Figure 2 showed the retained indicators of three variables of work environment; workload and employee performance.

Table 5: Assessing Path Coefficient and Hypotheses Testing

Research Hypotheses	Path Relationship	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	t-Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Decision
HO1	Work Environment -> Employee Performance	0.002	0.006	0.043	0.035	0.972	Fail to reject the null Hyp.
HO2	Work Load -> Employee Performance	0.177	0.179	0.049	3.597	0.000	Reject the null Hyp.

Source: SmartPLS v. 4.0.9.8; Key: WE–Working Environment; WL-Workload, EP- Employee Performance

Table 5 shows the path coefficient and the p-value based on the direct relationships. The result showed that there is no significant relationship between work environment and employee performance because the p-value of 0.972 was found to be greater than the threshold of 0.05. This study agrees with the study conducted by Antara et al. (2020). Workload revealed a significant

effect on employee performance. This is consistent with the study conducted by Johns and Iverson (2022). This study agrees with the study conducted by Maslach and Leiter (2020). Clear and frequent communication alongside social support buffered the negative effects of the pandemic on teacher burnout.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study found that the work environment had a positive but insignificant relationship with employee performance, while workload had a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that the work environment does not meaningfully impact employee performance. However, a moderate workload led to improvement in employee performance.

This study therefore recommends that the management of Government Teaching Hospitals in North Central Nigeria should improve work environment conditions either physical or social for the employees to perform well. Though workload has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, they should also adopt other strategies for effective workload management. For example task prioritization and flexible working arrangement.

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