

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF ELDERLY CAREGIVING ON JOB PERFORMANCE OF COMMERCIAL BOAT OPERATORS IN WARRI SOUTH-WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This assessment of the impact of elderly caregiving on job performance of Commercial Boat Operators (CBO) was conducted in Warri South-West Local Government of Delta State, Nigeria. The study utilized the spillover-crossover model in explaining the relationship between caregiving and job performance. Snowball technique, with the aid of In-depth Interview was used in sampling the view of 250 CBO obtained from closed ended questionnaires and 4 interviewees respectively. Responses were analyzed using the Chi-square (X^2) statistical method. Based on findings, the study discovered that caregiving stress has negative crossover effects on regular attendance to work. CBO opine that boat owners and their colleagues show little understanding for the stress they pass through in combining elderly caregiving with work demands. They agree that this stress could lead to confrontations and animosity with their colleagues. The fear of losing their jobs as a result of these makes them report for work even when their minds are fixated on elderly family members at home. Thus, presenteeism sets in, leading to low job concentration, accidents, poor performance and low productivity. The paper recommends that government should establish old people's home and social security for senior citizens. Employers and CBO should adopt flexible work plans that will enable working caregivers to visit elderly family members and ease off work stress, CBO who work afar from home should utilize the services of formal caregivers, while employers and colleagues show support for CBO elderly caregivers.

Keywords: caregiving, collegiality, commercial boat operators, performance, presenteeism, stress.

1. INTRODUCTION

In this modern and dynamic world, human beings are involved in daily work activities that attract corresponding roles. As workers and members of a family, they are expected to earn a living and contribute towards the wellbeing of their dependants. Because human are first born into a family before becoming workers, they are expected to perform certain domestic roles in combination with their job one of which is caregiving for elderly or sick parents. Okoye (2011) defines caregiving as the provision of assistance to an elderly, ill or disabled person. It requires attention to the physical, mental, social and psychological needs and well-being of both the caregiver and the elderly person requiring care. Therefore, caregiving for the elderly is a social role which most working people do not consciously prepare for. As parents get old, the realities associated with old age dependency and expectations arising from work roles begin to

create internal conflict on their young working family members.

Caregiving is on the increase owing to improvement in reproductive health and life expectancy which have led to an increase in human population (WHO, 2011). Data from WHO (2011) reveal that "in 2010, an estimated 524 million people were aged 65 or older -8 percent of the world's population by 2050, this number is expected to nearly triple to about 1.5 billion, representing 16 percent of the world's population". The report continues that, "between 2010 and 2050, the number of older people in less developed countries is projected to increase more than 250 percent compared with a 71 percent increase in developed countries" (WHO, 2011). As the world gets older, the increasing population, propelled by the in-built population

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF ELDERLY CAREGIVING ON JOB PERFORMANCE OF COMMERCIAL BOAT OPERATORS IN WARRI SOUTH-WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

momentum since the last 3 decades has impact on the increasing population (Shofoyeke & Amosun, 2014). This increase in global population structure will be most felt in developing countries such as Nigeria where emphasis is placed on the socio-cultural and economic importance of large family size and tremendous considerations for care at old age, little wonder Nigeria has the largest number of elderly people of 60 years of age, South of the Sahara (Mudiare, 2013; Okoroafor, 2015).

According to a UN (2006) prediction, the population of Nigeria aged 60 years above will increase to 26 percent by 2020 and 38 percent by 2050. The steady growth in the number of ageing people will result to a corresponding increase in the number of caregivers with attendant responsibilities on family members. This is because, most caregivers are family members and relatives (Okoye & Asa, 2011; Okoye, 2012; Shofoyeke & Amosun, 2014). Socio-culturally, children are regarded as a veritable form of social capital valued for the needs they meet and the services they provide (Hoffman, Thornton & Manis, 1978). Infact, economic support at old age is regarded as a major reason for bearing children in many African societies including Nigeria. Other reasons for raising children include social status and psychological comfort. Okoye (2012) agrees that in Nigeria, cultural norms expect children to provide material and non-material care for their aged parent's. Placing parents or grand-parents under external caregiving is culturally unacceptable (Okoroafor, 2015), and may be regarded as disrespectful to the prestige associated with old age. This makes children the most culturally accepted and expected caregivers to elderly family members in Nigeria.

Caregiving requires emotional commitment, time, patience and financial wherewithal in order to provide medical and nutritional needs for old and sick family members. As a result, most caregivers may be faced with the difficult decision of whether to quit working or to stop caregiving. Furthermore, caregiving role for an ill or disabled relative may depend on the

flexible and intensive demand of caregiver's job. Unfortunately, CBO are engaged in a demanding job which exposes them to occupational hazards such as cold, exposure to polluted water, accidents, and water piracy. As a result, they require unhindered concentration and mental alertness on the job.

It is therefore worrisome that with little flexibility in their job, CBO may less likely take on elderly caregiving responsibilities or may reluctantly leave their jobs to accommodate elderly caregiving role. Leaving an elderly family member without care will result in societal rebuke, this is more so in an African society which places emphasis on respect for old age. For CBO who chose to combine both roles, the attendant stress and role conflict which arises from combining work and caregiving role will have great consequences on caregiver's health, income, and employee workplace relationship (Gilbreath & Karimi, 2012; Fatigue Science, 2014). The attendant role conflict and psychological strains associated with caregiving responsibilities may therefore have adverse effect on their relationship with colleagues, commitment to work and performance level. Based on this background, this study seeks to examine the impact of caregiving on the performance of CBO in Warri South-West Local Government Area, Delta State Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Caregiving is a work place concern with multifaceted psychological, health and economic impact on workers job performance "performance assesses whether a person performs a job well" (Indraja, 2016). It is an agglomeration of employee's knowledge, skills, and attentiveness to work task. It is the relationship between prompt completion of job tasks, improved work competencies and low incidences of accidents or breach of safety in the workplace. However, job performance can be mitigated by stress arising from family demands (Smith, 2014).

One of the effects of caregiving is its implication on working caregivers' health which arises from

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF ELDERLY CAREGIVING ON JOB PERFORMANCE OF COMMERCIAL BOAT OPERATORS IN WARRI SOUTH-WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

combining caregiving roles with work demands. Sohana (2017) define stress as a negative experience associated with new physical symptoms, including increased heartbeat, swiftness of breath, dry mouth, stomach upset and serious digestive upset, cramp and raised blood pressure, and resultant cardiovascular disease. The accumulation of sleep debt arising from caregiving can lead to insomnia (Fatigue Science, 2014). This results to loss of energy, poor cognitive function, decreased productivity, and inability to cope with job demands (Fatigue Science, 2014). A study by the Pulse Institute (2014) reveals that employees who are deprived of sleep experience 23% reduced concentration, 18% reduced memory function, and 9% increased difficulty in performing work. Accumulation of caregiving and workplace stress is linked to six leading causes of death which are heart diseases, cancer, liver diseases, lung ailments, accidents and suicide (Sohana, 2017). Stress is associated with workplace absenteeism, increased medical expenses, loss of productivity, insomnia, cognitive impairment, depression, neurological illness, hypertension, arthritis, ulcers, asthma, migraines, immune system disturbances, skin disease, aggression, relational conflict, substance abuse, fatigue and negative effects of ageing (Sohana, 2017). Boyum (2015) opine that “unmanaged stress also negatively impacts memory”. “Stress has recently been shown to trigger degeneration of dopaminergic neurons, which causes Parkinson Disease in chronically restrained rats (Sugama, Sekiyama, Kodama, Takamatsu, Takenouchi, Hashimoto, Bruno, Kakinuma, 2015), and exacerbates Multiple Sclerosis(MS) (Boyum, 2015). At the organizational level, caregiving stress spills over into workplace, which can lead to increased human error and accidents at work (Smith, 2014; Sohana, 2017), this can diminish self-confidence, reduce performance and concentration at work thereby increasing chances of accident in the course of navigating the waterways.

As a result of strains arising from caregiving and job demands, some caregivers seek solace in prayers, reading bible and consulting with religious leaders in the midst of their challenges (Faronbi,

2018). CBO may be irrational when interacting with colleagues, others may be unable to socialize with their coworkers, show less concern for passengers’ safety, speedily and carelessly navigate the waterways in order to rush home and attend to their elderly relatives at home. The situation becomes worst when passengers attempt to caution boat operator’s careless attitude at waterways without factoring in the stress and divided attention they are passing through. This scenario could lead to distraction and in extreme cases result into physical confrontations. CBO may regard their passengers and colleagues as inconsiderate to their plight. This could lead to fractured relationship and workplace enmity with their fellow boat operators and boat owners. CBO may be disengaged as a result of this. The fear of disengagement therefore compels CBO to be physically at work, but perform at a decreased capacity as a result of the physical and psychological worries of caregiving thus resulting to presenteeism. Presenteeism reduces productivity (Aetna, 2017). Employees who exhibit presenteeism make more mistakes, are less innovative, and show signs of reduced productivity (Gilbreath & Karimi, 2012).

Caregiving may cause CBO to arrive late for work, incessantly leave for home and make care calls while on the job. These disrupt work and limits job commitment. As a result, boat owners \may replace valued boat operators with non-caregiving workers due to their demanding caregiving responsibilities. One of the implications of replacing valued employees is the demand of replacement. These unplanned replacements have adverse effect on boat owners and portray them as inhuman employers. In worst scenarios, newly employed boat operators, in a short while, may assume the role of caregivers, having to combine work and caregiving, thus recreating a vicious cycle of recruitment and disengagement.

With the prevailing unemployment and underemployment in Nigeria, commercial boat business may not conduce for flexibility or leave options, and since stay-at-home caregiving is not an option in the present milieu, CBO caregivers are faced with two dilemma’s; whether to quit formal

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF ELDERLY CAREGIVING ON JOB PERFORMANCE OF COMMERCIAL BOAT OPERATORS IN WARRI SOUTH-WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

employment, or quit caregiving. Quitting a job results to a decrease in family income and low purchasing power needed to provide nutritional and medical needs for care recipients. Quitting caregiving is culturally frowned at. Similarly, leaving family elders to formal caregivers or old people's home is culturally unacceptable, and an act of irresponsibility which can generate condemnation from family, friends and the society (Okoroafor, 2015). Implicitly, CBO may exhibit presenteeism as they are caught in a scenario which can adversely affect their job performance. In view of these challenges, this study seeks to examine the economic and psychological impact of caregiving on the performance of CBO in the study area.

Conceptual Theoretical Model

This study will adopt the spillover-crossover model in unearthing the relationship between caregiving and its impact on the job performance of CBO. The crux of spillover-crossover model is the overlapping effect of workplace activities on the home front and vice versa. According to the model, "employees experiences at home spillover to the work domain, which then influence their behaviour and wellbeing at work, having impact on their colleagues and organizational wellbeing (crossover) (Bakker, 2011). Spillover effect is the transmission of behaviour, emotions, attitudes, or stress of one life domain to another life domain (Geurts & Demeruti, 2003). Spillover is bidirectional, it can occur at work or at the family level as a result of the effects of caregiving. Amstad & Semmer (2011) remarks that, "a spillover effect occurs within a person and is therefore an intra-individual transmission of stress. The resultant effects of caregivers' spillover manifest in care burnout, stress, fatigue, and psychological behaviour which has crossover effects on employers, customers and colleagues. Crossover effect can be divided into two. Firstly, if emotions, stress or strain which an individual experiences in the moment (Hatfield, Cacioppo & Rapson, 1992) or overtime (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2000) are transmitted to another person of the same life domain. "Secondly, if stress or emotions experienced in one life domain by an individual leads to stress or similar emotions experienced by a

close person in another life domain, this is called crossover" (Amstad & Semmer, 2011).

As a result of role conflicts arising from caregiving, CBO's may exhibit some spillover effects of elderly care which include stress and fatigue, presenteeism, psychological trauma, and health challenges. The crossover effect may result into anger, frustration, guilt, isolation, unhappiness in marriage, anxiety, depression, a diminished social life, loss of self-esteem from time to time and dissatisfaction with life (Albert & Schulz, 2010; Okoye & Asa, 2011). Crossover manifests when CBO begins to fall asleep on the job, become insubordinate to their employers, make care calls while on the job and frequently visit their homes in cases of emergencies, withdraws from colleagues, falls ill, and incessantly borrow to offset care bills. This spillover-crossover effect has far reaching impacts on CBO earnings and performance rate.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to assess the impact of elderly caregiving on job performance of commercial boat operators in Warri, Delta State, Nigeria. Essentially, the objectives of the study are to:

1. Assess the relationship between elderly caregiving stress and regular attendance to work.
2. Examine the relationship between elderly caregiving stress and work place collegiality.
3. Explore the relationship between elderly caregiving stress and presenteeism at work.

Methodology

This research is a survey design conducted among Commercial Boat Operators (CBO) who plies Ogbe Ijaw Main Market jetty and Escravos water-way in Warri South-West Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria. Commercial boat operation is essentially a male dominated job. As a result, all respondents are adult males between 19 to 44 years old.

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF ELDERLY CAREGIVING ON JOB PERFORMANCE OF COMMERCIAL BOAT OPERATORS IN WARRI SOUTH-WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

The study adopts the snowball sampling technique. “This technique is used in hidden populations which are difficult for researchers to access” (Katz, 2006). “It is important in cases where a sampling frame is hard to establish and it is assumed that cases are affiliated through links that can be exploited to locate other respondents based on existing one’s” (Katz, 2006). The peculiarity of the research makes it imperative that the research er have to rely on referrals from CBO who share similar elderly caregiving experiences.

Again, open ended questionnaire, alongside In-depth Interview (IDI) is used to collect data from respondents. The entire populations of the study are 27 CBOs, out of which 25 respondents returned their questionnaire, while 2 are unreturned. Hence, 25 CBOs constitutes the sample size. Chi square is used to test the three hypotheses formulated for the study. The results are presented thus.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

H₀: There is no relationship between elderly caregiving stress and regular attendance to work.

H₁: There is a relationship between elderly caregiving stress and regular attendance to work.

Table 1.0

Response s	O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
Agreed	18	8.3	7.7	39.7	7.1
Disagreed	7	8.3	-1.3	1.7	0.2
Undecided	2	8.3	-6.3	39.7	4.8
Total	25				X²cal = 12.1

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

DF = 2

Error level = 0.05

At 2df and 0.05 level of significance, the critical value of X_t² is = 5.99

Result: X_c² (12.1) > X_t² (5.99)

Decision Rule: Reject H₀ and accept H₁ if calculated value of X² is greater than table value.

Decision: The H₀ which states that there is no relationship between elderly caregiving stress and regular attendance to work is rejected.

Hypothesis II

H₀: There is no relationship between elderly caregiving stress and work place collegiality.

H₁: There is a relationship between elderly caregiving stress and work place collegiality.

Table 2.0

Response s	O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
Agreed	18	8.3	9.7	94.1	11.3
Disagreed	4	8.3	-4.3	18.5	2.2
Undecided	3	8.3	-5.3	28.1	2.4
Total	25				X²cal = 16.9

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

DF = 2

Error level = 0.05

At 2df and 0.05 level of significance, the critical value of X_t² is = 5.99

Result: X_c² (16.9) > X_t² (5.99)

Decision Rule: Reject H₀ and accept H₁ if calculated value of X² is greater than tabulated value.

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF ELDERLY CAREGIVING ON JOB PERFORMANCE OF COMMERCIAL BOAT OPERATORS IN WARRI SOUTH-WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

Decision: The H_0 which states that there is no relationship between elderly caregiving stress and work place collegiality is hereby rejected.

Hypothesis III

H_0 : There is no relationship between elderly caregiving stress and presenteeism at work.

H_1 : There is a relationship between elderly caregiving stress and presenteeism at work.

Table 3.0

Responses	O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
Agreed	20	8.3	11.7	136.9	16.5
Disagreed	4	8.3	-4.3	18.7	2.2
Undecided	1	8.3	-7.3	53.7	6.4
Total	25				X²cal = 25.1

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

DF = 2

Error level = 0.05

At 2df and 0.05 level of significance, the critical value of X^2_t is = 5.99

Result: $X^2_c (25.1) > X^2_t (5.99)$

Decision Rule: Reject H_0 and accept H_1 if calculated value of X^2 is greater than tabulated value.

Decision: The H_0 which states that there is no relationship between elderly caregiving stress and presenteeism at work is hereby rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The first objective of the survey was to assess the relationship between elderly caregiving stress and regular attendance to work. Data in this regard was analyzed in Table 1.0. The analysis showed that majority (16) of the CBO agrees that elderly caregiving stress reduces regular attendance to work

as they have to contend with emergencies that arises from caring for their elderly family member. 7 respondents disagreed that elderly caregiving affects their regular attendance to work, while 2 respondents were silent on the question. Hence, the study agrees that “employees may be forced to miss work in order to stay home and take care of an elder when normal arrangements have fallen through” (Forbes, 2013).

Secondly, the study examines the relationship between elderly caregiving stress and workplace collegiality. Data in this regard was tested in Table 2.0. Majority (18) of the CBO agree that caregiving stress affects relationship with their colleagues. 4 disagreed, while 3 were undecided. In an IDI, 4 respondents contend that their employer, that is the boat owners, do not show sympathy to their plight and the attendant financial and emotional stress they put up with at home Thus, they argued that this lack of concern from their employers makes them to exhibit antagonistic and asocial behaviour towards their employers, colleagues and passengers.

The third objective explores the relationship between elderly caregiving stress and presenteeism at work. 20 CBO reveals that the stress of elderly caregiving spills over to their work. 4 disagreed, while 1 CBO was undecided. In an IDI, 4 respondents stated that the fear of losing their job to other job seekers, the proliferated employment condition in Nigeria, financial demands of providing nutritional and medical needs for old dependants at home leaves them with no other option that to be present at work even though their minds may be far away from the job, thus having serious implications on job concentration and safety. This discovery is in line with the argument of Gilbreath & Karimi (2012) that employees who exhibit presenteeism may be exposed to work accidents as they are likely to make mistakes while on the job. Hence, presenteeism in the views of Werapitiya, Fernando & Opatha (2016) and Bokhari, Ahmed & Hyder (2017) is a catalyst for poor performance and low productivity.

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF ELDERLY CAREGIVING ON JOB PERFORMANCE OF COMMERCIAL BOAT OPERATORS IN WARRI SOUTH-WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

Conclusion

The study assessed the impact of elderly caregiving on job performance of commercial boat operators (CBO) in Warri, Delta State. Findings from the survey reveals that the spillover affects of caregiving cross over to job performance of CBO. Caregiving stress militates against regular attendance to work by CBO. This is because the attendant demands of caregiving require the physical presence of caregivers who also double as CBO. As a result, CBO carry over so much stress and emotional strains which results into aggression and confrontational attitude in the workplace.

The study discovered that because boats owners may not grasp the emotional and financial burden associated with elderly caregiving, CBO tend to regard boat owners as uncaring employers with no regards for employee wellbeing, but profit maximization. Based on these, the fear of losing their job to other job seekers as a result of irregular attendance to work and poor workplace collegiality leads to presenteeism. The condition of being physically present but emotionally absent at work in a demanding job such as commercial boat operation may result to on-the-job mistakes, accidents and reduced performance.

Recommendations

With regards to the findings of this research, this paper recommends that:

1. Caregivers should accept elderly caregiving as a social fact. This acceptance of new care roles will go a long way to ease the unplanned expectations and responsibilities which they find themselves.
2. Government at all levels should establish old people's homes and a social security system that is assessable to the unemployed and aged people. This will alleviate the financial burdens associated with providing medical and nutritional needs for senior citizens.
3. Religious organizations, Non Governmental Organizations (NGO) and socio cultural institutions should embark on reorientation in many Nigerian communities on their socio-cultural perception of old peoples' home. The

idea of regarding old people's home as culturally unacceptable and a taboo have great implications on caregivers who have to combine caregiving and informal employments such as commercial boat business.

4. Boat owners should make out time to interact with their employees and seek flexible work arrangements such as granting work leave, taking time off to spend with their elderly relatives, etc. These arrangements may reduce emotional strain, job stress, and rejuvenate family relationship.
5. CBO who reside in distant locations may employ the services of formal caregivers to augment their regular visit to their elderly family members.

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**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF ELDERLY CAREGIVING ON JOB PERFORMANCE OF
COMMERCIAL BOAT OPERATORS IN WARRI SOUTH-WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, DELTA
STATE, NIGERIA**

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