

**IMPACT OF STRESS AND ITS MANAGEMENT AMONG SME OPERATORS  
IN ILORIN METROPOLIS: THE BURNOUT SELT TEST APPROACH**

**BY**

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**Abstract**

*Considerable attention has not been paid to the issue of stress and its management both in the public and private sectors of the nation's economy. Many of the SMEs in the country may have died as a result of stress often encountered by the frontiers of these businesses.*

*Past studies particularly, in Nigeria have shown that majority of these firms do not live beyond five years. It was observed from the study that majority of the respondents scored between 50 and 59 meanings that they are at severe risk of burnout. The study population is 650 registered SMEs in Ilorin metropolis.. A multi stage sampling technique was used to select the SMEs, Stratified random sampling technique was further adopted to select the SMEs that were taken as samples. One hundred and eighty agro allied SMEs (180) and four hundred and seventy (470) non agro allied registered SMEs were selected. The study findings revealed specifically, 83 per cent of the SME operators in the agro allied sector fell between 50 and 73 percent signaling between severe and very severe risk of burnout. The study concludes that ability to study oneself and be more aware of stressors and to watch physical and emotional reactions to stressors. Therefore, the study recommend among others were to practice time management techniques and manage one owned life accordingly. This will go a long way to achieve prioritizing in daily routines. Take sometimes off during the day. Sit down and be comfortable.*

**Keywords: Stress, stress management, burnout**

**Introduction:**

The current wisdom now tends towards the belief that contributions from the Small and Medium Scale Enterprises cannot be underestimated. The sector was adjudged by past studies as a reliable means and catalyst for job creation, enhanced household income, wealth creation and poverty reduction (Kadiri, 2011). It had moved some Asian countries into world leaders with unprecedented economic and industrial expansion. Japan for instance, currently outpaced the United States of America (USA) in car, steel and electronics production. The situation of SMEs as a frontier for economic growth and development is similar to what obtained in countries such as Taiwan, USA and Germany (Kadiri, 2011). Past studies particularly in Nigeria have shown that majority of these firms do not live beyond five years (Kadiri,2011) .

Factors such as lack of finance for continuity, unstable government policy, lack of skill and technical know-how of the entrepreneur among others have been attributed to these anomalies. Over the years, considerable attention has not been paid to the issue of stress and its management both in the public and private sectors of the nation's economy. Many of the SMEs in the country may have died as a result of stress often encountered by the frontiers of these businesses. It is pertinent to note that some of the SMEs might have died as a result of stress encountered in the business.

Stress is an individual's perception and assessment of the environment. It depends on how one perceives the situation. That which creates stress is called stressor. The positive perception is called eustress which is natural and useful part of life (Terri, 2009). Without it there would be no life. It helps us to be at alert, motivates us to face challenges, and drives us to solve problems. The second perceptions (negative) of stress on the other hand often lead to distress and could lead to death if not properly managed. Stress could cause headaches, insomnia, high blood pressure, heart diseases, and in extreme cases, may lead to death (Terri, 2009).

This study therefore seeks to examine stress as a major cause of business failures in Nigeria using Ilorin metropolis as a case study.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Job stress has been of great concern to employees, labour unions, employers of labour as well as other stakeholders of organizations. Job stress is perceived discrepancy as a between environmental demands (stressors) and individual capacities to fill these demands (Topper, 2007; Vermut and Steensma, 2005). It need be noted that scholars among whom are Varca, 1999; Ornelas and Kleiner 2003 all support that Job stress stress is a serious problem in many organizations. The cost of job stress is very high in many organizations in recent times. More so, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) reports that inefficiencies arising from job may cost up to 10 percent loss in Nations Gross Domestic Product (Midgley, 1996).

Over the years, mired of factors such as perceived loss of job, and security, sitting for long periods of time or heavy lifting, lack of safety, complexity of repetitiveness and lack of autonomy in the job stress, lack of resources and equipment; work schedules (such as working late or overtime and organizational climate are considered as contributors to employees stress have been found to be factors that trigger up stress (Christo & Pienaar, 2006). In addition, job Job stress often shows high dissatisfaction among the employees, job mobility, burnout, poor work performance and less effective interpersonal relations at work (Manshor, Rodrigue, & Chong, 2003).

### Kinds of Stress

- **Performance Stressors:** - These were situations where one is stressed to perform. E.g. Driving Car, Sports and preparing for examination.
- **Threat Stressors:** - These are dangerous situations eg Riots, War, Road Accident. etc
- **Boredom Stressors:** - These are situations which are perceived and assessed as lacking in physical or mental simulations. E.g. Routine office/Factory work, unemployment etc.
- **Frustration Stressors:** - These are situations which are perceived and assessed as being undesirable but beyond one's power to control eg Government Policy.
- **Bereavement Stressors:-** Death of loved ones, loosing

- **Physical Stressor:** - These are physical damage of breaking of limbs, suffering from diseases or infections and working in conditions where extreme temperature and pollution exists which can be avoided.

### **How to Manage Stress**

- **Awareness of Stressors:** - Study you self and be more aware of your stressors. Watch you physical and emotional reactions to stressors. Understand your body and how it responds to stress.
- **Change your Attitudes:** - Be more positive towards stress management. Look at every situation in a positive manner including your stressors. Alcohol and drugs can mask stress. They don't help deal with the problems.
- **Set your Goals right:** - Make your goals to be Specific, Measurable, Achievable and Realistic. Pursue goals which are meaningful to you, rather than goals others have for you that you do not share. This can be achieved by reducing the number of events going on in your life.
- **Manage your time:** - Practice Time management techniques and manage your life accordingly. Prepare your daily routine roaster and follow it in your own way and allow flexibility to your system.
- **Improve your Emotional Quotient:** - Reduce the intensity of your emotional reactions to stress. Do not view your stressors in exaggerated terms. Don't over react and view things as absolutely critical and urgent.
- **Relax:** - Take sometimes off during the day. Sit down and get comfortable. Close all works and have some rest or take a stroll. Meditation and breathing exercises have been proven to be effective in relaxing and controlling stress. Practice clearing your minds of disturbing thoughts
- **Practice Acceptance:** - Many people get distressed over things they wont let themselves accept. Often these are things that can't be changed.
- **Talk Rationality to yourself:** - Think through whether the situation is your problem or the other person's. If yours, approach is calmly and firmly. If it is the other person's, there is not much you can do about it. Learn to remove yourself from stressful situations.

- **Exercise:** - Physical activities have been known to be a potent relief from stress. Develop a regular exercise program to reduce the effects of stress before it becomes distress.
- **Talk to Family and Friends:** - These people can be good medicine. Daily conversation, regular social interaction and engagements, and occasional Sharing of deep feelings and thoughts can reduce stress. These will assist you to seek alternatives viewpoints.

### **Theoretical Framework**

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 bank experience job ambiguity especially when there is conflict in schedule of duties. Apart from this, some positions and tasks in the Bank are given based on certain incentives and performances etc. while promotions are hardly done on merit especially on contract staff, and this most at times creates stressful environment for some contract workers.

The best option thus becomes that the practice and use of due process in the SME sector 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 among SME operators that will result into less stress.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Ilorin is the capital city of Kwara State. It comprises five Local Government Areas. These are Ilorin West, Ilorin East, Ilorin South, Moro and Asa Local Governments. (Saliu & Jawondo, 2006). The development of inter-roads, commercial centers, the educational institutions and the railway network that passed through the metropolis served as a major booster to economic and commercial activities in the city. The strategic location of the city led to a multiple nuclei growth pattern in many areas, particularly outside the indigenous areas (Usman, 2006).

Since the focus of the study was to examine the impact of stress on organizational performance, a survey was initially carried out and a total of one thousand six Hundred (1601) SMEs were identified in the study area. Of these, three hundred and seventy (370) belong to the agro-allied processing firms while a total of one thousand two hundred and thirty (1231) operate in the non-agro allied sector. Of these number, one hundred and eighty agro allied SMEs (180) and four hundred and seventy (470) non agro allied SMEs were duly registered by the government and have been operating in the business for a minimum of five years. A total of 650 in both group therefore forms our study population.

To obtain the required data/information, a detailed questionnaire was prepared and administered on the target group. A multi stage sampling technique was used to select the SMEs that were examined. SMEs identified were first grouped into strata; that is the agro and non-agro allied enterprises. Stratified random sampling technique was further adopted to select the SMEs that were taken as samples. This sampling method is informed by the relative homogeneity of SMEs characteristics and the residential structure of the enterprise under study.

## Analysis of Result

### Agro-Allied Enterprise

INDUSTRY	TOTAL
Garri Processing	31
Black soap Processing	25
Saw Milling	19
Groundnut shelling	14
Mellon shelling	23
Adi (Local Cream)	12
Cashew Nut Processing	6
Poultry	44
Skin Tanning	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>

**Source: Author's field survey (2017)**

From the table above it was observed that a total of 31 respondents engaged in gari processing, 25 in the native black soap industry, 19 in the saw milling, 14 in the groundnut shelling enterprise, 23 respondents in melon shelling, 12 in local cream production (Adi), 6 respondents in cashew nut processing, 44 in poultry farming while 7 in skin tanning.

### Non-Agro Allied Enterprise

INDUSTRY	TOTAL
Aluminum/ Meal Fabrication	26
Auto Mechanic	54
Black Smiting	17
Fashion designing	45
Weaving/Carving	27
Construction Firms/ Block Moulding	36
Bakery / Confectionaries / Flour	26
Pottery	15
Filling Station	12
GSM Operation	130
Hair Saloon, Hotel, and Tourism	28
Pharmaceutical / Hospital	19
Educational Establishment	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>470</b>

**Source: Author's field survey (2017)**

More of the Small and Medium Enterprise operates in the non-agro allied enterprise in the state. This represents about 62 percent of the SMEs covered by the study. 26 of the respondents engage in aluminum and metal fabrication, 44 in auto mechanics, 17 engage in black smiting, 45 in fashion designing and 27 engages in weaving/ carving, In addition, 36 SMEs sampled operate in construction enterprise/block moulding, 26 six in pottery, 12 operate filling stations, a very large number; 130 engages in GSM operation. Also, 28 are in hair salon/hotel/tourism.19 engages in pharmaceutical/ hospital business while a total of 45 operates in educational institution. 400 of the respondents correctly filled and returned the questionnaires given to them. This represents a response rate of about 62 percent. Of this number, 120 are those operating in the agro allied sector while 280 are in the non-agro allied category.

### **Burnout Score Interpretation**

<b>Score</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>15 – 18</b>	<b>Little sign of burnout here</b>
<b>19 – 32</b>	<b>Little sign of burnout here, unless some factors are particularly severe</b>
<b>33 – 49</b>	<b>Be careful - you may be at risk of burnout, particularly if several scores are high</b>
<b>50 – 59</b>	<b>You may be at severe risk of burnout - do something about this urgently</b>
<b>60 – 75</b>	<b>You may be at very severe risk of burnout - do something about this urgently</b>

### **Discussion of Findings**

It was observed from the study that majority of the respondents scored between 50 and 59 meanings that they are at severe risk of burnout. No wonder most of the SMEs in the state as well as in the country do not last long. Specifically, 83 per cent of the SME operators in the agro allied sector fell between 50 and 73 percent signaling between severe and very severe risk of burnout.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Study yourself and be more aware of your stressors. Watch your physical and emotional reactions to stressors. Understand your body and how it responds to stress.

- i. Be more positive towards stress management.



- ii. Look at every situation in a positive manner including your stressors.
- iii. Alcohol and drugs can mask stress. They don't help deal with the problems.
- iv. Set goals that are realistic, measurable and achievable
- v. Pursue goals which are meaningful to you, rather than goals others have for you.
- vi. Practice Time management techniques and manage your life accordingly. This is achievable by prioritizing daily routines. Take sometimes off during the day. Sit down and get comfortable.
- vii. The government and its policies also affect the growth and development of the SMEs which on the long run negatively affects the SME operators. Many African government policies are not geared towards economic growth, somewhere politically motivated. This leads to lack of support services thereby constraining growth in this sector. No matter the efforts exerted by the frontiers of the SMEs, political support is not only important but also necessary.
- viii. Also there is the problem of multiple statutory levies imposed by the various agencies of the government which need be streamlined and reduced.

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