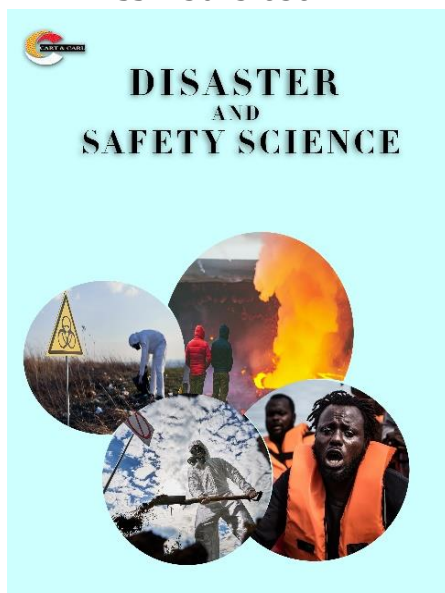




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Workers' Training, Workload, Stress, and Productivity in Tertiary Institutions in the Niger Delta, Nigeria

Abstract

This study examined the relationship between workers' training and development, workload/stress, and workers' productivity in selected tertiary institutions in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The study became necessary due to persistent concerns regarding inadequate staff development programmes, excessive workload, occupational stress, and declining productivity among workers in Nigerian tertiary institutions. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, while primary and secondary data were utilised for the study. Structured questionnaires were administered to respondents across selected tertiary institutions in Rivers, Bayelsa, Akwa-Ibom, Cross-River, and Delta States. A total of 400 copies of questionnaire were distributed, while 383 valid copies representing 95.75% were retrieved and used for analysis. Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed a strong and positive relationship between workers' training and development and workers' productivity with correlation coefficient ($r = 0.882$) and significance value ($p = 0.001 < 0.01$), indicating that effective training and development programmes significantly enhance workers' productivity. The study also revealed a significant negative relationship between workload/stress and workers' productivity with correlation coefficient ($r = -0.724$) and significance value ($p = 0.004 < 0.01$), indicating that excessive workload and occupational stress significantly reduce workers' productivity. The study concluded that workers' training and development positively improve productivity, while excessive workload and stress negatively affect workers' efficiency and performance in tertiary institutions. The study recommended regular staff training programmes, effective workload distribution, stress management strategies, and improved staff welfare policies to enhance workers' productivity.

Keywords: Workers' Training, Staff Development, Workload, Stress, Workers' Productivity, Tertiary Institutions, Niger Delta.

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Introduction

Tertiary institutions occupy strategic positions in national development because they are responsible for manpower development, research advancement, innovation, and knowledge production. The effectiveness of these institutions depends largely on the quality and productivity of their workforce. Workers represent the most important assets within tertiary institutions because institutional performance, service delivery, and organisational growth depend on their competence, commitment, and efficiency. Workers' productivity remains one of the major determinants of organisational effectiveness and institutional development. In tertiary institutions, productivity influences teaching effectiveness, administrative efficiency, research output, and service delivery. However, productivity in many Nigerian tertiary institutions has continued to decline due to inadequate training opportunities, excessive workload, occupational stress, and poor welfare conditions. re safety issues in such buildings due to several fire incidences that have occurred (Nimlyat et al., 2017; Daramola & Ibrahim, 2021).



The work environment significantly influences workers' morale, commitment, effectiveness, and productivity. Edwin (2016) explained that the environment consists of all surrounding conditions and influences affecting human activities and organisational performance. Kohun (2002) further defined work environment as the totality of forces and organisational conditions influencing workers' activities and productivity. Training and development have become essential organisational strategies for improving workers' competence, effectiveness, and productivity. Training refers to organised activities aimed at improving employees' knowledge, skills, and performance, while development involves long-term educational and professional growth programmes. Armstrong (2009) maintained that training and development improve employees' competence, efficiency, and organisational commitment.

In tertiary institutions, workers require continuous training to adapt to technological changes, administrative innovations, and contemporary educational demands. However, inadequate staff development opportunities in many Nigerian institutions have negatively affected workers' efficiency and productivity. Workload and occupational stress also constitute major challenges affecting workers' productivity in tertiary institutions. Workload refers to the volume and complexity of tasks assigned to employees within a given period, while stress refers to psychological and physical strain resulting from excessive demands and pressure. Robbins and Judge (2013) argued that excessive workload contributes to fatigue, burnout, low morale, and declining productivity. Workers in Nigerian tertiary institutions often experience excessive workload due to inadequate staffing, administrative pressure, role conflict, and increasing institutional demands. These conditions frequently result in stress, absenteeism, low morale, and reduced productivity. Consequently, this study examined the relationship between workers' training and development, workload/stress, and workers'

productivity in selected tertiary institutions in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Many tertiary institutions in Nigeria continue to experience declining workers' productivity arising from inadequate training opportunities, poor staff development programmes, excessive workload, and occupational stress. Workers in many institutions are often expected to perform multiple responsibilities under difficult conditions without adequate training, motivation, or institutional support. The inability of institutions to organise regular training and development programmes has negatively affected workers' efficiency, innovation, and adaptability to modern organisational practices. Furthermore, excessive workload and occupational stress have contributed to fatigue, frustration, low morale, absenteeism, and poor service delivery among workers. Despite government interventions aimed at improving tertiary education, productivity among workers in many institutions remains relatively low due to inadequate staff development opportunities and poor working conditions. Although previous studies have examined organisational productivity, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the relationship between workers' training and development, workload/stress, and workers' productivity in tertiary institutions within the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This study therefore sought to fill this gap.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to examine the influence of work environment on workers' productivity in selected tertiary institutions in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

1. Examine the relationship between workers' training and development and workers' productivity.
2. Determine the relationship between workload/stress and workers' productivity.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between workers' training and development and workers' productivity?
2. How does workload/stress affect workers' productivity?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between workers' training and development and workers' productivity.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between workload/stress and workers' productivity.

*Literature Review**Concept of Work Environment*

Work environment refers to all surrounding factors that influence employees' activities and productivity within organisations. Edwin (2016) maintained that the environment consists of physical, biological, and social conditions influencing human existence and organisational effectiveness. Agbozo et al. (2017) classified work environment into physical, psychological, and social environments. The physical work environment includes office layout, ventilation, machinery, equipment, lighting, and temperature, while the social environment consists of interpersonal relationships and communication patterns. Organisational environment includes institutional policies, procedures, and leadership practices. Kyko (2005) identified conducive and toxic work environments as two contrasting organisational conditions influencing workers' behaviour and productivity. Toxic work environments contribute to stress, absenteeism, low morale, and reduced productivity.

Concept of Workers' Productivity

Workers' productivity is something that is expected by the management of institutions to enable her achieves its goals and objective. And for achieving this, require setting up strategies and leaders with the required visions to ensure effectiveness efficiency. The concept productivity has been severally defined, by different scholars, Babatunde and Mrakinyo (2015) sees productivity as the number one reason that why institutions need to provide the needed welfare for its workers and so, productivity is the measurement of efficiency and effectiveness as a means of improving the quality of life that is basic for achieving desire output from the available resources. That is in agreement with Rolloos (1997) assertions who admitted that productivity is that in which people can produce with less effort. Also, Sustermeister (1976) view productivity based on output driven oriented. Thus, "output per worker's hour, quality measured". To management, productivity implies increased in profit. To customers, productivity is referred to as better goods after costs. To directors of industries or marketing directors, productivity is achieved when there is improvement and increase in the firm's competitiveness overseas and there is reduction in the cost of goods sold in the foreign market. And to the economists, productivity is obtained when there is an increase in the country's standard of living field to gain in output per man hour. This aligned with the argument of Cecune (2004), who stated that productivity could be seen as "an index that is expressed as the ratio of output over input.

To Lambert (2005), productivity is hardly measured directly but could be observed from changes in the workers' attitude and conduct such as institutional commitment, institutional citizenship behavior and job satisfaction". Productivity is about 'reaching maximal height of performance with minimal expenditure of resources, both physical and human at a given time. It measures qualitatively in terms of efficiency and

effectiveness with three major elements which includes: Output, Resources committed, and Time. In this path, industrialists are concerned with how to minimize production costs (inputs) so as to attain the greatest (output) that is goods and services. Thus, the productivity of an employee is seen as the relationship between units of labor inputs units of output. Hence, an effective integration of resources both human and physical will yield high output. In a similar vein, Danang Sunyoto (2015), observed that work productivity is a mental attitude that has perspective that today is better than yesterday and tomorrow will be greater than today. It demonstrates that productivity in organisations depends solely on worker`s engagement and institutional environment as such the achievement of the institutions relies on the worker`s work environment.

Workers` Training and Development and Workers` Productivity

Training and development are essential tools for improving employees` competence, knowledge, and productivity. Armstrong (2009) defined training as a systematic process of modifying employees` behaviour, skills, and knowledge to improve organisational performance. Development, on the other hand, involves long-term educational activities aimed at improving employees` future capabilities. Employees who receive adequate training are usually more productive, innovative, and committed to organisational goals. Training enhances workers` ability to adapt to technological and organisational changes, thereby improving institutional effectiveness.

Workload/Stress and Workers` Productivity

Workload refers to the amount of duties and responsibilities assigned to employees, while stress refers to psychological and physical pressure arising from excessive demands and unfavourable working conditions. Robbins and Judge (2013) maintained that excessive workload often results in fatigue, frustration,

emotional exhaustion, and reduced productivity. Workers in tertiary institutions often experience excessive workload arising from inadequate staffing, administrative responsibilities, role conflict, and increasing institutional demands. Occupational stress resulting from excessive workload negatively affects workers` morale, commitment, efficiency, and productivity.

Several factors could associate to workload or in other words refers to as occupational stress. There is no work without stress or workload but sometimes differs. This load could be minimal or overload. The work overload could also be seen to be in a situation whereby the workers are involve in several roles or role expectations exceed the resources or time available to fulfill assigned responsibilities. Badaz (2019) identified some basic factors that led to workload, such as workload technological problems, higher target, poor compensation and salary, outcomes of the management decisions, and poor work relations among colleagues. Increase in the rank of the offer can also attribute to increase in workload that leads to work stress. Khattah (2016) has maintained that workers experienced stress because of workload, technological problems at long working durations or hours, poor salary, insufficient time for family and job worries at home. Workload also creates dissatisfaction among workers. Perhaps Shahid (2013) affirmed that inflexible work hours, work overload and poor working relations with coworkers contribute to job stress, which causes dissatisfaction between members of staff in organizations.

Theoretical Framework

Abraham Maslow`s Hierarchy of Needs

This study was anchored on Abraham Maslow`s Hierarchy of Needs Theory. Maslow (1954) argued that human beings possess hierarchical needs ranging from physiological and safety needs to self-actualisation. Workers become motivated and productive when

organisations provide supportive and secure work environments that satisfy these needs. The theory is relevant because workers' productivity in tertiary institutions is influenced by organisational factors such as staff training opportunities, workload distribution, and stress management systems.

Empirical Review

Mohamud (2014) carried out study to investigate the effect of training on staff productivity in public sector organizations in Kenya, the research revealed that training has significant impact on staff productivity and benefits both the individual's workers and the organization at large. Again, a study conducted by Githinji (2014) on the effect of training on worker's productivity in nations support office for African union mission in Somalia, established that training has positive impact on job satisfaction by influencing the work activities.

According to Watson, et al., (2015), stress is becoming more common and is having a negative impact on people and businesses around the world. The purpose of his research was to identify any gender differences in stress and coping strategies used by male and female employees. He adopted 258 participants from various walks of life and professions who took part in the study (106 men and 152 women). Men and women responded differently to stress in the workplace, with the results showing that they formed two distinct groups and used different process models. The results of the evaluations were used to draw conclusion: that Stress affects a large percentage of people, especially those who work in demanding jobs. Numerous physiological and psychological problems are triggered by stress.

An empirical evaluation of the influence of occupational stress on the performance of Nigerian managers was conducted by Salami, Ojokuku, and Ilesanmi (2018). Using One hundred thirty-five managers with five years' experience or more in management positions were

selected using a random selection technique. A standardised questionnaire was used to collect data relevant to the investigation. In order to test the study's hypothesis, the Z-score was used. The results showed that Nigerian managers experienced decreased focus, mental blockage, and reduced decision-making abilities as a result of job stress-induced subjective impacts such as anger, fear, and anxiety. Workload, position ambiguity, and psychological strain can be reduced by job redesign initiatives, according to organisations in Nigeria. It is recommended that existing organisational support programs, such as counselling and stress reduction courses, be strengthened. Hotel workers in Central Florida were the subjects of a study on depression by Amir and Abraham (2019). Through analysing the relationship between occupational stress and job characteristics, they were able to ascertain the prevalence of depression among workers in the hospitality sector.

Materials and Methods

Research Design and Procedures

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised staff of public tertiary institutions in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria (Figure 1). The population comprised 12,928 workers drawn from five selected tertiary institutions in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The institutions included the University of Port Harcourt, Niger Delta University, Dennis Osadebay University, Cross River State University of Technology, and Akwa Ibom State University. Data were collected using structured questionnaires designed to assess the influence of physical, social, and organisational work environments on workers' productivity. The instrument was validated by experts in educational management and measurement and evaluation. Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha method. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics such as mean and standard

deviation, while hypotheses were tested using inferential statistical tools at the 0.05 significance level. A sample size of 400 respondents was determined using the Taro Yamane formula. A total of 400 copies of questionnaire were distributed, out of which 383 valid copies

representing 95.75% were retrieved and used for analysis. The study employed Spearman’s Rank Order Correlation Coefficient to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

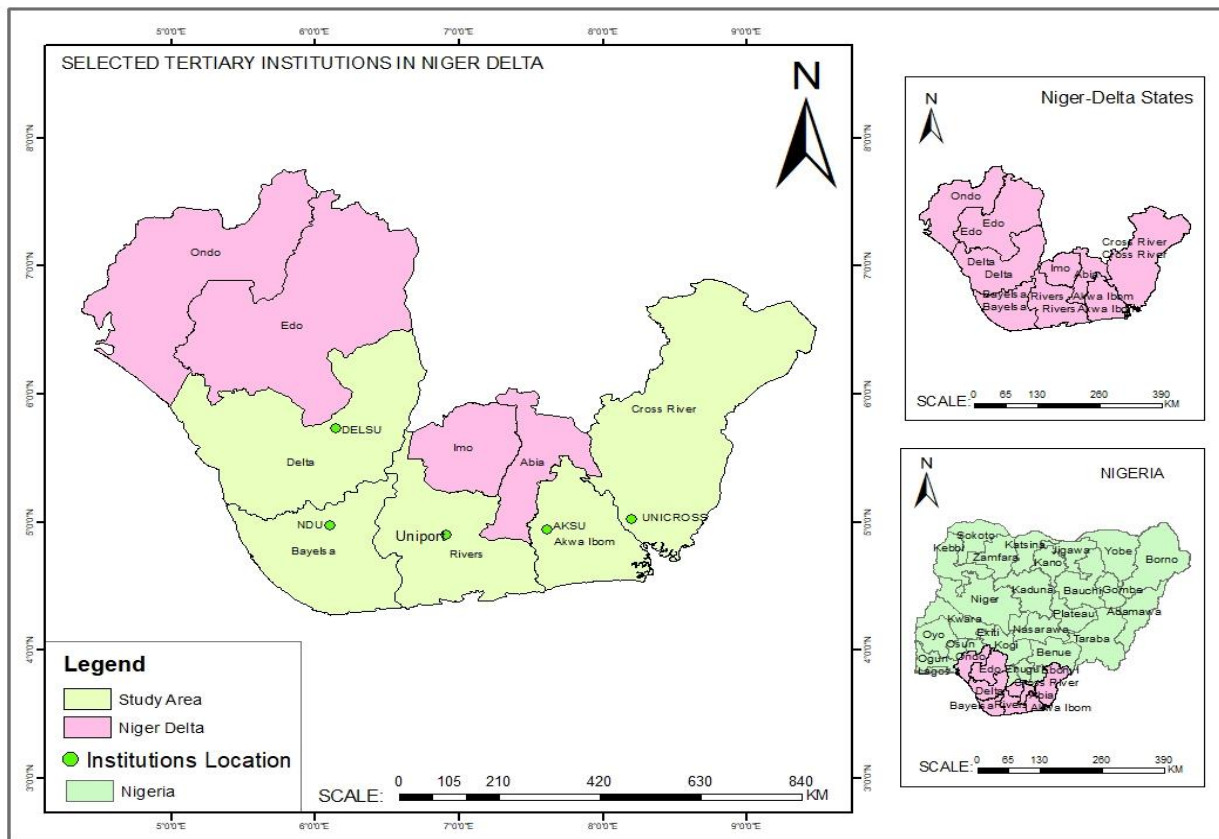


Figure 1: Map of Niger Delta with selected tertiary institutions

Source: Cartography Laboratory, Department of Geography and Environmental Management, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Port Harcourt, 2025.

Results and Discussion

Socio-Economics Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 presents the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. The socio-demographic profile of the respondents revealed that the majority of the respondents were female workers, representing 58% (223 respondents), while male respondents accounted for 42% (160 respondents). This indicates that female staff constituted a larger proportion of the workforce in the selected tertiary institutions. Regarding length of service, the highest proportion of respondents, representing 30% (117 respondents), had worked for 16

years and above, followed by those with 11–15 years of service at 28% (108 respondents). This suggests that most respondents possessed considerable work experience and institutional knowledge.

In terms of academic qualifications, respondents with B.Sc qualifications constituted the highest percentage at 34% (130 respondents), followed by M.Sc holders at 27% (103 respondents), indicating that the workforce was largely educated and academically qualified. Furthermore, the job status distribution showed that non-teaching staff constituted the majority with 58% (223 respondents), while teaching staff accounted for 42% (160 respondents). Overall, the table indicates that

the respondents were experienced, academically qualified, and adequately distributed across teaching and

non-teaching categories, thereby providing reliable information for the study.

Table 1: Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 383)

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender of Respondents	Male	160	42
	Female	223	58
	Total	383	100
Length of Service	1–5 years	60	16
	6–10 years	98	26
	11–15 years	108	28
	16 years and above	117	30
	Total	383	100
Academic Qualifications	FSLC	50	13
	SSCE	60	16
	B.Sc	130	34
	M.Sc	103	27
	PhD	40	10
	Total	383	100
Job Status of Respondents	Teaching Staff	160	42
	Non-Teaching Staff	223	58
	Total	383	100

Workers’ Training / Development and Workers’ Productivity

Table 2 presented respondents’ view on the relationship between workers’ training and development and worker’s productivity in selected tertiary institutions in Niger Delta. Table 2 presented respondents’ view on the relationship between worker’s training and development influence productivity in selected tertiary institutions in Niger Delta. On whether Increase in productivity is determined by effective transfer of knowledge through intrinsic training, 36% of respondents indicate Strongly Agreed, 24% indicated Agreed, 18% indicated Disagreed while 21% of the respondents Strongly Disagreed. In relation to whether increase in productivity will determine by effective transfer of knowledge through training and staff development, 32% of the respondents indicated Strongly Agreed, 26% indicated Agreed, 19% indicated Disagreed while 23% of the respondents indicated Strongly

Disagreed. In the same vein, responses to whether Staff development encourages higher productivity, 35% Strongly Agreed, 31% Agreed, 16% Disagreed while 18% Strongly Disagreed. Furthermore, responses to whether worker’s training significantly influence institutional productivity, 36% of total respondents Strongly Agree, 29% Agreed, 13% Disagreed while 22% Strongly Disagreed. responses to whether Staff development increases worker’s morale and passion to be more committed for daily tasks, 36% of total respondents Strongly Agree, 29% Agreed, 13% Disagreed while 22% Strongly Disagreed.

Test of Hypothesis One

Table 3 presents the results of the Spearman’s rho correlation analysis conducted to examine the relationship between workers’ training and development and workers’ productivity. The analysis reveals a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.882, which indicates a strong and positive relationship between the

two variables. The findings revealed a strong and positive relationship between workers' training and development and workers' productivity with correlation coefficient ($r = 0.882$) and significance value ($p = 0.001 < 0.01$). Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that workers' training and development significantly influence workers' productivity. This finding agrees with Armstrong (2009), who maintained

that training and development enhance employees' competence, commitment, and productivity.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between physical work environment and workers' productivity.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between physical work environment and workers' productivity.

Table 2: Distribution of Responses on the relationship between worker's training and development influence productivity in selected tertiary institutions in Niger Delta

S/N	Description	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	TOTAL %
1	Increase in productivity is determined by effective transfer of knowledge through intrinsic training	78 (37)	70 (24)	95 (18)	145 (21)	100%
2	Increase in productivity will determine by effective transfer of knowledge through training and staff development.	126 (32)	100 (26)	73 (19)	89 (23)	100 %
3	Staff development encourages higher productivity	135 (35)	120 (31)	64 (16)	69 (18)	100 %
4	Worker's training significantly influence institutional productivity.	140 (36)	113 (29)	50 (13)	85 (22)	100 %
5	Staff development increases worker's morale and passion to be more committed for daily tasks.	139 (36)	112 (29)	51 (13)	89 (22)	100 %

Table 3: Workers' Training / Development and Workers' Productivity

			Workers' Training / Development	Workers' Productivity
Spearman's rho	Training / Development	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.882**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
		N	383	383
	Workers' Productivity	Correlation Coefficient	.882**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
		N	383	383

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Workload/Stress and Workers' Productivity

Table 4 presented respondents' view on relationship the relationship between workload, and worker's productivity in selected tertiary institutions in Niger Delta. On whether workload increases productivity, 21% of respondents indicate Strongly Agreed, 18% indicated Agreed, 24% indicated Disagreed while 37% of the respondents Strongly Disagreed. In relation to whether

workload reduces worker's productivity, 32% of the respondents indicated Strongly Agreed, 26% indicated Agreed, 19% indicated Disagreed while 23% of the respondents indicated Strongly Disagreed. In the same vein, responses to whether Stress and workload negatively affect tertiary institutions productivity, 35% Strongly Agreed, 31% Agreed, 16% Disagreed while 18% Strongly Disagreed. Furthermore, responses to whether

Workload have positive influence on worker's productivity. 36% of total respondents Strongly Agree, 29% Agreed, 13% Disagreed while 22% Strongly Disagreed. responses to whether Workers derive pleasure in working with much workload and stress. Leaders create recognition and reward environment to enhance productivity in tertiary institutions, 22% of total respondents Strongly Agree, 13% Agreed, 29% Disagreed while 36% Strongly Disagreed.

Test of Hypothesis Two

Table 5 presents the results of the Spearman's rho correlation analysis conducted to examine the relationship between workload/stress and workers' productivity. The analysis reveals a correlation coefficient (r) of -0.724, which indicates a strong but

negative relationship between the two variables. The findings revealed a significant negative relationship between workload/stress and workers' productivity with correlation coefficient (r = -0.724) and significance value (p = 0.004 < 0.01). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that workload/stress significantly affects workers' productivity. The finding corroborates Robbins and Judge (2013), who argued that excessive workload and occupational stress reduce workers' morale, efficiency, and productivity.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between workload/stress and workers' productivity

H₁: There is no significant relationship between workload/stress and workers' productivity

Table 4: Distribution of Responses on the relationship between workload, and worker's productivity in selected tertiary institutions in Niger Delta

S/N	Description	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	TOTAL %
1	Workload increases productivity.	78 (20)	70 (18)	95 (25)	145 (37)	100%
2	Workload reduces worker's productivity.	126 (32)	100 (26)	73 (19)	89 (23)	100 %
3	Stress and workload negatively affect tertiary institutions productivity	135 (35)	120 (31)	64 (16)	69 (18)	100 %
4	Workload have positive influence on worker's productivity.	140 (36)	113 (29)	50 (13)	85 (22)	100 %
5	Workers derive pleasure in working with much workload and stress	86 (22)	51 (13)	112 (29)	139 (36)	100 %

Table 5: Workload / Stress and Workers' Productivity

			Workload / Stress	Workers' Productivity
Spearman's rho	Workload / Stress	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.724**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.004
	Workers' Productivity	Correlation Coefficient	-.724**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.
		N	383	383

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Conclusions

This article examined the influence of workers' training and development, workload, and stress on workers' productivity in tertiary institutions in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The study established that training and development positively influence workers' competence and productivity, while excessive workload and workplace stress negatively affect employee wellbeing and institutional performance. The study concluded that workers' training and development significantly improve workers' productivity, while excessive workload and occupational stress negatively affect productivity in tertiary institutions in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Workers who receive adequate training opportunities tend to demonstrate improved competence, commitment, and efficiency, whereas excessive workload and stress reduce morale, effectiveness, and institutional productivity.

The study therefore recommends as follows:

1. Management of tertiary institutions should organise regular staff training and development programmes to improve workers' competence and productivity.
2. Government and institutional authorities should provide adequate funding for capacity-building programmes and professional development.
3. Institutional management should ensure equitable workload distribution among workers to reduce stress and burnout.
4. Stress management programmes and employee welfare policies should be implemented to improve workers' wellbeing and productivity.
5. Additional staff should be employed to reduce excessive workload and improve institutional efficiency.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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