E-ISSN: 2997-934X

SemantJournals

American Journal of Business Practice
https://semantjournals.org/index.php/AJBP

| Research Article

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Self-Enhancing Funblast and Employee Occupational Stress in Construction Companies in Souht-South, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study was determined on impacting employee occupational stress in construction companies in South-South, Nigeria through self-enhancing funblast as a channel. The measures considered for the study under the criterion variable were employee emotional stress and employee physical stress. The study objective was mainly to determine the extent to which self-enhancing funblast, influenced the measures of employee occupational stress in construction companies in South-South, Nigeria. The research design adopted was a cross-sectional survey design and we utilized a structured questionnaire to collect primary data. The population of the study was 1014 which represented the total number of full-time staff in 5 construction companies and the sample size were 278 study elements who are full time employees in the construction companies. However, the final analysis in the study was based on data collected from 258 respondents. The Spearman's rank order correlation served as the test statistics, while the zero partial correlation was used to determine the moderating effect of the relationship between the predictor and the criterion variables. The test was

carried out at a 0.05 significance level. The study found out that self-enhancing funblast, have a significant and positive relationship with employee occupational stress. Consequently, the result showed that employees gender demography strongly moderates the relationship between appreciation funblast and employee occupational stress of construction companies in South-South, Nigeria. The study concluded that self-enhancing funblast demonstrated degrees of impact on how the organizations decreases the stress they experience as a result of carrying out their job, achieve set corporate goals, acquire resources, adapt to and respond to learning in the face of change. The study suggests the inclusion of self-enhancing funblast efforts and activities, in the organizational planning in order to ease employee's stress and increase commitment.

Key words: Self-Enhancing Funblast, Employee Occupational Stress, Emotional Stress, Physical Stress.

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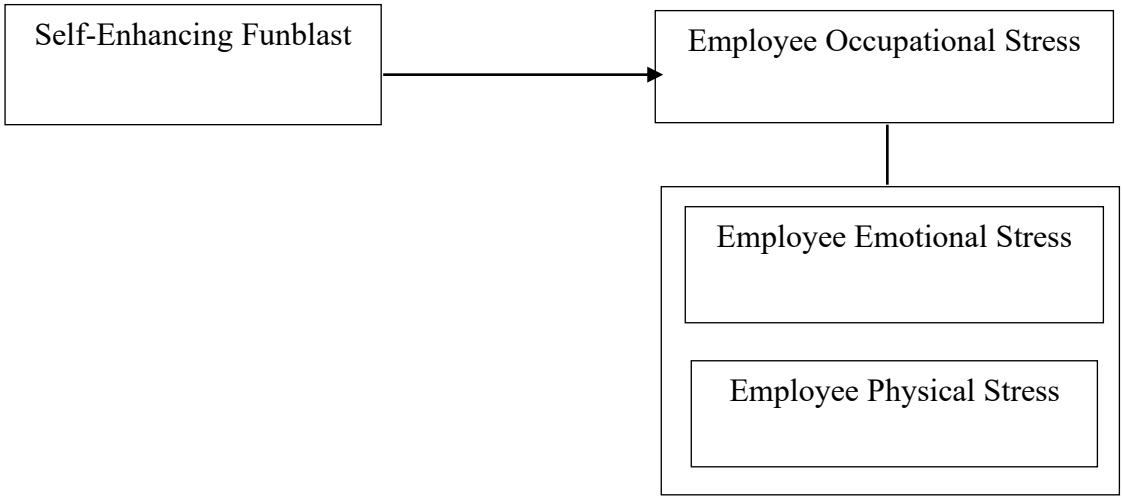
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

Employee occupational stress is inevitable. Scholars have suggested various medium to minimize the impact of stress on workers in construction companies in South-South, Nigeria. Using instruments that is in-dependable variables as a strategy to reduce stress. howbeit, not many have considered adopting self-enhancing funblast. According to a survey conducted by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (1999), around 40 percent of workers reported that their work is too stressful and about 26 percent felt overwhelmed by stress at work. Lewig and Dollard, (2001) concluded that employees in the public sector experienced higher levels of stress than employees in the private sector. Moreover, they found that workplace environments in the public and private sectors were characterized by increasing pressure on employees to perform, as such contributing to increased risk of health problems among employees. A survey by Ricardo *et. al.,* (2007) showed that public sector employees were significantly more likely (64%) to report stress to be the primary cause of concern at work than private sector employees (with only 46%).

Moreover, a random sample of 305 employees and 325 managers across Canadian companies surveyed found a negative correlation between employee occupational stress and job performance (Jamal, 1984). The relation between high levels of stress and reduced productivity has also been shown by the Towers Watson study (2014). This study included 22,347 employees across 12 different countries around the world. Their research, showed that one out of three employees are anxious about the excessive work pressure and this affects their work performance as well as absenteeism, inevitably leading to lower levels of productivity at work. Self-enhancing funblast is an instrument used in developing a positive mindset in the face of distress, tension and tribulation. People who employ self-enhancing funblast have a funblatous view of life and are not easily overwhelmed in distress and by its inevitable tribulations (Romero & Arendt, 2011). This funblast style is individually centered unlike affiliative funblast (Martin, 2003). The level of organizational related stress is higher than job & individual related stress. Despite the studies, conducted to resolve employee occupational stress, there seems to pose some problems to which this study, have contributed to knowledge and been able to minimize employee occupational stress in construction companies in South-South, Nigeria. Through self-enhancing funblast.

Fig: 1 Conceptual Framework



Source: Scholars' Computation, 2024.

Research Questions

H_1: What is the relationship between self-enhancing funblast and employee emotional stress in construction company in South-South, Nigeria?

H_2: What is the relationship between self-enhancing funblast and employee physical stress in construction company in South-South, Nigeria?

Literature Review

Relief Theory

This theory of funblast tries to explain funblast from the perspective of its functions and values to us as individuals. According to this theory, funblast is an antidote of tension, stress and paradoxes of everyday life. The major proponent of this theory is Sigmund Freud. Freud, (1928) opined that funblast releases repressed emotions that are associated with the funblast theme. Also, this theory assumes that an individual will laugh or experience funblast when he/she feels that stress or tension has been released (Martin, Rich & Gayle, 2004). The theory is expressed as the release of built-up tension either regarding a subject or a general sense of tension within the responder (Morreall 2009; Lyttle 2007). Thus, organizational members use jokes, stories, as an antidotes to build group cohesion and alleviate boredom (Block, Browning, & McGrath, 1983; Smeltzerand Leap, 1988; Ullian, 1976), develop inclusive relationships, increase a sense of belonging (Duncan *et. al.,* 1990), reduce tension (Martineau, 1972), and enhance group enjoyment (Wasserman & Klein, 1974). Additionally, self- disparaging funblast, that is when jokes are directed at oneself, could be used as a tool by managers to achieve a release of stress and increased subordinate participation, thus being an effective tool in the hands of a skillful leader (Miznikova & Schönfeldt, 2010). More so, subsequent literature by (Wyer, & Collins, 1992; Davis, 1993), have proposed several funblast theories which are considered as: arousal and arousal reduction theory, superiority and disparagement theory, incongruity resolution theory and comprehension and elaboration theory. Overall, these theories explain the reason behind the individuals expressing funblasts and the process individuals evaluate funblasts.

Self-Enhancing Funblast

Self-enhancing funblast has been said to be negatively related to neuroticism and positively related to self-esteem and favorable emotions (Ho, Wang, Huang & Chen, 2011). Romero and Cruthirds (2006) posit that this type of funblast is used to enhance the image of the initiator when

used in the organization. This funblast style is individual centered unlike affiliative funblast (Martin, 2003). Romero, and Cruthirds, (2006) also opined that this type of funblatous is use mainly to impress others. This is in consonance with Martin, (2003) assertion that self-enhancing funblast emphasizes the internal transformations of oneself and it is not easy for team members to be aware of the intentions of the initiations at the beginning. Managers who use this humor style enhance their self-image relative to others and demonstrate to others that the manager has a positive mindset towards stress and can effectively cope with organizational distress. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) expresses that job stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the workers.

Occupational Stress

Employee occupational stress is defined as the perception of a discrepancy between environmental demands (stressors) and individual capacities to fill these demands (Topper, 2007; Vermut & Steensma, 2005; Ornels & Kleiner, 2003; Varca, 1999). Christo and Pienaar (2006) for example, argued that the causes of employee occupational stress include 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. In addition, employee occupational stress is caused by lack of resources and equipment; work schedules (such as working late or overtime and organizational climate are considered as contributors to employees' stress. Employee occupational 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). Johnson (2001) similarly argued that interventions like identifying or determining the signs of stress, identifying the possible causes for the signs and developing possible proposed solutions for each sign are required.

Employee Emotional stress

Employee emotional stress is a psychological response to events or situations that are perceived as threatening, challenging, or overwhelming. It can manifest in a variety of ways, including feelings of anxiety, frustration, anger, sadness, and overwhelm. Employee emotional stress can have a significant impact on an individual's mental and physical well-being, leading to a range of negative consequences if not managed effectively (Lazarus, & Folkman, 1984). Employee emotional stress involves the experience of negative affect, such as anxiety, in the context of a physiological stress response that includes cardiovascular and hormonal changes. Employee emotional stress commonly occurs when an individual perceives that he or she does not have adequate personal resources to meet situational demands effectively (Lazarus, 1966). Early conceptions of stress characterized its physical properties, with a focus on the disruption of homeostasis in an organism (Selye, 1956). The stress concept subsequently evolved to include a greater emphasis on the influence of psychological factors on the stress process. The term "employee emotional stress" reflects the fact that the stress process in humans involves a substantial affective component.

Employee Physical stress

Employee physical stress refers to the strain or pressure placed on the body as a result of physical exertion, environmental factors, or other external stressors. It can have a variety of negative effects on the body, including fatigue, muscle soreness, reduced immune function, and increased risk of injury (McEwen, & Stellar, 1993; Selye, 1956). One key aspect of employee physical stress is the body's response to strenuous physical activity. When the body is subjected to intense exercise or physical labor, it must adapt to the increased demands placed on it. This adaptation process can lead to improvements in strength, endurance, and overall physical fitness. However, if the body is subjected to excessive or prolonged physical stress without adequate rest and recovery,

it can lead to negative consequences such as over training, burnout, and increased risk of injury (Kivimäki, Nyberg, Batty, Fransson, Heikkilä, Alfredsson, & Virtanen, 2012).

Methodology

Methodology this has to do with the method, the researcher, intends to use in carrying out his study. For the purpose of this study, the research designed adopted was cross sectional survey. This is to give the respondents an equal opportunity to be chosen.

The population of the study was one thousand and fourteen (1014) people operating in five (5), construction companies in South-South, Nigeria. As contained in the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), 2024. While the sample size was two hundred and seventy eighty (278) full time workers.

The analysis was carried out, using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient to test the relationship between the two instruments, used. The reliability and validity test were 0.930 at 0.01 significant level. Which implies that the study is replicable and reliable elsewhere.

Response Rate

Two hundred and seventy-eight (278) questionnaires were distributed to the respondents in construction companies in South-South, Nigeria. Two hundred and fifty eighty (258) were returned representing 92.8%. two hundred and thirteen (213) representing 82.6% are male while, forty-four (44), representing 17.1% are female. It implies more male are given opportunity than the female in construction companies in South-South, Nigeria.

Results and analysis

Table 1. Correlation Matrix Self-enhancing Funblast and Measures of Employee occupational stress.

Correlations						
			SEF	**MS**	**ES**	**PS**
Spearman's rho	SEF	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.513**	.357**	.663**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	258	258	258	258
	ES	Correlation Coefficient	.357**	.747**	1.000	.406**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	258	258	258	258
	PS	Correlation Coefficient	.663**	.521**	.406**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	258	258	258	258
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

Source: SPSS Output

To enable us accept or reject hypotheses 1 and 2 as well as generalize our findings to the study population, the p-value was used as shown below:

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between self-enhancing funblast and emotional stress in construction companies in south - south, Nigeria.

Similarly displayed in the Table 1. is the statistical test of significance (p-value) which makes possible the generalization of our findings to the study population. From the result obtained from Table 1, the sig-calculated is less than significant level ($p = 0.357 < 0.01$). therefore, based on this finding, the null hypothesis earlier stated, is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Hence, there

is a weak significant relationship between self-enhancing funblast and emotional stress of construction company workers in South-South, Nigeria.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between self-enhancing funblast and physical stress in construction companies in South-South, Nigeria.

Further displayed, in the Table 1 is the statistical test of significance (p-value) which makes possible, the generalization of our findings to the study population. From the result obtained from Table 1, the p-value is ($p = 0.663 < 0.01$). therefore, based on this finding, the null hypothesis earlier stated, is hereby rejected and the alternate accepted. Thus, there is a strong significant relationship between self-enhancing funblast and physical stress of construction company workers in South-South, Nigeria.

Discussion of findings

Self-enhancing Funblast and Employee occupational stress in Construction Companies in South-South, Nigeria

The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between self-enhancing funblast and employee occupational stress of construction workers in South-South, Nigeria. The findings support the earlier result of the study of Martin, (2003) assertion that self-enhancing funblast emphasizes the internal transformations of oneself and it is not easy for team members to be aware of the intentions of the initiations at the beginning. Managers who use this funblast style enhance their self-image relative to others and demonstrate to others that the manager has a positive mindset towards stress and can effectively cope with organizational distress. Also, one study conducted by Cann *et. al.,* (2011) found that individuals who scored higher on measures of self-enhancing funblast reported higher levels of life satisfaction and lower levels of depression and anxiety. Similarly, Martin *et al.* (2003), found that individuals who used self-enhancing funblast as a coping strategy reported lower levels of stress and higher levels of psychological well-being. In addition to its benefits for mental health, self-enhancing funblast has also been shown to have positive effects on social relationships.

For example, Lefcourt, (2001), found that individuals who used self-enhancing funblast were perceived as more likable and were more likely to be sought out as social companions. Overall, the literature on self-enhancing funblast suggests that incorporating funblast into daily life can have a range of positive effects on mental health and well-being. By using funblast to re-frame negative situations and maintain a positive outlook, individuals can improve their overall quality of life and enhance their social relationships. The result of the current research, concurs to the assertion of previous studies conducted by scholars. Furthermore, self-enhancing funblast serves the purpose of shining a positive light on the communicator and enhancing his or her image (Romero & Cruthirds 2006). while self-enhancing funblast has been said to be negatively related to neuroticism and positively related to self-esteem and favorable emotions (Ho, Wang, Huang & Chen, 2011). Romero and Cruthirds (2006) posit that this type of funblast is used to enhance the image of the initiator when used in the organization.

Conclusion

This study concluded that self-enhancing funblast, moderately decreases the impact of occupational stress in workers in construction companies in South-South, Nigeria. This implies that when self-enhancing funblast is applied to employee occupational stress, there is an observed change on the body system and hormones. Which helps the individual cope with anxiety and negative affect.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the study recommends thus:

1. Management should as part of their planning, structuring and restructuring, make arrangements for time and areas where fun activities can be demonstrated while at work. As saying goes all work no play, makes Jerk a dull boy. But this should be done with proper supervision to avoid excessiveness of event display.
2. Management of the organization foster the culture providing a good work policy and ensuring that the workers understand, follows and lives by the tenets of the instructions as provided by the guided manual of the organization.
3. It is recommended that managers, should encourage the use of funblast approach amongst workers.

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