



Research Paper

Work Overload Implications on the Health of Employees in the Banking Sector, Nigeria

Williams Okon Williams¹, Supper Roland Okijie² and Emem Bassey Inyang³

¹Department of Sociology, University of Calabar, Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria.

²Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

³Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT:

The frequent retrenchment exercises that are ongoing in the Nigerian banking sector have created excessive workloads, and the surviving employees are experiencing long-term work overload and stress that had, in turn, generated poor health conditions. Using General Adaptation Syndrome GAS Model, the study analyses work Overload and how it affected the Health of banks' employees after retrenchments. A total of four banks - First Bank of Nigeria Plc, (FBN), United Bank for Africa Plc (UBA) representing Old Generation Banks (OGBs); while Access Bank Plc, ECO Bank Nig Plc, representing New Generation Banks (NGBs) were randomly selected. The sample comprised 256 survivors selected through the triangulation of purposive and simple random sampling techniques, while questionnaires and in-depth interviews (IDIs) were used to gather data. The quantitative data were analyzed using frequency percentage distribution, and content analysis for qualitative data. Findings revealed that employees in both old and new generation banks were continually experiencing heavier and persistent work overload which resulted in long-term stress. For instance, 83.6% of workers in NGB, 82.0% in OGB stated that they were experiencing stress situations due to persistent and heavier work overloads. Equally, exposure to stress conditions had triggered both physical and psychological health challenges such as headache, ulcer, depression, etc. The study concludes that banking work is very stressful for the employees; therefore, the affected employees should be aware of their different stress conditions endeavor to manage their body response to guide against severe health challenges.

KEYWORDS: Bank, Retrenchment, Workload, Work Overload, Stress, Survivors, GAS.

JEL: J21, J53, J59, M51, M54, M59

Received 25 May, 2021; Revised: 06 June, 2021; Accepted 08 June, 2021 © The author(s) 2021.
Published with open access at www.questjournals.org

I. INTRODUCTION

In an organized workplace be it the private or public sector, a certain amount of works or tasks are frequently assigned to a particular employee, as a rule, these tasks have to be done within a stipulated time frame to accomplish organizational goals. But by nature, some organizations, especially highly demanding "human/customer servicing outfits" such as hospitals, banks, telecommunications, etc, witness numerous workloads than other institutions. Most often, numerous workloads usually lead to increased, heavy, and excess workloads most especially when the numbers of employees are few; this, in turn, has triggered work overload. Work overloads arise when the surviving employees are doing too much work, or being asked to do work that is too difficult. It can manifest at a physical or mental level or both (Imam, Mashood and Khan, 2011). Mentally, work overload describes a perception that employees are doing too much or excess work, hence, employees perceived their workload to be more than they can handle. Physically, they can feel overloaded with work by the number of tasks they are being asked to carry out, especially when they simply cannot do the work in the allotted time. Also, employees can feel overloaded by the difficulty of the work he has been asked to do particularly when the staffer is not capable of carrying out such work (Robbins, 2003).

Downsizing often leaves the remaining members of staff with too many tasks for one individual to accomplish and this resulted to work overload (Cox, et al 2006). In Nigeria, bank workers are overloaded with work as a result of the reoccurring and intermittent retrenchment exercise that reduced the number of employees to an unbearable level. All over the country, and even within the regions, cities, including Lagos and Ibadan metropolis, mass retrenchment and job loss are the order of the day. According to Ademola (2012), thousands of

banks' employees have been sacked even to the extent that in some banks, offices, staff cubicles, office tables and desks of the affected banks at various branches are left unoccupied by workers, thus, leaving the numerous customers to be attended to by few remaining employees. Retrenchment exercise in the Nigerian banking sector has posed a heavier workload for the survivors in their new workplace.

One of the ways workers are experiencing work overload is by doing too much work. Too much work may arise because of insufficient numbers of staff members to share the load, or inequitable distribution of work, where some individuals have heavier workloads than others (Hammer et al, 2010). Commonly most bank workers are experiencing work overload. But positively, work overload can push employees to perform well or be committed to working; however, this depends on the intensity and magnitude of the overload. Work overload faced by employees can be heavier and occur persistently, it can be moderate and occur occasionally, it can also be low and subsiding and occur intermittently- come suddenly and go within a short while without remaining permanent. But where work overload may pose extremely dangerous effects on the bank workers is when it remains permanent and in a long term, while the surviving employees are persistently working under pressure continually on the daily basis just as normal routine. Of course, this can have a propensity to induce work overload stress on the employees. Luthans (2003) states that certain employees in different occupations especially human service occupations such as banking, teaching, medicine & nursing are increasingly exposed to be under the persistent and unacceptable level of workload stress. But bank workers respond in different ways when subjected to certain stressors such as work overload, and they must perceive the stressor to be excessive and persistent for stress to result.

Work overload is indeed an occupational stressor. It is job-induced stress manifested in form of tension and excess pressure which the survivors perceived as a threat that disrupts their physical or psychological conditions such that the employees are forced to deviate from normal functioning. This is due to a poor match between the abilities of the employees and the demands of the job. This distress condition is frequently noted by people and scholars across banking, hence, Adenugba and Otewoyo (2012); Siyanbola (2013) affirm that employees in banks face workload stress and that work is potentially an important source of stress for bankers because of the large number of tasks demanded with a very limited timeframe and working for very long hours. Though scholars such as Williams, Etuk and Inyang (2014); Siyanbola (2013); Adnugba and Otewoyo (2012); Chipunza and Berry (2011) have linked the aftermath of retrenchment to increasing workload, and stress. But the little attempt has been made to study the intensity or magnitude of work overload and the consequences on the health conditions of the employees who retained their work after retrenchment exercise. Given the above, this study, therefore, sets out to empirically examining the relationship between retrenchment and work overload and its repercussions on the health conditions of the employees in the Old Generation bank (OGB), and the New Generation bank (NGB) in Ibadan city, Oyo State – Southwest Nigeria. In achieving this aim, the specific objectives are designed to:

- establish the association between retrenchment and work overload in selected old and new generation commercial banks.
- examine the intensity or magnitude of work overload experienced by the surviving bank workers after retrenchment.
- find out how work overload affected the health condition of employees of the selected banks.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORY FRAMEWORK

Retrenchment in banks is a crucial causal factor that exposes the surviving employees to work overload. As put by Siyanbola (2013), the aftermath of retrenchment is work overload. This is so because retrenchment limits the numbers of staff, and couple with day-to-day increasing task demands and numerous jobs, the surviving employees are compelled to do the work of the victims in addition to their normal work. According to Chipunza and Berry (2011), retrenchment always results in more work with less staff doing too many works under time pressure, working for longer hours, having to handle increasing demands from customers and supervisors.

Luthans (2010) in his study has identified two aspects of work overload - physical and psychological/mental work overload. Physical work Overload can manifest in both qualitative and quantitative forms and may involve doing too much work and “multi-tasking” where the remaining employees perform several tasks simultaneously within a time limit due to increasing demands on the remaining employees either from or both customers and supervisors (Mashood, 2011). Surviving employees can also experience physical work overload when they are working under long/extra hours. According to Adedipe (2006), in the Nigerian banking sector, an average working hour per month is more than 200 hours per staff. Invariably, employees are assumed to work for 10 hours a week and 50 hours a month. (excluding weekend work and voluntary overtime without pay. Long working hours heightened the stress situation for the survivors after retrenchment. As stated by Robbins (2010), long working hours may affect the physical condition of employees, and that the employees facing workload may be exposed to stress condition)

Mental or psychological work Overload involves constantly working under pressure. But pressure can be positive and negative, and when it becomes negative, generate a distress situation. As indicated by Luthans (2010), pressure can be positive and desirable up to a certain level, but when it becomes too great, extreme, persistent, and unrelieved, it can therefore degenerate to stress i.e. distress situation. Another major source of mental work overload is “role conflict and ambiguity” According to Robbins (2003), role conflict and role ambiguity occur when an employee is required to carry out two or more roles at the same time or a situation in which an employee is confronted by divergent role expectations. For Robbins, role conflict occurs as a result of one of these reasons- when time devoted to the requirements of one role makes it difficult to fulfill the requirements of another when strain from participation in one role makes it difficult to fulfill the requirements of another when specific behaviours required by one role makes it difficult to fulfill the requirements of another. In effect, if this situation is extreme, it may create a crisis and feeling of unaccomplished tasks, and this conflict situation can lead to stress that can invariably affect the health conditions of the workers.

Work overload is a stressor that poses a risk to the health of workers when it occurs frequently or is intense, prolonged or mismanaged (Luthans, 2003). It is one of the most significant sources of occupational stress which can have damaging physiological and psychological effects on employees, and would likely affect their health conditions. It can also lead to sickness absence and staff turnover (Akah, Chukwurah and Ihejiamaizu 2011, Malik, 2011)

According to Luthans (2010), there are physical health concerns that associated with workload stress such as – a problem of the immune system, resulting in a lowered ability to fight off illness and infection; the problem of the cardiovascular system of which blood pressure and heart diseases are the most common; the problem of the musculoskeletal system (muscle tension, pain, and headaches); the problem of the gastrointestinal system, like diarrhea, stomach ulcer, and constipation.

Besides, excessive workload be it “actual or perceived”, can contribute towards stress-related physical and psychological illness.

Similarly, the study is using General Adaptation Syndrome – GAS. GAS is a Stress Adaptive model developed by Hans Selye in 1974, and further expanded by stress scholars such as Luthans in 2010. The GAS model sees stress as mental pressure, but also has physical effects or signs on the body. This model says that stress may occur as a result of life events (problems in the workplace) work events (excess workloads, target pressure), and psychological and social tensions.

It describes what happens to the body and how the body responds to stress. And that when stress occurs, the body can respond to it in three levels: The different three stages are

- i. Alarm Reaction- it the first stage and of course involves reaction processes. When an individual is exposed to any stressor such as work overload, the body reacts through a nervous system by sending distress alert to the brain which in turn produces stress hormones- adrenaline that gives a boost of energy that leads to a heart rate increase, increase of blood pressure or blood sugar level increase. At this stage, stress conditions alert the individual to fight back, managing stress situation or avoid and withdraw from such situations
 - ii. Resistance – if stress condition is not properly managed at alarm stage, it graduates to the second level i.e. resistance stage. Here the body attempts to counteract or neutralize the initial stressful conditions that occurred during alarm reaction level aiming to return the body to normal by reducing the level of stress hormones. In this stage, if the work overload situation comes to an end or subsiding, reducing, or even remains moderate, the body of the exposed person would return to normal. However, if the work overload stressor continues and becomes persistent, it will keep on producing stress hormones that made the individual restless, lack concentration and irritability.
 - iii. Exhaustion- is the final stage of GAS. When stressor persists and continues for a long period, the body energy will be weak, and could no longer fight stress conditions. When this happens in the workplace, the affected employees will experience fatigue, anxiety, etc. Therefore, if the intensity of work overload stress is not properly managed, the workers are at risk of developing stress-related health conditions such as ulcers, rising blood pressure, depression, headache, burnout.
- This model believes that long-term stress can harm a person’s physical and immune system leading to increasing health conditions of the affected individuals.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Ibadan metropolis Oyo State, Nigeria in four (4) selected commercial banks - First bank of Nigeria Plc. (FBN) and United Bank for Africa Plc. (UBA) representing Old Generation banks (OGBs), while Access Bank Plc. and Eco bank Plc, represent New Generation Banks (NGBs) The study population was the survivors - the surviving bank employees in the retrenching commercial banks comprising “management and non-management staff cadres”, “permanent and contract staff cadres” in Marketing, Operations and other departments. The study employed a two-stage sampling technique. Firstly, the purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the old generation banks (UBA and FBN) because they are

outstanding banks that were not declared “distress” like their counterparts – Union, Wema bank. From the new generation banks, Eco bank and Access bank were randomly selected through deep balloting among the surviving new generation banks, to ensure an equal chance of representation. Secondly, Simple random sampling was used to select a sample size of 280 respondents representing 29.9% of the total population of 935 in the selected banks was drawn using the Taro Yamane formula. Quantitative and qualitative instruments were used for data collection. For the quantitative instrument, structured questionnaires were administered to 280 respondents, 70 copies in each of the banks distributed among the branches of which 256 copies were finally retrieved for analysis. The respondents in the branches were selected using simple random sampling; this method was adopted to give each member an equal chance to be involved in the study without any element of bias. For the qualitative instrument, twelve (12) In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) sessions were conducted, in which 3 respondents, (2 Management staff & 1 Non-Management) from the four banks were purposively selected to complement the data generated through the questionnaire. The IDI was also used because it allows probing deeper especially on issues that the questionnaire could not extensively address.

The data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The data from the questionnaire were analyzed using frequency distribution. The aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was also employed to analyze and cross-tabulate the data, while the results were presented on tables, and interpreted by the use of simple percentages. For qualitative data, tapes and notes from IDI were first translated, and the data were then coded and transcribed through content analysis.

IV. RESULTS

A. Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1 below shows the socio-demographic characteristic of the surviving employees of old generation banks (OGBs) and new generation banks (NGBs) after the retrenchment exercise. As observed, a close proportion of the male workers - 58.6% in NGBs, and 55.5% in OGBs were retained, compared to the number of females workers- 44.5% in OGBs, and 41.4% in NGBs. This result shows that both NGBs and OGBs prefer to retain more male employees than female employees. This is probably because the Management of these banks perceived that male employees could cope well with work overload than females.

Within various age categories, overwhelming number of employees (56.2%) between 21-30 years age range were found while few number (32.2%) were in OGBs. Also, equal number - 31.2% in NGBs, and 32.0% in OGBs fell within the age range of 31-40 years. However, OGBs had more survivors (23.4%) within the 41-50 yrs age range, compared to few number (11.0%) in NGBs. But very few number of staff (9.4%) in OGBs, and (1.6%) in NGBs fell within 50 yrs range and above. Though NGBs and OGBs maintained an almost equal number of middle-age workers between 31-40 yrs age range; however, it is obvious that within the young age range of 21-30 years, NGBs maintained a larger portion of retained workers. But within the older age category – 41-50 years and above, OGBs kept a substantial proportion of older staff. This may imply that banks prefer to hire young employees with more energy and fewer family commitments that could withstand the inherent increasing workloads.

Banks retained both married and single employees, but in some cases, they usually prefer unmarried and young employees whom they perceived would endure heavy workloads. For instance, 64.8% of surviving employees in OGBs and 43.8% in NGBs were married; while 35.2% in OGBs and 56.2% in NGBs equally were single.

Educational qualification is very crucial to banks; most of the employees are either ND/HND holders while others were first degree/ post-graduate degree holders. As observed (68.0%) of workers in NGBs and 62.5% in OGBs who survive retrenchment were NDs/HNDs holders, while 27.3% in NGBs, and 31.2% in OGBs were 1st degree holders; also 4.7% in NGB and 6.3% in OGB were postgraduates holders. But most of the contract or outsource workers were NDs/HNDs holders while some of the permanent (core) staff were degree holders. For example, the workforce (66.4%) in NGB and 60.2% in OGB were contract workers, while others (33.6%) in NGB and 39.8% in OGB were permanent workers. This shows that banks prefer to use competent workers such as NDs/HNDs, 1st Degree and postgraduate degree holders whom they perceive to acquire sound intellectual and mental skills that would be capable to manage work overload stress.

Also, there are many departments in banks both at head office and branches, but specifically at branch level, 33.4% of the survivors in OGB and 32.0% in NGB worked in Marketing department as Business Managers, Relationship Managers, Marketing Officers, while the majority (52.3%) in OGB and (46.9%) in NGB worked in Operations department as Branch Operations Manager/Customer Service Manager, Head of Operations, Tellers, Cash Officer, Customer Service Officer, Funds Transfer Officer, etc. But a few number of the survivors- 13.3% in OGB and 21.1% in NGBs worked in other departments as Internal Control Manager/Officer/Auditor/Inspector, Loan recovery Officer, Information Technology Officer. But in both banks, there are greater number of employees concentrated in Operations and Marketing Units because of the emerging increasing workloads to be handled on daily basis. Despite that banks were retrenching their workers on the

regular basis, some employees still worked for considerable numbers of years. As revealed, 79.7% in NGBs and 31.3% in OGB have worked for 1-8 years. Also, 29.7% in OGB and 18.8% of the employees have spent between 9-16years. Equally, 22.7% in OGB and 1.6% in NGBs worked for 17-24years; while 16.4% in OGBs have spent over 24 years in the service. Having worked for these years, some of the employees are exposed to excessive workloads and may experience stress

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by Sex, Age, Marital Status, and Educational Qualification

Item	Variables	NGB	OGB	Total
1	Sex			
	Female	53(41.4)	57(44.5)	110(43.0)
	Male	75(58.6)	71(55.5)	146(57.0)
2	Age group			
	21-30 years	72(56.2)	45(35.2)	117(45.7)
	31-40 years	40 (31.2)	41(32.0)	81(31.6)
	41- 50 years	14 (11.0)	30(23.4)	44(17.2)
	Over 50 years	2 (1.6)	12 (9.4)	14 (5.5)
3	Marital Status			
	Married	56(43.8)	83(64.8)	139(54.3)
	Single	72(56.2)	45(35.2)	117(45.7)
4	Educational qualification			
	OND/HND	87 (68.0)	80 (62.5)	167 (65.2)
	B. Sc.	35 (27.3)	40 (31.2)	75 (29.3)
	M. Sc.	6 (4.7)	8 (6.3)	14 (5.5)
5	Employment category			
	Contract	85(66.4)	77 (60.2)	162 (63.3)
	Permanent	43 (33.6)	51(39.8)	94 (36.7)
6	Department			
	Marketing	41 (32.0)	44 (34.4)	85 (33.2)
	Operations	60 (46.9)	67 (52.3)	127(49.6)
	Others	27 (21.1%)	17 (13.3)	44 (17.2)
7	Length of stay in the bank			
	0-8 years	102 (79.7)	40 (31.3)	142 (55.5)
	9-16 years	24 (18.8)	38 (29.7)	62 (24.2)
	17-24 years	2 (1.6)	29 (22.7)	31 (12.1)
	Over 24 years	0 (0)	21 (16.4)	21(8.2)

Note: N of NGB and OGB each = 128 and pooled = 256 respondents

B. Relationship between Retrenchment and Work Overload

The result on Table 2 shows that retrenchment exercises have caused excess workloads because it limits the numbers of staff. The result reveals that almost all the surviving employees in the NGB (96.1%) and the largest numbers in OGB (78.9%) accepted that retrenchment had reduced numbers of workers and the remaining employees are forced to carry out extra work left behind by the victims who lost their job. By doing extra work, they have experienced increasing workloads. Bank employees experience both physical and mental work overload, 91.4% in NGBs, 78.1% in OGBs said their physical workloads had increased since the commencement of retrenchment exercise, though very few numbers of survivors 4.7% in NGBs, 08% in OGBs were unsure, still (3.9%) in NGBs and 21.1% in OGBs declined increasing physical workload. Also, 86.7% of survivors in NGBs and 72.7% in OGBs said their psychological work overload had increased since the commencement of retrenchment exercise in their banks. This shows that both survivors located in NGBs and OGBs were experiencing increasing physical and mental workloads ever since the retrenchment exercise commenced in their banks. This is so because the limited numbers of employees that remained are made to combine their numerous tasks with the duties of their colleagues that were disengaged. More so, the

management of the banks put too much pressure on them to perform within a limited timeframe, couple with conflicting and ambiguous demands.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of respondents' views on how retrenchment leads to excess workloads for surviving employees

Item	NGB	OGB	Pooled
1 Retrenchment exercises have reduced numbers of workers causing excess workload for survivors.			
Strongly Disagreed	0 (0.0)	1 (0.8%)	1 (0.4%)
Disagreed	0 (0.0)	18 (14.1%)	18 (7.0%)
Undecided	5 (3.9%)	8 (6.3%)	13 (5.1%)
Agreed	17 (13.3%)	28 (21.9%)	45 (17.6%)
Strongly agreed	106 (82.8%)	73 (57.0%)	179 (69.9%)
2 My physical workload has increased since the commencement of the Retrenchment exercise in my bank			
Yes	117(91.4)	100(78.1)	217(84.8)
No	5 (3.9%)	27 (21.%)	32 (12.5%)
Not certain	6 (4.7%)	1 (.8%)	7 (2.7%)
3 My psychological workload has increased since the commencement of the Retrenchment exercise in my bank			
Yes	111(86.7)	93(72.7)	204(79.7)
No	12 (9.4%)	9 (7.0%)	21 (8.2%)
Not certain	5 (3.9%)	26 (20.3%)	31 (12.1%)

Note: N of NGB and OGB each = 128 and Pooled = 256 respondents

C. Ways Employees Are Experiencing Work Overload

One major way surviving bank employees were experiencing work overload was by doing too many works because of the increasing volume of work. As shown in the result 65.6% in OGBs and 62.5% in NGBs said the volume of work they carried out on the daily basis were just too much. This is so because more additional tasks and roles were assigned to them in the bank after retrenchment. Another way they experienced workloads is by working extra hours. The largest number of respondents constituting - 99.2% in OGBs, and 79.0% in NGBs accepted that they usually worked for extra work hours outside official time, to meet their work schedules. This means that bank workers both in NGB and OGB worked for long and extra hours. This is so because the nature of work does not demand that a day work task be postponed to the following day or be taken home after official hours. Transactions are required to be fully consummated, balanced, and completed on the daily basis to guide against service failure and enhance an adequate internal control system. To achieve this, workers do report earlier to work and stayed behind to complete their work after official hours. This situation has led to physical work overload on the employees.

The manner banks' management put pressure on their workers to perform had pushed them to faced mental work overload. The result revealed that an equal proportion of respondents (56.3%) in the NGB and (56.2%) in OGB accepted that their bank's Management put too much pressure on them to perform. Also, a few of them 35.9% in NGB and 43.0% in OGB objected, while 7.8% in NGBs and 0.8% in OGBs were unsure. This means the employees of both categories of the bank were working under extreme and persistent pressure put on them by the bank's Management to perform multi responsibilities simultaneously under intense time pressure. Moreso, bank workers who survived retrenchment regularly faced conflicting and ambiguous tasks due to multiple roles which eventually degenerated to heavier work overload. As confirmed in the result, the highest percentage of the respondents (76.5%) in the OGB and 70.3% in NGBs accepted that conflicting and ambiguous demands had frustrated their work. This result confirmed that workers in both NGB and OGB were experiencing conflicting and ambiguous demands that frustrated their work. This is so because they were faced with more additional tasks and intra organizational roles in their banks, and were responsible to too many customers and even answerable to many supervisors. This complex situation usually frustrated their work hence causing work overload.

Table 3: Respondents views on how workers are experiencing physical and mental workloads

Item	NGB	OGB	Pooled
1 The volume of work I do in a day is just too much for me to cope with			
Yes	80(62.5)	84 (65.6)	164(64.1)
No	36 (28.1)	35(28.0)	71(27.7)
Note certain	12 (9.4%)	9 (7.0%)	21 (8.2%)
2 My work schedule demands that I work extra hours outside the time when my presence is officially required			
Yes	101(79.0)	127 (99.2)	228(89.1)
No	27 (21.1%)	0	27 (10.5%)
Undecided	0 (0.0)	1 (.8%)	1 (0.4%)
3 My bank Management puts too much pressure on me to perform			
Strongly disagreed	40 (31.2)	23 (18.0)	63 (24.6)
Disagreed	6 (4.7)	32 (25.0)	38 (14.84)
Undecided	10 (7.8)	1 (0.8)	11 (4.29)
Agreed	55 (43.)	45 (35.2)	100 (39.05)
Strongly agreed	17 (13.3)	27 (21.0)	44 (17.18)
4 Conflicting and ambiguous demands frustrate my work			
Strongly disagreed	1 (0.8)	2 (1.6)	3 (1.17)
Disagreed	18 (14.1)	5 (3.9)	23 (8.98)
Undecided	19 (14.8)	23 (18)	42 (16.40)
Agreed	79 (61.7)	71(55.5)	150(58.6)
Strongly agreed	11 (8.6)	27 (21.0)	38 (14.83)

Note: N of NGB and OGB each = 128 and pooled = 256 respondents

D. Intensity and Level of Work Overload and Emerging Stress Condition

As shown in the result, overall, very few employees 7.4% stated that only in few cases, work overload could be low and subsiding; while only 23.1% said work overload could sometimes be considerable. But more than 69% of the employees said their exposure to work overload in their banks was persistent and heavier. Generally, work overloads experienced by bank workers in NGB and OGB were commonly heavier, and a majority of the employees were constantly exposed to intense work overload on a long-term or permanent basis. The result also shows that intense work overloads aggravated stress conditions for most employees. This is shown in the report where 83.6% of workers in NGB, 82.0% in OGB stated that they were experiencing stress situations due to persistent and heavier work overloads. Though very few 0.8% of the workers in NGB, and 8% in OGB were unsure, similarly a small proportion 15.6% in NGB and 11.7% in OGB claimed they were not experiencing stress. However, the majority of bank workers were generally facing stress conditions such as fatigue, burnout in their workplaces.

Table 4. Frequency Distribution of Respondents' views on intensity & levels of Physical and Mental Work Overload and stress conditions

Item	NGB	OGB	Pooled
1 As a survivor in a bank that has been retrenching, how would you rate your intensity and level of physical and mental work overloads experienced at work?			
Subsiding and Low	6(4.7)	13(10.1)	19(7.4)
Moderate/considerable	31(24.2)	28(21.9)	59(23.1)
Persistent and heavier	91(71.1)	87(68.0)	178(69.5)
2 I am experiencing stress conditions due to intense and heavier work overload			
Yes	107(83.6)	105(82.0)	212 (82.8)
Not sure	1(0.8)	8(6.3)	9(3.5)
No	20(15.6)	15(11.7)	35 (13.7)

Note: N of NGB and OGB each = 128 and pooled = 256 respondents

E. Work Overload Stress and its Effect on the Health Conditions of Surviving Employees

Work Overload induces stress has elicited debilitating health conditions for surviving employees in banks. As shown in Table 5, over 87% of the employees in Old and new generation banks believed that their exposure to work overload could trigger health challenges since most of the workers were at risk of contracting or could stand a chance of developing one form of physical or mental health conditions. While 42.6% agreed that they usually developed frequent headaches, 21.5% said intense stress would activate stomach ulcer. Also, 31.6% stated that stress situations had generated an increase in their blood pressure, while 4.3% claimed that stress had incited body pain and irritability. Just as work overload stress-triggered physical health conditions, it had equally in the same way prompted psychological health issues for the survivors. For instance, 18% of employees in both banks had suffered depression, 24.2% experienced anxiety, 12.5% went through helplessness, 19.9% endured lack of concentration, while 25.4% experienced nervousness and usually being exhausted. This means that bank employees in both New and Old generation banks stand a chance or usually at risk of contracting any form of physical and psychological health symptoms or illness. This is because the stress faced by employees has transited to the GAS exhaustion stage that weakens the body’s immunity to withstand stress.

Table 6. Frequency distribution of respondents’ views on work overload and stress on workers’ health conditions

Item	NGB	OGB	Pooled
1 Do you think work overload has any health effect on you?			
Yes	104(81.2)	120(93.8)	224(87.5)
No	24(18.8)	8(6.2)	32(12.5)
2 If yes, how does work overload stress affect your physical health condition?			
Frequent headache	52(40.6)	57(44.5)	109(42.6)
Triggers Ulcer	28(21.9)	27(21.1)	55(21.5)
Triggers increasing blood pressure	43(33.6)	38(29.7)	81(31.6)
Body irritability	5(3.9)	6(4.7)	11(4.3)
3 how does work overload stress affect your mental health situation?			
Depression	16(12.5)	30(23.4)	46(18)
Anxiety	37(28.9)	25(19.5)	62(24.2)
Helplessness	5(3.9)	27(21.1)	32(12.5)
Lack of concentration	40(31.3)	11(8.6)	51(19.9)
Strain and burnout	30(23.4)	35(27.3)	65(25.4)

Note: N of NGB and OGB each = 128 and pooled = 256

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Banking is a human service profession and by its nature entails a huge volume of works to be carried out by employees. In effect, workloads in old and new generation banks are increasing, while workers are required to combine different duties or tasks. But ever since the commencement of frequent retrenchment exercises in our banking sector, workloads have over-bloated and likewise creating work overloads for the few remaining employees. This, therefore, means that retrenchment in banks leads to work overloads. A study by Siyanbola (2013) affirms that there is usually a potential for workloads to become heavier due to reduced employees’ numbers caused by retrenchment in banks. As revealed in the study, when Management of the Old and New Generation banks laid off their workers, they often did not replace them with required numbers of staff, thus reducing the staff strength, and creating “staff short fall”. Under this situation, the limited number of employees that remained are made to combine their numerous jobs with the duties of their colleagues that were retrenched, hence, these employees were overloaded with more additional or extra works making them to be exposed to work overloads in their banks. Staff shortfall arising from retrenchment is the major source that created work overloads for bank workers. However, low staff strength and work overloads are purposely manipulated and also sustained by the bank’s management as a means to strategically maximize profit and minimize staff cost. That is why the “Management” of these banks are ignoring existing work overload, or showing little or no attention to work overload (Riga, 2006).

Retrenchments are strategic; unfortunately, in most cases, they are poorly planned and hastily implemented by the banks’ Management. Because of this, there is every tendency for the remaining workers to experience intense physical and psychological work overloads due to insufficient numbers of workers facing increasing loads. But work overloads faced by remaining bank workers might be subsiding for some period; it could remain moderate; it could also become persistent. This study reveals that work overload in both Old and New Generation banks persist, and the bank workers are continually experiencing heavier work overload in the

long term. Some of the bank's workers are experiencing persistent work overload because they were doing too many volumes of works. Also, extra works were usually assigned to surviving employees, and in order to complete their numerous works, the majority of them chose to work for longer or extra hours voluntarily without receiving "overtime" allowance. Mostly, at the branch level, the nature of work requires the employees especially those in operations and marketing units to attend to and satisfy many customers. This aspect of their work alone takes most of their time, while other responsibilities are pending till the close of work. Practically, most bank workers constantly stay behind to complete their work after closing hours and it is during the close of work that most of them have time to perform other internal transactions that must be completed the same day.

Most bank workers are working under intense pressure on a daily basis. According to GAS Model, working under pressure can induce work overload stress. As stated by Adenugba (2010), bank workers are pressurized to perform, and as a result, they experienced excess workloads and stress. In fact, this is true that bank work is stressful, it is designed in a way that all the departments work under pressure. But those who are mostly exposed to pressure are employees in operations and marketing. Operation people are working under pressure because they have direct interface with huge number of customers, rendering daily core customer banking services which involve numerous tasks to be consummated daily. The nature of the work is that a transaction must be completed and not carried forward to the next day, and in this regard; the employees had no choice but to work for longer or extra hours to complete their tasks. In fact, the normal closing hours in banks is 4 or 5 pm, but bank workers worked till very late at night because of huge volumes of daily transactions (Musa, 2013). Aside from these core deliverables, they were also given financial targets to meet. These situations made them to be exposed to persistent work overloads in order to perform. In a similar manner, marketers perform related responsibilities just like operations, but they are the worst hit because of financial targets. Marketers are employees that drive business for their banks, and their core deliverables are deposit mobilization and profit generation. As a result of cut-throat competition and high motive by the bank employers to maximize profits at all cost, unrealistic deposit and income targets were assigned to the marketers on the regular basis. The management also put more pressure on the employees to meet their targets, and most time, threatened, harassed, and even disengaged some of them for not meeting their targets. Based on GAS theory, working under pressure can generate psychological distress. Other than meeting unrealistic targets, marketers were also faced with increasing demands with numerous work roles and often worked under pressure to perform these assignments within a limited time frame. In fact, these conditions made work to be ambiguous and conflicting leading to work overload and stress for employees.

Working under persistent work overload either physical or psychological is hazardous, and can degenerate to stress. This study reveals that the persistent work overload experienced by the surviving employees has triggered stress. This also is in line with GAS theory that exposure to long-term work overload could lead to stress (Selye, 1974; Luthans, 2010). But workload stress is dangerous and has created debilitating health conditions to the surviving employees (Akah, 2013), it equally affects both their physical and psychological health (Luthans, 2010). On the physical health, the study showed the surviving employees in the Old and New Generation Banks reportedly experiencing mild or severe physical ailments such as heart disease, ulcer, increase in blood pressure, frequent headache, muscular-skeletal disorders - body pains and irritability in form of back pain and upper limb disorders. Psychologically, some of the employees affected by the work overload stress were increasingly distressed and irritable, unable to relax or concentrate. In addition, they have difficulty thinking logically and making decisions, also feel tired, depressed, helpless and anxious. Physical and psychological health signs and debilitating health conditions occurred because; the workers could not respond to the stress signs at GAS alarm stage. And at resistance stage, their bodies could not reduce the stress hormones to return the body to normal. Unfortunately, after a prolonged period of stress, the bodies entered GAS exhaustion stage; and at this stage the employee's body is no longer equipped to fight stress, hence creating all aforementioned stress-related health problems for the workers (GAS).

Bank workers in the Old and New Generation banks were more committed to the job in particular, but with less commitment to the organization. In fact, the majority of them were not satisfied and fulfilled with their banks, they suffered disillusion, in addition to heavier work overload, stress, and poor health. Yet most of them never intended to quit the job on their own, instead, they were even afraid of being sacked. Despite these sufferings, some survivors were driven to work harder hence, because they were afraid of losing their job due to the paucity of jobs in the country. This essentially confirmed the implication of the miserable unemployment situation in the country which made people to accept any kind of job including contract employment in the banks; even those who were lucky to gain employment or retained their work in the banks after retrenchment hardly intended to quit, because they are afraid that they would not get a comparable job given the prevailing economic situation in the country. The situation is so critical to the extent that employees in the bank prefer to endure sufferings and poor health conditions since they are already aware that the "reserved army of unemployed" (Marx, 1959), which assumed an alarming dimension in the economy were ready to replace them even with meager salaries compared to what they earned currently. Consequent to this precarious situation, bank

employers on their own meted all forms of unwholesome treatments to employees because they have options to choose cheap labour from available reserve army hence excessively arrogate power to hire and fire at any time without adhering to the procedural requirements

VI. CONCLUSION

Retrenchments in the banking sector had increased work overload for the few employees that remained. Because of the large number of tasks demanded to be carried out within a limited time, employees are compelled to work under intense pressure. Bank employees are constantly exposed to work overload and intense stress in order to meet up with set performance standards, therefore banking work in Nigeria is very stressful because of persistent physical and psychological work overloads. It is certain that most of the bank employees who had worked under a long period of stress were experiencing health challenges; therefore, it is important for the surviving bank workers to promptly identify the signs of stress and develop a means of managing stressful situations.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Adedipe, A. 2006. Bank Consolidation: Breasting the Tape, Facing New Challenges. Zenith Economic Quarterly, pg. 39-49.
- [2]. Ademola, A. 2012. "More Bankers to lose job". The Punch, 29th June, 2012 pg 16
- [3]. Adenugba, A. A. & Oteyowo, O. 2012. "Job insecurity in selected Banks in Ibadan in Southwest Nigeria". Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences Vol.3 (2), Pg 47- 60
- [4]. Akah, L. U. 2013. Stressor and Job Performance of Health Workers in the Public Sector of Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State. International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities Vol.4, No 2. (2013) pp.142-148
- [5]. Akah, L. U; Chukwurah, C. C. and Ihejiamaizu, C. C. 2011. Assessment of indices for job Satisfaction among nursing staff in Calabar metropolis for Cross River State, Canadian Social Science Journal, 7(1) (2011), 124-129.
- [6]. Balogun, F.; Ademosu, F. and Ojelu, H. 2013. Banks as Slave Camps. The News, Vol.40, No28, 08th July, 2013, Pg14- 19
- [7]. Chipunza, C. and Berry – David, M. 2010. "The relationship among survivor qualities – attitude, commitment and motivation – after downsizing" African Journal of business management Vol. 4(5), pp. 604-613.
- [8]. Cox, T.; Griffiths, A. 2010. Work related stress: A theoretical perspective. In occupational health psychology edited by StavroulaLeka and Jonathan Houndmont, Wiley, Blackwell.
- [9]. Cox, L.E.; Fuenzalila, B.; Sohl Laura. 2006. Workload history effects. A comparison of sudden increases and decreases on performance, current Psychology, Social Spring 2006, 25(1).
- [10]. Hammer, L.B., Kossek, E. E, Anger, W. K., Bdner, T., Zimmerman, K. L. 2010. Clarifying work – family intervention processes: The roles of work –family conflict and family supportive supervisor behaviour. African journal of business Mgt. vol 4. (5)614
- [11]. Imam, H., Mashood, T., Muhammad, A. 2011. "The retrenchment effect on job performance with mediating effect of work life balance". African Journal of Business management Vol. 5(21), pp. 8642-8648.
- [12]. Luthans, F. 2003. Organizational Behaviour(7th Ed.). New York: McGraw Hills.
- [13]. Luthans, F. 2010. Organizational Behaviour (12th Ed.). New York: McGraw Hills.
- [14]. Malik, N. 2011. A study of occupational stress experienced by private and public bank employees in Quetta City. African Journal of Business Management, 5 (8): 3063-3070
- [15]. Mashood, R. Z. 2011. Stress Mgt: A key to employee retention. Mgt. insight 7(1):100-111.
- [16]. Musa, D. 2013. Our Banks are Slave Camps. The News, Vol 40. No 28, 08th July, 2013 Pp 18-19.
- [17]. Riga, A. 2006. Business awakes to cause o stress. The gazette, ABI/Inform Global database.
- [18]. Robbins, S. P. 2003. Organizational Behaviour. (9th Ed.) New York: Prentice Hall.
- [19]. Robbins, S. P. 2010. Organizational Behaviour. (14th Ed.) New York: Prentice Hall.
- [20]. Salako, S.O. 2013. Banks as Slave Camps. The News, Vol 40, No 28, 8th July, 2013, P 14- 19
- [21]. Selye, H. (1974). "Stress without Distress." Harper and Row Publications, U.S.A.
- [22]. Siyanbola, T. O. 2013. Employees' perception about gains and losses: The case of Nigerian commercial banks. World Journal of Social Sciences Vol.3. No. 1. pp. 85-101.
- [23]. Young-Victor A. 2012. "Labour Raises Alarm Over mass retrenchment in Banks". Punch, July 16th 2012 pp 15.