

**Evaluation of Mental Health and Well-being Initiatives in the Workplace: Case Study of
SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria**

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Abstract

This study examines mental health and well-being initiatives in the workplace with a particular focus on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Lagos, Nigeria. Implementing workplace mental health and well-being initiatives has increasingly become a focal point for enhancing employee productivity, morale and overall organizational success. The specific objectives of this study was to assess the impact of work environment on employee mental health and well-being; examine the relationship between job satisfaction and employee mental health and well-being; and to investigate the effect of stress on employee mental health and well-being. In this research a quantitative method strategy was adopted, using an online survey questionnaire, which was deployed on google form as a method for collection of the quantitative data of the study. The online survey was sent through the SMEDAN, which is the Nigeria government agency that is in charge of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Lagos, Nigeria to employees in Lagos working for SMEs businesses and organization. The data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential (Linear Regression) analysis. The findings shows that work environment, job satisfaction and stress levels has a significant impact on employees' mental health and well-being in SMEs in Lagos Nigeria. Based on these findings this study recommends that SMEs on developing a friendly and inclusive work environment by enhancing physical spaces, encouraging work-life balance, and increasing communication, giving the huge influence that work environment has on employee mental health and wellbeing in SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria.

Declaration

I Ibrahim Oluwapelumi Abidemi hereby declare that the work in this dissertation is fully my own work and has not been previously submitted for examination, degree or qualification. All materials used in this dissertation has been properly and correctly acknowledged and I verify that this dissertation adheres with the ethical guidelines of the National College of Ireland.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Globally, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are recognized as key drivers of economic growth (James et al., 2011). Many authors have echoed this fact, as SMEs are among the largest employers and play a crucial role in wealth generation and poverty alleviation. For instance, in the United States, SMEs employ half of the workforce and contribute about 43.5% of the country's GDP (Ferguson & Isabella, 2023). In the UK, small businesses have recently employed 16.3 million people, contributing around 25% to GDP (DL Accounts, 2024). In China, SMEs are highly significant, contributing approximately 60% to GDP, 50% to tax income, 79% to job creation, and 68% to exports (OECD, 2022). These facts underscore why SMEs are regarded as economic drivers worldwide. Similarly, in African countries, governments increasingly recognize SMEs as vital for national growth and development (Akinruwa et al., 2013). Ariyo (2009) described SMEs as the foundation of nations, implying that most countries depend on SMEs for economic and infrastructural development.

The role of SMEs in Nigeria mirrors their global significance. SMEs in Nigeria have made substantial contributions to the country's economic growth. Research has consistently shown that SMEs are economic drivers in both developed and developing nations, including Nigeria, regardless of the country's economic conditions. For example, a study by Ikediashi (2007) indicates that SMEs contribute 55%, 70%, and 60% of employment in high, middle, and low-income countries, respectively. In all these cases, SMEs are recognized as the main drivers of the economy and the largest employers. In Nigeria, SMEs account for over 60% of the GDP and approximately 70% of total employment, including micro-businesses (NBS, 2010). This shows that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are vital to Nigeria's economic growth.

SMEs are often seen as crucial environments for fostering innovation and employee development. They provide unique opportunities for employees to engage in diverse roles and contribute to various aspects of business operations. However, the workplace conditions within SMEs can significantly impact employee productivity and well-being.

The workplace is an integral part of society, as nearly every adult engages in some form of work, whether for a company or on a project. On average, individuals spend around 20 hours per week at their workplace, making it the primary location where people spend their time outside of their homes (Raziq and Maulabakhsh, 2015). Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that workplace activities are supportive rather than destructive. The aim is to create a comfortable environment that enhances both mental and physical well-being, ultimately boosting productivity (Raziq and Maulabakhsh, 2015).

Mental illness or instability in the workplace incurs significant costs, which can become even greater if left unaddressed over time. More than one-third of the productivity losses in the workplace are attributed to mental health issues (Dewa et al., 2011). In their study, the researchers found that individuals with severe depression experience higher productivity losses compared to those with mild or moderate depression. It was also noted that 57% of individuals with severe depression do not take the medications provided, while about 40% of those with mild or moderate depression also forgo medication. This implies that the more severe the depression, the harder it is to help the individual recover and return to productivity. Other researchers have found that the productivity loss in mentally unstable individuals can be comparable to, or even worse than, those with physical disabilities (Naylor et al., 2012). Physical challenges often precede mental challenges, and the reverse can also be true (France et al., 2012). This suggests that individuals with physical disabilities are more likely to experience mental instability, often in the form of depression, and those with depression are at risk of developing physical challenges, typically due to neglect.

Therefore, the financial burden of mental illness in the workplace often falls on employers, who either suffer from reduced productivity or must invest in processes to prevent employees from becoming mentally unstable. According to research, supporting employees' mental health is easier and more cost-effective than paying for lost productivity due to mental instability (Dewa et al., 2011). Furthermore, joint research by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2022 provides important data on mental health issues on a global scale. The effects of mental health issues on employees around the world are brought to light in the comprehensive study by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

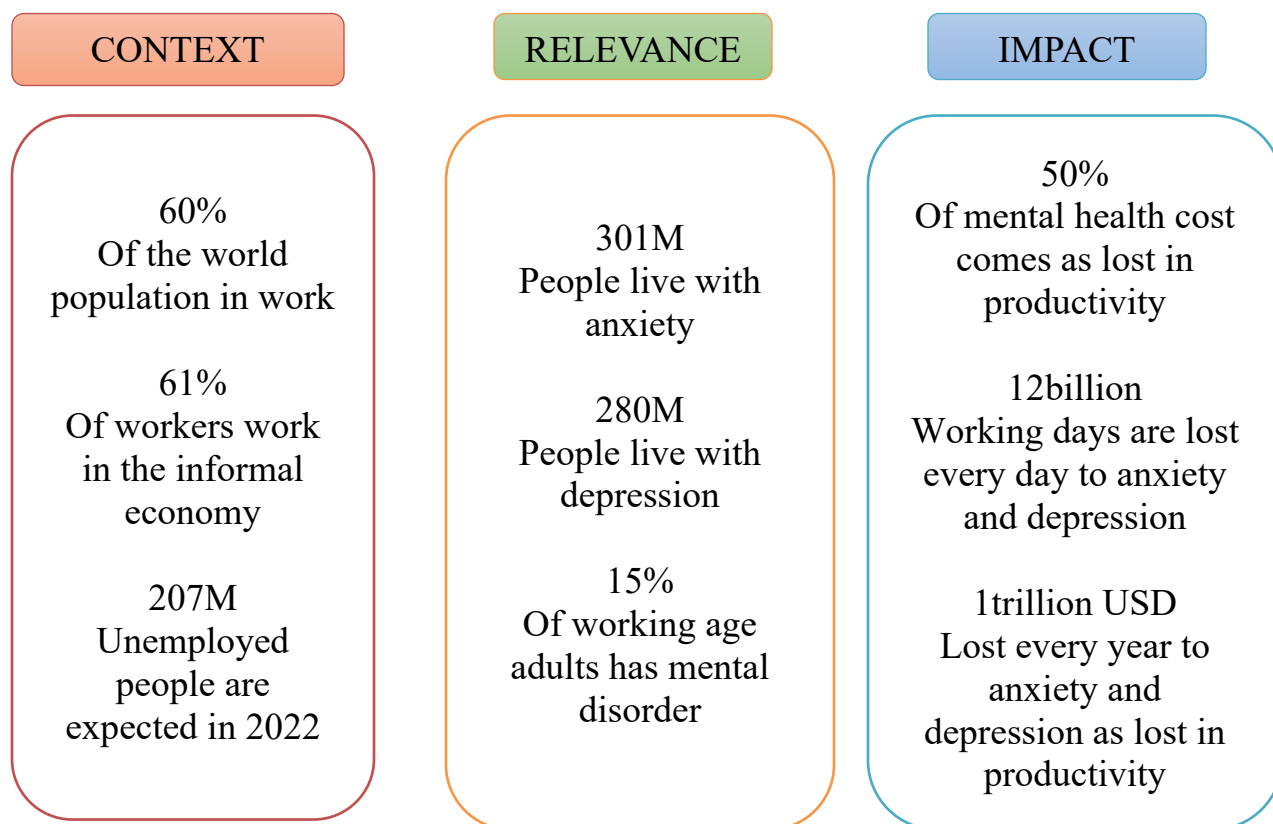


Fig 2.2: Source: (World Health Organization and International Labour Organization, 2022)

The infographics above show results from a massive global survey on workplace mental health. The objective is to understand the context of this mental health study, examine its relevance, and assess its impact on productivity and the global economy. It highlights that approximately half of the world's population is employed in some form, either within the formal or informal economy. The informal economy refers to the private sector or businesses not directly controlled by the government, while the formal sector consists of businesses under government control (International Monetary Fund, 2022).

Given that over half of the global workforce operates within the informal economy, there is a validated need to study mental health within the context of SMEs. The statistics indicate that about 15% of working-age adults suffer from mental disorders, typically manifesting as anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts. This has led to substantial economic losses, with around 12 billion working days lost annually to anxiety and depression, amounting to an annual economic loss of \$1 trillion USD. The majority of this burden is borne by employers through lost revenue.

Anxiety and depression are identified as the predominant mental disorders in the workplace, prompting further research to understand their nature and causes.

Two years ago, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that approximately 15% of working adults were estimated to have work-related mental disorders (World Health Organization, 2022). Globally, around 12 billion working days are lost each year due to work-related anxiety and depression, resulting in an estimated \$1 trillion loss in productivity (World Health Organization, 2022). Clearly, maintaining good mental health among employees is essential for high job performance. Poor mental and physical well-being among employees can be triggered by various factors, including poor working environments, discrimination and inequality, excessive workload and pressure, and job insecurity, among other issues (World Health Organization, 2022). External factors not caused by the organization can also play a role. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, a study revealed a significant negative impact on the mental health of healthcare workers (Dsouza et al., 2020). This was mainly as a result of a combination of increased workload and concern about contracting the virus (Dsouza et al., 2020).

A study by Bailey et al. (2016) states that the physical layout of a workplace significantly affects the health and productivity of its employees. Employment resources, such as opportunities for personal development and a supportive work environment, can reduce stress and increase engagement (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). Workplace policies that successfully encourage employee well-being are essential, and Zhang et al. (2020) highlight the importance of organisational support in mitigating the negative effects of work stress on mental health. According to Şükran (2022), job satisfaction is influenced by the organisational environment. This research study with a particular focus on small and medium-sized enterprises in Lagos, Nigeria, evaluates workplace initiatives related to mental health and well-being.

1.2 Problem Statement

Oyewunmi et al. (2015) found that cultural factors in Nigeria typically lead people to avoid talking about mental health. As a result, the time it takes to implement suggestions and get study results is consistently long. Mental health does not hold much importance in poor nations like Nigeria (Oye et al., 2015). In 2013, the World Bank reported that about 12 million Nigerians suffered from some form of mental illness, particularly work-related issues, while the population of Nigeria was

around 174 million at the time (World Bank, 2013). In 2023, the WHO reported that about 40 million Nigerians suffer from mental illness, with the majority experiencing depression and anxiety (TC Health, 2023). Notably, depression and anxiety are among the predominant mental illnesses observed in the workplace (World Health Organization, 2022). These alarming statistics are of great concern because mental illness has been inversely linked to productivity (World Health Organization, 2022). Thus, avoiding discussions of mental health in Nigeria, especially with rising mental illness rates, could directly and negatively impact the productivity of workers in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria.

The workplace has a significant impact on employees' mental health and wellbeing. While a toxic or stressful work environment can worsen mental health difficulties, a supportive work environment can improve mental health (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Another important component is job satisfaction; workers who are satisfied in their positions typically have better mental health and higher levels of productivity (Zhang et al., 2020). However, stress and mental health issues brought on by dissatisfaction may negatively affect performance and general well-being. Stress levels, which are frequently increased by an excessive workload and a lack of assistance, play a significant role in workplace mental health problems. Maintaining employee well-being requires effective stress management techniques (World Health Organisation, 2022).

The problem of mental illness has continued to increase over the years, as seen in the World Bank and WHO reports. It is imperative to understand whether SMEs in Nigeria especially Lagos State have adopted any initiatives to address this issue. The present study is being guided by the following research questions, which have been established in response to the discovered gap: Does the work environment affect the mental health and well-being of employees in SMEs in Lagos? What is the relationship between job satisfaction and the mental health and well-being of employees in SMEs in Lagos? And how do stress levels influence the mental health and well-being of employees in SMEs in Lagos?

1.3 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to evaluate the practices adopted by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Lagos State Nigeria to support the mental health and well-being of their employees in the workplace. This study will also provide recommendations based on the findings, considering

modern discoveries in mental health initiatives. SMEs were chosen because they are vital to Nigeria's economic growth, contributing approximately 48% of the GDP in 2023 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024). Improvements in the mental health and well-being practices of SMEs can lead to increased productivity, benefiting the country as whole.

1.3.1 Study Objective

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. Assess the impact of the work environment on employee mental health and well-being in SMEs in Lagos.
- ii. Examine the relationship between job satisfaction and employee mental health and well-being in SMEs in Lagos.
- iii. Investigate the effect of stress levels on employee mental health and well-being in SMEs in Lagos.

1.4 Research Questions

To meet the study's objectives, the following research questions were formulated.

- i. How does the work environment affect the mental health and well-being of employees in SMEs in Lagos?
- ii. What is the relationship between job satisfaction and the mental health and well-being of employees in SMEs in Lagos?
- iii. How do stress levels influence the mental health and well-being of employees in SMEs in Lagos?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses derived from the research questions were:

- H₁:** The work environment has a significant impact on employees' mental health and well-being in SMEs in Lagos.
- H₂:** There is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and the mental health and well-being of employees in SMEs in Lagos.
- H₃:** Stress levels are significantly influence by employees' mental health and well-being in SMEs in Lagos.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study holds significant importance for several stakeholders, including business owners and managers, employees, and policymakers. For business owners and managers, the recommendations provided in this research will offer strategies to better manage employees and enhance productivity. Employees will benefit by gaining insights into the importance of prioritizing mental health and well-being, as the study highlights the advantages of good mental health and the consequences of poor mental health.

Furthermore, this research serves as a bridge between previous studies and future research in this field. For instance, Oyewunmi et al. (2015) conducted a study when mental illness in Nigeria affected approximately 12 million people, focusing primarily on cultural barriers. Today, with the number of Nigerians affected by mental illness rising to around 40 million, additional factors beyond cultural barriers have been identified. This study aims to explore these factors and how SMEs have implemented initiatives to address them.

The findings will also be valuable for organized labor unions in advocating for enhanced worker safety and care in the workplace. Ultimately, this study contributes to the country's GDP in a roundabout way by encouraging healthy mental states among workers, who in turn produce more output for the economy.

1.7 Gap in Literature

Case studies or specific industries have been the focus of most recent research on this subject. For instance, the research on mental health by Oye et al. (2015) was focused on the primary healthcare system and another on mental health by Aminat et al. (2023) focused on female entrepreneurs. Little is known with respect to the year 2024 about the opportunities and challenges that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria confront with regards to mental health since so little is known about the literature that covers this subsector.

To address this gap, this study will take a comprehensive evaluation of mental health and well-being of their employees in the workplace across SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria. Several crucial elements will be assessed, including stress, job satisfaction, and the work environment. Their impact on employees' mental health and well-being will also be evaluated. This study will offer a thorough

framework for assessing the effectiveness of workplace programs and propose changes to improve mental health and wellbeing in small and medium-sized firms (SMEs). It will include participants from various industries under the SME sector.

1.8 Research Overview

This research study on the evaluation of mental health and well-being initiatives in the workplace: case study of SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria is structured into six chapters. The first chapter covers the introduction, statement of problem, aim and objectives, research questions, research hypotheses, significance, and gaps in literature for the study. The second chapter is the literature review, where relevant materials such as articles and journals on the topic are being reviewed and formulating a theoretical framework to direct the investigation. The third chapter covers the methodology of the study, research philosophy, strategy, type of data, method of data collection and analysis. The fourth chapter is the presentation of the descriptive and inferential (regression) results of the data collected and then further discussion of the findings in relation to existing literature is covered in the fifth chapter. The sixth chapter is the summary of findings, conclusion and recommendation chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the existing body of knowledge, highlighting and addressing gaps using various scholarly articles, journal studies, and previous theses and dissertations. The literature review is divided into three major sections: the conceptual review, the theoretical review, and a summary of the linked literature review.

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs)

A 2020 World Bank poll on SMEs found that 90% of enterprises and 50% of employment worldwide are in this sector. In emerging nations, this sector generates 70% of employment and contributes more than 40% of GDP, according to the research. There are over 63 million SMEs operating in Indonesia, where the SME sector is growing quickly (Surya et al., 2021). Of these, 0.75 million are small enterprises and 62 million are considered medium-sized companies. SMEs are classified into four groups: small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with 20–29 workers, big organizations with more than 100 workers, and home businesses with 1–5 workers (Badan, 2020). More significantly, the industry supports 97% of all jobs in the nation and accounts for 61.07% of GDP (ILO, 2019; Kementerian Koperasi dan UKM Republik Indonesia, 2019; Pramono et al., 2021).

Small and medium-sized businesses are the backbone of Nigeria's economic growth. SMEs play a significant part in promoting the development of wealth and employment in the nation's economic system. They are essential in connecting the nation's progress in industry, agriculture, services, and many other sectors. Sustainable growth boosts the productivity and competitiveness of SMEs while creating a wealth of chances for employment, the acquisition of tangible and intangible assets, and foreign investment in the nation (Ndayako, 2021). The backbone and principal engine of Nigeria's economy are its small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The Nigerian economy has profited greatly from SMEs numerous performance contributions as a provider of innovative items and state-of-the-art technology, which helps to understand SMEs relevance (Ndayako,

2021). What constitutes an SME is defined differently in each country. In certain cases, the enterprise's industry is also considered alongside its size criteria (Berry-Johnson, 2019). Businesses that are not publicly traded, have a small number of employees, and do not control a large percentage of their industry's sales are considered SMEs. Ajayi et al. (2018) suggest that the company's workforce level and sales volume could be contributing factors. Consequently, aspects like labour employment and fixed investment may cause large-scale organisations in emerging nations to differ from small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in industrialised nations.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are essential to economic growth and job creation. SMEs promote innovation, new ideas, and entrepreneurship while also providing employment opportunities. Businesses with fewer than 100 employees are better able to respond quickly to changing market conditions, ride out economic upswings, and seize fresh opportunities than their larger counterparts. In 2018, Mateciuc (2018) provided a definition of SMEs as "non-subsidiary, independent firms which employ fewer than a given number of employees." There is often a cap of 250 employees, though the exact figure differs from one national system to the next. According to Mateciuc (2018), small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are limited to a maximum of 27 million euros in balance-sheet valuation or 40 million euros in annual turnover.

Businesses are classified as either small or medium-sized based on their revenue or the number of employees they have. Both conditions must be met before the business can be considered small or medium-sized on a national level. To get this identification, different countries have different requirements. Companies that employ less than a certain number of people and are not subsidiaries are considered SMEs. The numbers differ from country to country. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are typically defined as having no more than 250 employees, in line with EU regulations (Dzuljastri & Moha, 2018). According to Dzuljastri and Moha (2018), financial assets are another characteristic that distinguishes SMEs. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are defined by a number of characteristics, including capital, project scope and cost, annual turnover, stability in finances, and staff size (European Commission Official Website, 2022).

SMEs in Nigeria were classified by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) according to their asset base and workforce size. A five-million-Naira or smaller asset base and a ₦100,000 personnel strength are the prerequisites. As per the Federal Government Small Scale Sector Development

Plan of 1980, a firm operating in the manufacturing or service sector in Nigeria is considered a small-scale business if its capital for production and equipment alone does not exceed ₦150, 000.00. Okejim and Ogonu (2018) state that the Federal Ministry of Commerce and Industry's (FMCI) small-scale industries section, small-scale enterprises are defined as establishments with a capital investment of ₦250, 000 and staffed by 50 to 150 employees. Like many others, this definition considers the amount of money invested and the number of employees.

SMEs make up more than half of all businesses, 60% of GDP, 90% of all technological innovation, 100% of all labour employment, and 100% of all firms overall, and due to this, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the principal engines of economic growth (Chen et al., 2022). According to Shan et al. (2022), SMEs rely on their personnel the most, and it is crucial to their growth and survival. A number of negative effects, such as low organisational commitment, job dissatisfaction, and an increased likelihood of resignation, are linked to employee burnout, which is characterised by weariness and misery (Uchmanowicz et al., 2020). The end result is a decline in employee performance (Prasad & Vaidya, 2020).

2.1.2 Role and Contribution of SMEs towards Nigerian Economic Development

The expansion and improvement of any country's economy depends on its SMEs. The substantial contributions made by SMEs to economic growth and development have earned them the title of "primary driver" in industrialised economies. Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) constitute the backbone of the economy in most developed nations that are experiencing economic growth. Local growth sources and the infrastructure required for rapid economic expansion and development are strengthened by SMEs, which are acknowledged for their diversity of activities, sizes, and numbers (Ogonu & Okejim, 2018).

Industrialisation is one of the strongest arguments in favour of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) contributing to fair economic growth. The modernisation and development of economies have always been largely attributable to industry, because it is the primary tool for developing nations to boost their capacity and factor of production. While industrialisation consistently raises living standards and decreases poverty, manufacturing SMEs help other emerging economy sectors, particularly agriculture, through their industrial links (Sultan, 2019).

Thus, among other things, SMEs contribute to Nigeria's development in this ways (Ogonu & Okejim, 2018). The vast majority of all businesses nowadays are SMEs. As a result, this sector is acknowledged as the primary engine of job creation and economic expansion in the vast majority of economies. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a crucial role in the development of capital since they increase the two main components of gross domestic capital formation: changes in the stock of capital markets and gross domestic fixed capital (Sultan, 2018).

Developing countries' economies rely heavily on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) because of the enormous number of people employed by these companies (Enesi & Ibrahim, 2021). Due to their ability to increase productivity, decrease unemployment, and improve people's welfare, SMEs play a crucial role in Nigeria's economic growth (Aderemi, et al., 2020). In any economy, the small, and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector plays a crucial role in fostering growth, exports, and new jobs. World Bank data shows that small, and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are responsible for over 50% of all jobs and nearly 90% of all businesses (Uyi & Taiwo, 2020). Every country's economic progress and equitable development depend on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Many innovations have their origins in SMEs, which boost local economies through the creation of jobs, the attraction of foreign investment, and the export of goods and services (Okonkwo, et al., 2019).

It is generally believed that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are crucial to the economic and social development of Africa and, more specifically, Nigeria. Since promoting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) has gained significant attention, all but one African country Nigeria have included it in their policy agendas. Undoubtedly, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) serve as a structure for the next crop of African entrepreneurs. Adjabeng and Osei (2022) cite data from the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), which states that over 90% of Africa's registered businesses are SME. In Nigeria, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are responsible for 20–45% of full-time jobs and 30–50% of rural household income. They have a considerable impact on job creation and family income. Nearly all Nigerian companies (97%) have less than 100 employees, according to the country's Federal Office of Statistics.

According to Uyi and Taiwo (2020), formal SMEs in developing countries can account for about 40% of GDP. According to the latest SMEDAN/NBS MSME Survey, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria are responsible for 80% of the country's employment and 50% of the GDP. The sector is undeniably critical to Nigeria's development, especially in light of the fact that it plays a pivotal role in alleviating poverty in the country. Uyi and Taiwo (2020) note that the sector is confronted with issues that would hinder the nation's ability to grow in the long run. According to statistics compiled by the National Bureau of Statistics, SMEs in Nigeria have contributed an average of over 48% to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) over the last five years. Despite the importance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to Nigeria's economy, problems remain in the way of their expansion and improvement. SMEs has numerous obstacles, such as employee well-being, different tax regulations, a shortage of trained employees, and high operating costs (Esiri, 2020).

2.1.3 Evaluation of Mental Health and Well-being Initiatives

Mental health includes a range of problems, including substance misuse, eating disorders, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, depression, and eating disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 2021; WHO, 2021). These circumstances have a major effect on companies, increasing the costs of workers' compensation and healthcare as well as presenteeism, absenteeism, turnover, disability, and accident and injury rates (SAMHSA, 2020). A person in a good state of mental health is one that can reach their full potential, manage everyday stressors, work well, and give back to their community. According to WHO (2014), it encompasses social, psychological, and emotional well-being. In addition, self-actualization, intergenerational dependency, autonomy, competence, subjective well-being, and perceived self-efficacy are all involved. Mental health impacts one's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, which impact relationships, decision-making, and stress management. According to WHO (2014), it refers to the degree of psychological well-being or the absence of mental illness.

According to Cameron and Schneider (2018), mental health is essential for overall health since it serves as the basis for people's well-being and efficient operation. The WHO emphasizes the significance of mental health by including it in their definition. Activities that enhance mental health include avoiding mental illnesses, treating and rehabilitating those who are afflicted in work

environments, and increasing overall well-being (WHO, 2016). The functional and working ability of an individual can be considerably diminished by mental health problems. Mental health issues can result in diminished productivity, sick leave, and absenteeism depending on when they first appear. According to WHO (2014), long-term mental health issues are one of the main causes of disability, affecting productivity and necessitating disability pensions in many nations, including Nigeria. Communities are impacted by mental health issues, which emphasizes the importance of mental health initiative.

Mental health initiative is defined by the World Health Organization (2016) as efforts to establish surroundings and living situations that support mental health and healthy lives. These activities include creating conditions that uphold and defend fundamental civil, political, socioeconomic, and cultural rights in order to maximize each person's prospects of having improved mental health. In addition to creating a healthy and safe workplace, mental health initiative has many other positive effects on employees, such as increased self-esteem, decreased stress, more job satisfaction, better morale, and overall better health. Businesses reap the rewards in the form of an effective health and safety program, a positive and understanding reputation, increased morale among workers, reduced absenteeism and turnover, greater output, lower healthcare costs, and less likelihood of legal action (Cameron and Schneider, 2018). Workplace mental health initiative can take many forms, including changes to policies, processes, and settings; health education and communication; and systemic and environmental improvements.

Health communication integrates several theories and models to encourage positive behavioral changes in employees by using written and spoken tactics that empower them to make healthier choices (Wierenga et al., 2013; Rojatz, et al., 2017). According to McCoy, Stinson, Scott, Tenney, and Newman (2014), health education offers learning experiences that are customized for the target populations and presents knowledge on mental health themes through lectures, courses, seminars, workshops, and classes. Policies, procedures, and surroundings that facilitate and sustainably provide healthy options are necessary for the effective initiative of mental health (Rojatz, et al. 2017).

2.1.4 Mental Health in the Workplace: Causes

According to the World Health Organisation (2022), a lack of support from employees, inadequate legislation for health and safety, and ineffective management and communication strategies are all consequences of poor mental health in the workplace. According to WHO (2022), some ways to make the workplace a better place for mental health include creating programs to help employees advance in their careers, giving them more opportunities to have a say in company decisions, increasing awareness of mental health initiatives, making safety rules stick, and employee's recognition at work. There are a variety of internal and external elements that could affect workers' mental health.

2.1.4.1 Internal Factors

In Nigeria, stress is typically not regarded as a factor that could lead to mental instability; hence, it is not customary to pay attention to mental health in the workplace. The World Health Organization has clarified, however, that the workplace is a location of numerous psychological experiences, encompassing, among other things, the formation of social identities, the creation of social contracts, and the cultivation of a sense of purpose (World Health Organization and International Labour Organization, 2002). Numerous elements, including physical ones like ventilation, lightning, noise level, etc., might help or impede mental health at work (Ajala, 2012). However, the foundation of the organization may consist of cultural elements or ideals. These cultures typically result from the creation of operational guidelines. For instance, it has been seen that the recapitalization strategy for commercial banks in Nigeria has increased employee stress by setting unattainable goals (Abubakar et al. 2013). As a result, a large number of banking industry workers have had to resign from their positions in order to preserve their mental health. When an organization's culture is not focused on its employees, it typically causes problems for their mental and psychological well-being (Abubakar et al. 2013).

Lack of work security is another aspect of cultural problems that typically exacerbate mental instability in Nigeria. This might be attributed to the fact that most companies' priorities hiring new hires over providing ongoing training for their current workforce. According to Abubakar et al. (2013), older workers who lack the necessary qualifications may therefore experience anxiety and worry of losing their jobs.

Day-to-day contacts with superiors and coworkers are a crucial factor that significantly influences people's mental health, in addition to cultural expressions in the workplace. In the Nigerian workplace, this problem is particularly notable given the country's diversity in terms of religion, ethnic groupings, and cultural practices. As a result, several ethnic groups and cultures might be found in a typical Nigerian workplace (Stoetzer 2010). Disagreement and conflict are typically fostered in this kind of environment. For instance, the Yoruba ethnic group in Nigeria greets superiors or the elderly by bending completely to the ground. Igbos often do not practice this culture. Thus, even at work, a basic problem like greeting style can lead to tension. Workplace conflict has been linked to depression by numerous studies (Stoetzer 2010). This suggests that if there is an ongoing conflict at work due to cultural biases, employees are more likely to have mental instability.

Moreover, self-desires are linked to additional variables that may impact mental instability in the workplace. Workplace stagnation, work-life balance issues, inadequate pay, etc. are a few examples (Cox, 1993). Given that human wants are both innate and ever-changing, it is critical for businesses and organizations to continuously modify their methods to better meet the demands of their workforce and the resources they provide. Poor pay and benefits are one of the main causes of industrial strikes in Nigeria (Oyewunmi, et al., 2015). These demands are frequently tied to their unique aspirations, which, if unfulfilled, can lead to melancholy and lower productivity levels for the employee.

2.1.4.2 External factors

In Nigeria, both internal and external influences have an equal impact on employees' mental health at work. Poor infrastructure, particularly the road networks, is one of the external issues. Due to traffic or poor roads, workers must spend lengthy hours on the road, which exhausts them. By the time they get to work, the majority of them are psychologically exhausted. External variables such as worry and insecurity can also lead to mental instability in employees (Oyewunmi, et al., 2015). According to the researcher, employees who experience insecurity are psychologically unable to perform their jobs at work since it has led to the loss of loved ones and property. The authors have found additional external causes, such as a high rate of poverty, inflation, unemployment, and an increasing degree of dependency.

It is noteworthy to acknowledge that while many external issues are outside the purview of businesses, others can be effectively managed by those enterprises or organizations. For instance, companies can provide a way for employees to go to work securely and stress-free, as well as a way for them to unwind for a little while to help them decompress (Owoyemi, 2013).

2.1.5 Ways to improve mental health in the workplace

Many firms implement various efforts aimed at enhancing employee mental health, according to the literature reviewed in this area. A number of these initiatives, meanwhile, are replicated in practically all of the evaluated literatures. This section will provide a thorough discussion of the numerous projects and approaches that have been recognized by different researchers, particularly those that closely relate to the goals and objectives of the research.

2.1.5.1 Leadership support

The attitude of employees and the atmosphere at work are greatly influenced by leadership. In fact, without the backing of an organization's leadership, putting mental health policy into action is nearly difficult. Employee impression is always a direct result of how seriously an organization's leadership regards promoting mental health (Milner et al 2013). Therefore, having leadership that is either indifferent to or nonexistent when it comes to mental health growth and supports presents a dilemma. Usually, their leadership style will reflect this.

It is crucial that SMEs leadership views mental health initiatives as an essential component and appropriately incorporates them into their management approaches. Additionally, implementing an open-door policy that permits staff members to freely express their opinions on any organizational policy without fear of rejection or worse, will help the leadership of the organization learn what aspects of mental health needs improvement (World Health Organization, 2017). Additionally, any organization's leadership that aims to support workers' mental health must adopt a constructive leadership stance. This will guarantee that there is always a positive work environment at the company, allowing employees to flourish. In addition to creating a more positive work atmosphere, an open-door policy guarantees that programs for mental health are customized to the requirements of the staff (Milner et al 2013). Additionally, managers at all levels are urged to use supportive techniques by gathering staff members and figuring out where stressors

are coming from in order to eliminate or lessen them. Research has shown that this process improves workers' physical and mental health and eventually boosts productivity (Milner et al 2013).

2.1.5.2 Workplace policies and practices

Policies and procedures at work have a significant role in preserving employees' mental health. Effective policies can reduce problems including bullying, aggression, sexual abuse, discrimination, and accidents. According to research, problems like bullying and discrimination are significant stressors that can lead to long-term physical and mental health problems (Cohen et al, 2007). In addition, policies must be formulated to guarantee an appropriate equilibrium between racial and gender disparities in order to prevent the impression of unfairness and prejudice among workers (Hershcovis & Barling, 2010).

Certain toxic behaviors that must be controlled by workplace policies and procedures have the potential to raise employee turnover and lower job satisfaction. Low productivity further results from this, which can be detrimental to the company as well as the individual worker (Frost 2007). In addition to policies, the strategies put out by several researchers focused on staff education and training regarding the elimination of harmful practices. Employee confidence in the company and their ability to improve their mental health conditions can both be increased by providing training on normative behavior, the need to avoid toxic behavior, and the confidentiality of reporting such cases to human resource personnel (Gates and Akabas, 2010).

2.1.5.3 Provision of Mental Health Resources

One method for assisting staff members in maintaining mental stability and a healthy work-life balance is through the implementation of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) (Attridge, 2009). Although the EAP was first created to address the problem of alcohol abuse in the workplace, it has since grown to include other services like clinical assessment, counselling, and referral communities. Employees who struggle to maintain a work-life balance are asked to complete the EAP process since it will help to guarantee their mental stability in their profession. Seeking help for mental health issues has been less stigmatized due to the EAP process. Workers who may be ashamed to seek mental health assistance will typically use the Employee Assistance

Program (EAP) to discuss their issues with a professional who will assess them and establish plans for future resolution (McCann et al, 2010).

2.1.6 Work Environment and Employee Mental Health and Well-Being

The demands, actions, and other major factors that may or may not hinder an employee's performance and activity make up the working environment. The workplace is a product of the interactions between employees and their immediate environment. Organisational ability to share information is defined by "how the work environment is designed to enable organisations to utilise work environment as if it were an asset" (Brenner, 2004). Furthermore, Brenner (2004) stated that the greatest way to motivate employees to increase production is to provide a work environment that values their health and encourages them to freely share their ideas.

Opperman (2002) argues that there are essentially three sub-environments that comprise an organization's working environment: the technological, the human, and the organisational. The technological environment consists of physical or technical components such as infrastructure for technology and tools. The technical environment has the necessary components for workers to do their jobs. The human environment includes teams and work groups, peers, other individuals with whom employees interact, interpersonal issues, leadership, and management. The workplace is designed to encourage employees to relax and engage in casual conversation with one another, which should increase the likelihood of employees sharing information and ideas. The management is accountable for the company's culture (Bushiri, 2014).

The workplace has both positive and negative impacts on employees' involvement, morale, and productivity (Chukundah et al., 2022). Equally crucial to the office's design, furnishings, and architecture are the actual workstations that workers utilise. Additionally, it considers external factors such as the office's support system, the industry in which the company operates, and local customs and laws (Basuki and Khalid 2021). A large body of research highlights the importance of creating a positive and supportive work environment for employees as a means to enhance their emotional and physical health. Research by Das and Pattanayak (2022) indicates that leaders' interactions with their members directly impact the wellbeing of their staff.

According to Bakker and Demerouti (2017), mental health can be negatively affected by two key stresses: having high expectations for one's employment and having little control over one's work

responsibilities. Bakker and Demerouti (2017) shed light on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) hypothesis, which states that in order to keep employee's well-being, it is necessary to find a balance between job demands and enough resources. A supportive company culture lessens the detrimental effects of job stress and fosters mental wellness, (Monteiro and Joseph, 2023). Employee well-being can therefore be improved by a positive workplace culture that emphasizes acknowledgement, gratitude, and social support. Employee well-being can be considerably increased by putting mental health initiatives into practice, such as stress management courses and mental health literacy training. SMEs encounter difficulties putting these tactics into practice because of their limited resources, although De Angelis et al. (2020) emphasized the significance of these techniques.

These aspects of the workplace have a significant effect on people's mental health and wellbeing. An organized and encouraging work environment can result in: Better mental health outcomes and increased job satisfaction are linked to lower stress levels. According to research by Faragher et al. (2014), job satisfaction has a major impact on employees' health, suggesting that lowering job unhappiness can reduce stress and enhance wellbeing. If mental health problems are not treated, there are large productivity losses. According to Dewa et al. (2011), productivity losses from severe depression are greater than those from mild or moderate depression, highlighting the importance of early intervention and support. Lu et al. (2022) discovered that creative behavior and work engagement are two ways that mental health positively affects job performance.

2.1.7 Job Satisfaction and Employee Mental Health and Well-Being

A person's job is crucial to their lives in many ways. Given the variety of illnesses and working situations, employee job satisfaction is crucial since it affects health in a significant way (Mohammad et al., 2022). An attitudinal variable called "job satisfaction" measures how people feel about their jobs in general and about certain aspects of their jobs specifically. Job satisfaction refers to how much individuals enjoy their jobs. It has been proposed as the root cause of significant organizational and personnel performance, such as longevity and work performance (Janyam, 2009). Job satisfaction characterizes a favorable impression of a job that comes from an assessment of its qualities. A person who is highly content with their work has positive emotions, whereas a person who is not satisfied with their work experiences negative emotions. The main aspects of job satisfaction (work, compensation, advancement, and coworkers) are usually always

most closely connected with high levels of total job satisfaction when it comes to liking one's job. The majority of people favor challenging and stimulating work over ordinary and predictable labor (Pooja, 2016).

An emotional reaction to a work environment is called job satisfaction. The degree to which results match or surpass expectations is frequently used to gauge job satisfaction (Karim, et al., 2013). When workers feel underappreciated while putting in more effort than their colleagues, they may develop unfavourable attitudes towards their job, supervisor, and coworkers. People are more inclined to have positive attitudes about their jobs when they feel they are getting a fair pay and great treatment. Job satisfaction is a measure of a variety of interrelated attitudes that people have about their jobs and how satisfied they are with them (Karim and others, 2013).

Job satisfaction, a crucial measure of an employee's contentment with their position, has a big impact on their general well-being and mental health. Job satisfaction and mental health are positively correlated, according to research consistently. Improved mental health outcomes are linked to higher levels of job satisfaction. For example, a meta-analysis carried out by Faragher et al. (2014) revealed that job satisfaction had a major effect on employees' mental health, lowering stress and enhancing general well-being. Not only does job satisfaction impact mental health, but it also has an impact on performance and productivity. According to Lu et al. (2022), creative behavior and work engagement are two ways that mental health positively affects job performance. This finding emphasizes the need of promoting job satisfaction to improve well-being and productivity. According to research by Karim et al. (2013), women in the workforce report higher levels of job satisfaction than males do, and this has a favorable impact on their mental health. This suggests that the relationship between job satisfaction and mental health may be influenced by factors particular to gender.

According to Akinyele (2010), a healthy work environment improves job satisfaction and mental health. It is facilitated by elements such as supervisor support, relationships with coworkers, training and development, and an appropriate workload. According to Muhammad and Azlan (2023), meaningful work promotes employees' continued engagement and connection, which is crucial in times of crisis. The fulfilment of this sense of purpose improves mental health in a direct manner. According to Heeley (2024), encouraging a healthy work atmosphere where

accomplishments are acknowledged has a beneficial effect on employees' well-being. This is consistent with research by Das and Pattanayak (2023), who found that pleasant work environments are fostered by leadership styles that acknowledge and value employees' efforts.

Due to a lack of funding, SMEs frequently encounter difficulties when putting comprehensive mental health measures into action. To enhance job satisfaction and mental health in SMEs, De Angelis et al. (2020) emphasized the significance of even fundamental support systems, such as stress management courses and mental health literacy. Tailored tactics that address individual demands and limits are crucial, given the unique dynamics of SMEs. This entails establishing a culture of support, making sure that work and life are balanced, and offering chances for advancement in the workplace. The effectiveness of mental health programs in SMEs is contingent upon the implementation of ongoing evaluation and feedback mechanisms. Oluwafunmi et al. (2024) highlighted the necessity of continuous evaluation to guarantee the efficacy of mental health programs and their ability to adjust to evolving requirements.

2.1.8 Stress Levels and Employee Mental Health and Well-Being

The endocrinologist Hans Selye coined the term "stress" in a biological sense for the first time in the 1930s. Later on, he expanded and popularized the idea to encompass an improper physiological reaction to any kind of demand. According to his terminology, a stressor is the stimulation that results in a stressful situation. It encompasses a broad spectrum of phenomena, from little annoyance to serious dysfunction that could lead to catastrophic health failure (Ekienabor, 2019). One of the main psychological hazards at work is stress. Stress is a result of specific stimuli that are generated or existing in the workplace, and working long hours is one kind of stress. "The response with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope" is how the World Health Organization (WHO) describes occupational or work-related stress (Al-Hareth, et al, 2016). Employee performance at academic institutions is thought to be significantly impacted by job stress (Vijayan, 2018).

Stress at work is an issue that worries employers, psychologists, counsellors, and employees alike (Joseph, 2013). In this age of downsizing, when companies have a smaller workforce compared to the amount of available jobs, many workers find it difficult to balance their professional responsibilities with their personal and family obligations. The result is tense circumstances

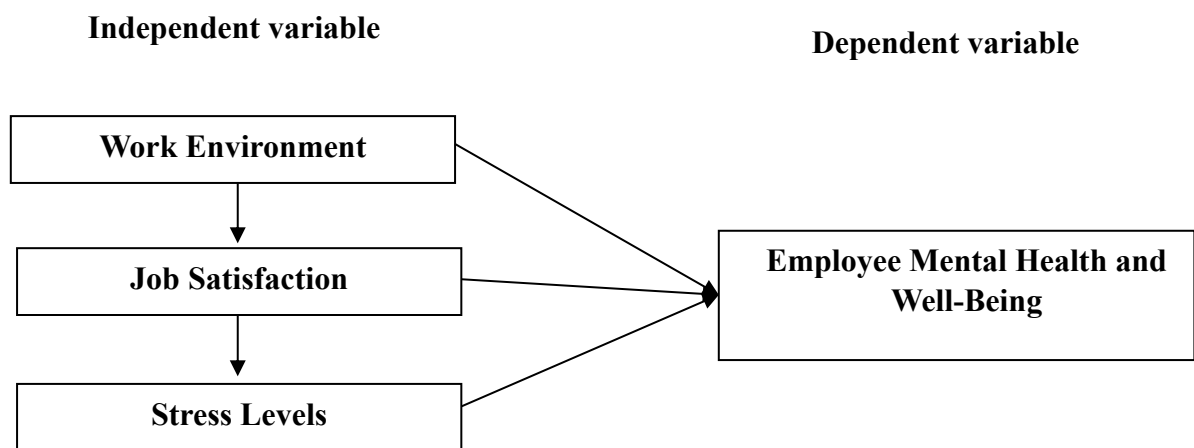
(Igbokwe, et al., 2020). According to Bashir and Ramay (2010), the negative reaction that people have when faced with excessive demands or expectations from their internal and external work settings is called stress. According to Dina (2016), an employee experiences job stress when elements related to their employment interact with them to alter their psychological or physiological state, forcing them to diverge from their typical functioning or conduct.

Employers frequently assign one person to complete tasks that would typically need three or more employees, especially in SMEs, because they do not want to shoulder a large payroll expense. Employees typically experience work overload and long workdays as a result. In a highly competitive environment, like a university, workers are typically trained to put in long hours with little to no break (Fonkeng, 2018). A high stress level and poor work quality can result from this. According to Okeke et al. (2016), stress has a significant role in the organization's high workforce turnover and unfavorable work attitudes. They argue that stressed-out employees can pose a risk to their coworkers, particularly if they are operating hazardous machinery, and they can also develop other unpleasant health issues. As a result, workers are becoming more aware of how much work is interfering with their personal lives, and they are unhappy about this because it is a major source of stress at work (Itoya & Igbokwe, 2020).

High stress levels in the workplace can lead to significant mental health issues, impacting not only the well-being of employees but also organizational productivity and performance. Numerous studies have explored the various dimensions of workplace stress and its effects on employee mental health. Bakker and Demerouti (2017) highlighted that these conditions are significant stressors that negatively impact mental health. Employees who feel overwhelmed by their workload and lack autonomy are more likely to experience stress and related mental health issues. One major factor that can either increase or decrease stress levels is the workplace. Stress can be decreased, and mental health outcomes can be improved by elements including effective communication, a supportive work environment, and leadership that is encouraging. According to Oluwafunmi et al. (2024), it is critical to establish work settings that prioritize people's holistic well-being. Tailored strategies that target stressors and mental health requirements are crucial, given the problems that SMEs confront. This entails fostering a culture that values mental health, granting flexible scheduling options, and facilitating access to resources for mental health.

2.1.9 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model created for this study is shown in this section, along with the linkages between the many elements influencing workplace initiatives related to mental health and well-being. To offer a structured understanding of their behavior in this environment, the model incorporates important variables found through research of literature. The conceptual framework in Figure 2.1, developed by the researcher, incorporates the following key variables: work environment, job satisfaction and stress level and employee mental health and well-being.



Source: Researcher's conceptualization from the review of previous models

2.2 Theoretical Review

Some of the major model that describes mental health as it concerns the workplace is as follows;

2.2.1 Exhaustion model

This model adopts the process of work as one of its fundamental approaches to studying mental health in the workplace (Laurell, 1983). It emphasizes the point that the process of the work is far more important than the outcome. Hence, work process and workload are seen as the major analytical categories. Exhaustion in this line is seen as loss of actual or potential biological or mental capacity, to the degree that the work has become much more exhaustive than the ability of the employee to replace his capacity over time (Laurell, 1983). This model views exhaustion in

three forms. The first is the organic exhaustion which is the exhaustion of the mind as a result of work accidents or the actions of toxic products. The second form is indisposition. Which is the exhaustion of both the mind and body? At this point, the employee is not disposed to perform any mental and physical tasks. The third form is the one that affects the employee's identity. This type affects their values and beliefs (Laurell, 1989).

Although the exhaustion model has explicitly explained that the term exhaustion is an accumulation of work stress which either be formal or informal, it is impossible to clinically measure the extent to which the work stress has contributed to the mental disorder of an individual. Sometimes what is spotted as the stressor might be an accumulation of the individual negative environment which may be outside of the workplace. The model therefore does not provide how the work stress can be isolated and how the impact can be clinically determined

2.2.2 The way of life model

This model seeks to understand an individual mental illness through the lens of the individual's occupation. The degree of the individual's engagement into his occupation is seen as the fundamental way of understanding the mental risks exposed to the individual (Possas 1989). This model also acknowledged the fact that an individual's life is a make-up of things pertaining to the way he lives his life and the nature or structure of his occupation (Possas 1989).

According to the model, the mental risks associated with occupation are not evenly distributed. In other words, exposure to the work process is not a continuous event, but what truly prevails is the employee's exposure to differentiated work process. For example, the health sector is filled with a lot of heterogenous occupation such as doctor, nurse, psychology, etc. Because of this heterogenous nature, a worker can be exposed to different series of events happening at the same time and when pulled together, can cause a mental disorder

Summarily, the model portrays that the work itself for an individual may not cause any harm, but the process which the individual will pass through, due to the nature of the workplace, is what really presents a challenge. While the way of life approach focuses on the work process, the exhaustion model looks at the work structure. They are similar because they both adopts the interaction with human as a bedrock for having mental stress in the workplace (Fernandes,1996)

2.2.3 The Existential model

This model explains that most mental disorder comes as a result of man trying to find the meaning of life in a difficult world which does not have a pre-defined meaning for it. One of the most important outstanding concepts of the model is anxiety, which is created as a result of freedom and the responsibility that comes with it (Lumen, 2023). It portends that freedom comes with a sense of responsibility, which prompts the individual to make choices about their lives. This responsibility creates anxiety for the individual, usually from the fear of failure.

Another important concept in the model is authenticity, which infers the desire of an individual to live his life to its full potential. Generally speaking, every individual wants to identify the meaning of their lives and achieve the goals they have set for themselves. Not meeting these goals could trigger a form of mental abnormalities. For example, a student who wants to become a medical doctor may fall into depression if he could not get admitted into a medical school. In the same manner, an employee who has set goals and targets to achieve, either for himself or for the organization may likewise fall into depression if the goals were not achieved.

This model therefore is relevant in the workplace as it could serve as a guide for studying the goals, targets, aims and objective of an organization. The extent to which these factors affect the employees' mental state. As earlier stated, these factors could be the main stressors in the workplace, causing employees to endlessly work on unrealistic targets, leading to possible exhaustion and mental instability.

The theories reviewed in this section have laid some fundamental principles for mental health issues in the workplace. These principles form the basis for this study and are covered in the research questions of the study. For example, the need for self-actualization as explained by the existential model is covered in the second and the third research question of this study. The exhaustion model which explains the need for an individual to replace his capacity through rest or other social activities is covered by the first research question in this study. These models, therefore, forms the basis for the development of the conceptual framework for the study

2.2.4 Resource Based theory

Resource-Based Theory (RBT) was established by Penrose in his 1959 landmark work "The Theory of the Growth of the Firm." This theory is based on the two fundamental points of resource

immobility and diversity. Applying these assumptions to the context of SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria, we see that mental health and well-being initiatives can be considered valuable internal resources. When these initiatives are unique (resource diversity) and difficult for competitors to replicate or implement (resource immobility), they can provide a sustainable competitive advantage. For instance, an SME that successfully implements comprehensive mental health programs may enhance employee productivity, reduce turnover, and create a positive workplace culture that is hard for competitors to match.

Successfully deploying the right resources and competencies may help SMEs achieve long-term success and gain a competitive advantage (Penrose, 1959). According to the guidelines laid out in this research, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Lagos can make strategic use of programs promoting mental health and wellness. In addition to helping their employees, firms also strengthen their brand through this. Through the use of foresight, intuition, and innovation in the selection and implementation of mental health programs, the SME can achieve long-term economic success by creating programs that are appreciated, unique, hard to copy, and irreplaceable.

Without such sustainable competitive advantages, any initial successes are likely to be short-lived, as competitors will quickly replicate and surpass the outcomes. Therefore, understanding and utilizing the potential of mental health and well-being initiatives as strategic resources is crucial for the enduring success of SMEs in Lagos, aligning perfectly with the principles of the Resource-Based Theory (Udu, Udu, & Eze, 2008).

2.2.5 Theoretical Framework

For the research "Evaluation of Mental Health and Well-being Initiatives in the Workplace: Case Study of SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria," the study anchored on Resource-Based Theory. The theory emphasizes leveraging internal resources and capabilities to achieve competitive advantage and improved performance. SMEs often operate with limited resources and must optimize what they have to enhance employee well-being and productivity. Mental health and well-being initiatives can be seen as valuable internal resources that contribute to the overall performance and sustainability of the organization.

The study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of mental health and well-being initiatives. Resource-Based Theory provides a framework for assessing how these internal initiatives (resources) impact employee performance and organizational outcomes. This theory allows for an examination of how well SMEs utilize their internal resources (mental health programs, supportive policies, etc.) to create a positive work environment. Implementing effective mental health and well-being programs can be a strategic advantage for SMEs.

The Resource-Based Theory highlights the importance of strategic resource management, which aligns with the goal of optimizing mental health initiatives to enhance employee satisfaction and productivity. Resource-Based Theory underscores the importance of sustainable competitive advantage. By investing in mental health and well-being, SMEs can create a more resilient and motivated workforce, leading to long-term benefits. This approach can help SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria, differentiate themselves in the market and improve their reputation as good employers.

2.3 Summary of Literature Review

Several important issues are highlighted in the research on workplace mental health and well-being initiatives, particularly in SMEs. The literature reviewed demonstrates that the workplace has a major impact on employees' mental health, with encouraging workplace cultures and supporting policies promoting productivity and well-being. Sustaining employee mental health requires a supportive work environment with clear communication, sufficient resources, and supportive leadership. One of the main factors influencing mental health is job satisfaction. Reduced stress and improved overall wellbeing are associated with higher levels of job satisfaction, whereas mental health issues and elevated stress levels are associated with lower levels of job satisfaction. Workplace stress, including high expectations and little autonomy, can be harmful to mental health. With honest dialogue and encouraging management, workplace stress may be reduced, which in turn improves employees' health and well-being. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are less likely to implement effective initiatives for mental health (such as stress management, mental health literacy, and employee support programs) than larger companies because of resource limits.

Despite this, these initiatives remain vital. Based on resource-based theory, which emphasizes the value of distinct, valuable, and non-replaceable resources, this study focusses on how SMEs may

use their skills to make effective mental health programs that provide them with a competitive edge.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology adopted in achieving the aim and objectives of the study. The chapter covers the study's research philosophy, research approach, research strategy, data collection, data source and selection criteria, data collection method, sample and sampling technique, data analysis, ethical considerations, study limitations, validity and reliability, and a summary of the chapter. The justification for each chosen approach is also provided. The research onion model will form the guide for this chapter and will show the various approaches adopted in the study's data analysis process.

The research onion model was developed by Saunders et al. (2007) to show the variety of aspects that might be considered when doing research. The term “onion” signifies the various layers of the model illustration, starting from outer layers to the inner layers. The diagram below depicts the illustration.

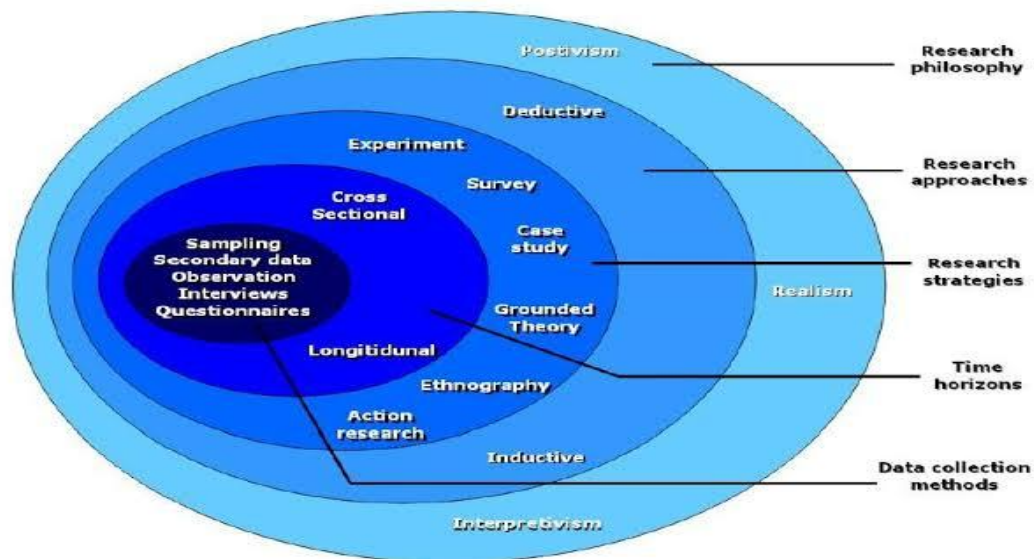


Figure 3.1: Research Onion (Saunders et al., 2007)

3.2 Research Philosophy

According to Saunders et al. (2007), research philosophy can either be positivism, realism, or interpretivism. The researcher for this present study on evaluation of mental health and well-being initiatives in workplace: case study of SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria, chose the positivism philosophical approach, due to its core principles of quantitative data, deductive reasoning and survey method of research. This approach focuses on understanding social phenomena from the subjective perspectives of individuals (respondents) (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) and is based on the belief that realities are constructed through social interactions.

Furthermore, this approach is best used mostly when dealing with understanding social phenomena (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), such as mental health in the workplace, studying the work environment and how it relates to the mental well-being of employees. Also, this philosophical approach allows

the researcher to view results from the lens of the respondents, which is the intention of this research in a bid to cover the literature gap identified in Chapter two of this study.

3.3 Research Approach

The research onion proposes three research approaches: inductive, deductive, and abductive. Each approach depends on the factors available to the researcher, such as the availability of theory to test, the nature of data, among other things (Saunders et al., 2007). In this research, the deductive approach was used. This is simply because the researcher will be dealing more with social variables like the employer-employee relationships with respect to work environment, job satisfaction, and stress levels.

The deductive approach is best used when three main conditions are satisfied. The first is when dealing with causality, checking the impact of one variable on the other (Saunders et al., 2019). This research met this condition because it examines the impact of various variables such as work environment, job satisfaction and stress level on the mental health of employees. The deductive approach is also applicable when there is an existing theoretical framework guiding the investigation process (Bryman, 2016). This is applicable in this research as various theories have been identified and analyzed in chapter two of this study.

Finally, the deductive approach is considered justified if the research involves surveys concerning social science issues or natural science. This research is also justified by its data collection, which adopts a survey of a sample size in social science. With these three factors, the researcher has considered the deductive research approach, which is also suitable for the adopted research philosophy as the best alternative for the study's research approach.

3.4 Research Strategy

The survey strategy was adopted in this research. This is because it allows the researcher to get many respondents that will enhance the reliability of the research results. Although the focus was on Lagos, Nigeria, the intention of the research is to use the results obtained from the survey to make reliable predictions for other various states in Nigeria. The use of this strategy is justified by various literatures (Fowler, 2013; Groves, et al., 2002; Dillman, Smyth & Christian, 2014). For

example, Fowler (2013) explained that the survey method is better used in social science and business-related surveys, where there is a need for the collection of large amounts of data. In this type of strategy, the volume of the data collected is as important as the decisions that need to be made with the results. Hence, in line with this, the survey strategy was adopted to help the researcher validate the study's results obtained from the research and subsequently make informed forecasts about other states in the country.

3.5 Data Collection

Data Type and Time Horizon

The data collected for this research was cross-sectional primary data. Cross-sectional data is collected from a sample at a specific point in time, allowing researchers to analyze the current state of affairs without delving into past trends. This approach is crucial for this research, as it aims to assess the current state of mental well-being among employees in SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) in Lagos, Nigeria. The focus is on identifying and understanding the factors influencing employee mental health within the workplace, such as work environment, job satisfaction, and stress levels. The use of cross-sectional data is particularly beneficial for describing the current characteristics and conditions of this specific population, providing insights into the immediate factors affecting their mental well-being (Creswell, 2014). The research seeks to address questions about the prevalence of mental health issues among SME employees and the workplace conditions that may contribute to or alleviate these issues. This snapshot of current conditions allows for an analysis of the factors impacting employee mental health and supports the development of strategies to improve workplace well-being.

The cross-sectional data is important for this research because the research questions seek to understand what is happening in SMEs with respect to the mental well-being of employees at this point in time. It does not seek to evaluate what happened in the past, but rather what is happening now. Also, cross-sectional data is beneficial for describing a particular population or phenomenon (Creswell, 2014), and in this case, the researcher seeks to understand the mental health phenomenon among employees in SMEs in Nigeria.

Some other advantages of cross-sectional data are that it is quick and cost-effective, as the collection of such data does not require going back in time to recover the trend of a variable. It also aids comparative analysis, comparing variables within the same time frame. Nonetheless, the data came from an original source; specifically, the researcher surveyed multiple employees of different small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Lagos, Nigeria. This is crucial since it ensures that the data comes from trustworthy sources, which helps validate the study.

3.6 Data Source and Selection Criteria

The data used for this research was obtained through primary means, from respondents from different SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria. To ensure that the information provided is reliable, selection criteria were developed to ensure only data from respondents working in SMEs within Lagos was selected and used. Researching the correct classification of business, it was discovered that globally, SMEs are classified based on diverse criteria; these criteria could be size of employees, amount of turnover, ownership structure, or the industry. For example, in the United States, small and medium-scale businesses are classified based on their industry standards (Liberto, 2023). This means that some industries could have higher employees and yet be classified as SMEs.

For example, a manufacturing firm with fewer than 500 employees are usually classified as an SME, whereas a mining firm with 1,200 employees is also classified as an SME. Any company with fewer than 10 employees is seen as a home office in the US. Canadian law classifies businesses as either "small" or "medium" depending on their employee count (Liberto, 2023). The EU, in the same vein, defines SMEs as businesses that have no more than 250 employees. The Chinese classification of SMEs is a bit complicated; they use both the number of employees, revenues, and assets. For example, retail companies in China are considered small if they employ about 10 to 49 employees with operating revenue of \$1 million annually (China Briefing, 2011).

On the other hand, real estate developers are considered SMEs if they have annual revenue of \$1 million to \$10 million and assets of \$20 million to \$50 million, and agricultural businesses are considered an SME if they have annual revenue of \$0.5 million to \$5 million (China Briefing, 2011). These diverse classifications show that it may be difficult to generalize the situation in one country. Globally speaking, there is no generally accepted yardstick for classifying SMEs; it always depends on the economic factors at play in the country.

However, in Nigeria, the classification of SMEs has been a bit complicated as the central bank seeks to break down the level of small businesses more by introducing micro and nano businesses. The Nigerian government agency in charge of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is SMEDAN. Specifically, it divides SMEs into the following groups: The following categories apply to businesses: micro, small, and medium-sized. According to Anaeto (2022), micro businesses have ten or fewer employees and assets of less than five million Nigeria Naira; small businesses have forty-nine to fifty employees and assets of five to fifty million Nigeria Naira; and medium-sized businesses have fifty to ninety-nine employees and assets of fifty million to five hundred million Naira. This classification has been generally adopted by different government agencies, including the central bank.

Hence, the research adopted the criteria of number of employees, ensuring that all data analyzed are in line with the Nigeria central bank's specifications for the number of employees. Organizations with above 200 employees were excluded from the sampled size and final analysis, as the Central Bank of Nigeria classifies them as big companies, which do not fall under small and medium-scale businesses.

3.7 Method of Data Collection

This study employed online survey questionnaire which was deployed on Google Form as a method for the collection of the quantitative data for this study. This instrument allowed the study to pose closed-ended questions, which was easy for the respondents to respond to using their smartphone, tablet, or their laptop/desktop computer. Some of the advantages of this type of questionnaire are its flexibility, allowing the respondents to express themselves in various forms. It also brings balance to the research (Saunders et al., 2019). This implies that the online survey questionnaire allowed the study to cover the breadth of the research by using structured questions to focus on the key areas of the topic while, also allowing for the possibility of collecting data from respondents in a different location other than the location of the researcher, to cover the depth of the research topic by getting more insights from the respondents.

This online survey questionnaire deployed on Google Form method is suitable for this research because it is best used for the collection of data in a situation that the researcher is not in the same location with the respondents of the questionnaire, and where the researcher intends to use the quantitative data (Creswell, 2014). The online survey questionnaire deployed on Google Form was distributed to the respondents through the SMEDAN, which is the Nigeria government agency that is in charge of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Lagos, Nigeria.

This study's questionnaire is made up of three sections; section A contains questions on the respondents bio-data; section B contains questions used in the measurement of the dependent and independent variables (which was further used for the simple linear regression and test of the study's hypothesis); section C contains questions used for the study's descriptive analysis.

3.8 Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample was selected from employees in Lagos working for SMEs businesses and organizations. About 315 respondents were received and their responses were analyzed. However, based on the selection criteria, 159 responses were valid for the purpose of this research. This is considered a large sample size according to the rule of thumb proposed in the Central Limit Theorem (CLT). Although the CLT applies $n = \text{infinity}$, in practice, is usually considered that where $n > \text{or} = 30$, the sample size is said to be large and sufficient for approximation of the larger population (Ross 2014). Hence the general rule of thumb as prescribed by CLT indicates that the sample size 159 respondents, is sufficient to approximate for the total population

The CLT conditions were met as well. The first condition, which states that the variable or respondent must have equal probability and be randomly selected was met through the random sampling technique used for the data collection. This ensures that every employee in Lagos has the equal opportunity of being selected regardless of your demographic factors and all have the same probability of being selected as well.

3.9 Data Analysis

To analyse the data collected through online survey questionnaire deployed on Google form, a quantitative method strategy was adopted. This technique is necessary and appropriate due to the nature of the collected data, which involved structured data and lends itself well to quantitative

data and analysis (Creswell, 2014). In order to determine the relationships between the variables, the quantitative analysis utilized both descriptive and inferential (Linear Regression) analysis approaches.

The analysis involved the use of statistical software known as Excel to conduct tests such as Simple linear regression analysis, correlation, and hypothesis testing, which help in identifying patterns and causal relationships within the data. In-depth understanding of the relationship that exists between variables were possible with the linear regression analysis, which goes beyond simple descriptive statistics like mean, mode, median, and percentages. The results of the linear regression analysis, for example, provided insights into how various mental health and well-being initiatives affect employee outcomes in SMEs. The quantitative analysis aimed to validate the findings through robust statistical methods, ensuring that the interpretations of the data are reliable and representative of the broader population.

3.9.1 Research Model

Simple linear regression analysis was used to determine the relationship between the variables (independent and dependent) of the study's hypothesis, for hypothesis 1: whether the independent variable represented by and control variables given as Age, Gender, and Marital status impacts the dependent variable (Employees Mental Health and Well-Being); for hypothesis 2: whether the independent variable represented by Job Satisfaction and control variables given as Age, Gender, and Marital status impacts the dependent variable (Employees Mental Health and Well-Being); and for hypothesis 3: whether the independent variable represented by Stress Level and control variables given as Age, Gender, and Marital status impacts the dependent variable (Employees Mental Health and Well-Being).

The estimated determination of hypothesis 1

$$EMHWB = \beta_0 + \beta_1 WE + \beta_1 AG + \beta_1 GEN + \beta_1 MS + \mu$$

Hypothesis 2

$$EMHWB = \beta_0 + \beta_1 JS + \beta_1 AG + \beta_1 GEN + \beta_1 MS + \mu$$

Hypothesis 3

$$EMHWB = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SL + \beta_1 AG + \beta_1 GEN + \beta_1 MS + \mu$$

Where:

MHWB = Employee mental health and well-being

WE = Work Environment

JS = Job Satisfaction

SL = Stress Level

AG = Age

GEN = Gender

MS = Marital Status

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The confidentiality of the participants was one of the main ethical considerations in this study. The study made sure that the participants withheld important details that are unique to them or their company. This is to guarantee that there are no data bridges between the company and the employees.

Additionally, a consent form was used to get the respondent's assent before taking part in the research. The consent form also informed the participants that they can stop their participation in the survey at any time if they think their privacy is being violated. The respondents were also informed that their participation should be out of their will as they are not mandated to provide responses to the survey questionnaire.

3.11 Validity and Reliability

Ten respondents with comparable backgrounds to the whole population participated in a pilot survey to verify the research's internal and external validity. The test results were utilized to improve the research questions and online survey questionnaire questions, eliminating any ambiguity and improving clarity for the respondents. Additionally, the online survey questionnaire's questions were adequately supported by academic works to guarantee that they accurately reflected the objectives of the study.

It was possible to attain external validity by applying random sampling procedures. This is to guarantee that each respondent has an equal chance of getting chosen. Additionally, a selection criterion was created using the Central Bank of Nigeria's guidelines for classifying SMEs. The

definition of these criteria previously in this chapter aids in preventing the inclusion of irrelevant material. Finally, in accordance with the Central Limit Theorem, a sample size of more than 30 respondents was employed (Ross 2014).

A test-retest methodology was employed for the reliability test. This entails distributing the questionnaire to various responder groups. It was found that the data obtained had a high degree of stability, indicating increased dependability.

3.12 Limitations of the study

Notwithstanding the thorough approach used in this study, the technique has several peculiarities. The first is the potential for biased responses. Instead of sharing the actual circumstances within their organizations, study participants may give responses that are more acceptable in society. The study cannot completely rule out this constraint, even if various steps were taken to encourage the respondents to offer accurate replies, such as anonymity and secrecy.

Likewise, it is possible for respondents to misunderstand the online survey questionnaire's questions, which might have an impact on their responses and the survey's final outcome. While it is impossible to completely rule out, the pilot survey assisted in re-examining the questions to guarantee clarity.

Lastly, because the study was carried out in Lagos, Nigeria, there may be less room for generalization of the findings to other regions of the nation. Even though Lagos is the nation's economic center, it is crucial to recognize that cultural norms and regional variations might have an impact on the final outcome if the study were to be done in a different location.

3.13 Chapter Summary

This chapter offers in-depth analyses of research-related themes, techniques, strategies, tools, approaches, data gathering methods, and data analysis techniques adopted in achieving this study's objectives. The chapter outlines the selection of a purely quantitative, mono-method technique for this investigation, as well as a positivist philosophical framework. The deductive research approach was adopted and for the time horizon a cross-sectional data was collected for this study. To gather data for the study, an online survey questionnaire which was deployed on Google Form

was utilized. Data analysis consists of two stages: descriptive and inferential (Regression) Analysis. The ethical considerations of the study and the limitations of the study along sides how the limitation was resolved were all highlighted in this chapter of the study.

The next chapter of this study will be presenting the data collected, the analysis, and interpretation of the data, using the descriptive and inferential (regression) methods of data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

For this study, the techniques, procedures, and strategies for gathering data outlined in the previous chapter were applied. Charts, graphs, percentages, and tables are used to display the gathered data. The number of respondents who completed the surveys, turned them in and used for this analysis was 159 in total, according to the research survey questionnaire. Two stages of analysis were performed on the gathered data: descriptive and inferential (regression) analysis.

By analyzing the questionnaire data using tables, percentages, graphs, and charts, the descriptive analysis is used to illustrate the diversity of perspectives among respondents. In the second part of

the analysis, known as inferential (regression) analysis, the study's hypotheses are tested using the statistical tool SPSS version 25, which is designed to analyse data in the social sciences.

The questionnaire respondents were given the following coded response options, before being analyzed using the SPSS: “Strongly Agree” (SA) = 5, “Agree” (A) = 4, “Undecided” (U) = 3, “Disagree” (D) = 2, and “Strongly Disagree” (SD) = 1.

4.1 Descriptive Data Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation

Table 1: Data Showing the Respondent's Bio-Data

Bio Data Variables	Options	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	84	52.8%
	Female	72	45.3%
	Prefer not to say	0	0%
	Others	3	1.9%
Total		158	100%
Age Group	18yrs - 25yrs	51	32.1%
	26yrs - 34yrs	99	41.5%
	35yrs - 44yrs	27	17.0%
	45yrs and above	15	9.4%
Total		159	100%
Marital Status	Single	87	54.7%
	Married	57	35.8%
	Divorced	15	9.5%
Total		159	100%

Source: Online Survey 2024

4.1.0 Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Maximum	Minimum
Gender	0.5535	0.5354	2	0
Age	1.0692	0.9488	3	0
Marital Status	0.6541	0.8929	3	0

Source: Excel Output

Interpretation: The demographics of the participants in the study's online survey on mental health and wellbeing initiatives in the workplace among SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria are shown in table 1 above. The gender distribution is relatively balanced, with a slight predominance of male

respondents (52.8%) compared to female respondents (45.3%). A small percentage of respondents identified as "Others" (1.9%), indicating an inclusive approach to gender identity in the survey.

Regarding age distribution, the majority of respondents fall into the younger age groups, with 32.1% aged bracket 18-25 years and 41.5% aged bracket 26-34 years. This suggests that younger employees are more represented in the survey, which could imply that mental health and well-being initiatives are particularly relevant to this demographic. These younger employees might face unique challenges and stressors affecting their mental health differently than older employees. Meanwhile, those aged 35-44 years (17.0%) and 45 years and above (9.4%) make up a smaller portion of the sample, possibly indicating fewer older employees in the surveyed SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria.

In terms of marital status, a slight majority of respondents are single (54.7%), which might influence their work-life balance needs and stressors. Married individuals constitute 35.8% of the sampled respondents, which might reflect different work-life challenges compared to single respondents. Divorced respondents make up 9.5% of the sampled respondents, highlighting the need for mental health support that addresses diverse life circumstances.

The demographic findings suggest that SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria may need to prioritize the development of welcoming workplaces that cater to employees' individual requirements if they want to retain a diverse and talented workforce. Mental health initiatives should be tailored to the unique challenges faced by younger workers, such as the pressures to maintain a healthy work-life balance and advance in one's career, because this demographic makes up the bulk of the workforce. Additionally, recognizing the life stage differences among employees can help tailor mental health and well-being programs to support individuals with varying family-related stressors and personal life responsibilities. Understanding these demographic distributions can guide SMEs in developing effective mental health and well-being strategies that promote overall employee well-being and productivity in the workplace.

4.1.1 Descriptive Data on Research Question One

Table 2: The work environment in SMEs in Lagos affects their mental health and well-being.

Questions	Work Environment	SA	A	U	D	SD
Q1	My mental health is favourably impacted by my work environment.	30 (18.9%)	60 (37.7%)	24 (15.1%)	30 (18.9%)	15 (9.4%)
Q2	I'm stressed out because of my work environment.	75 (47.2%)	45 (28.3%)	15 (9.4%)	18 (11.3%)	6 (3.8%)
Q3	There is a supportive atmosphere at work.	27 (17.0%)	69 (43.4%)	21 (13.2%)	27 (17.0%)	15 (9.4%)
Q4	The physical design of my workspace encourages wellbeing.	33 (20.8%)	66 (41.5%)	18 (11.3%)	30 (18.9%)	12 (7.5%)
Q5	A good work-life balance is possible in my work environment.	24 (15.1%)	72 (45.3%)	24 (15.1%)	27 (17.0%)	12 (7.5%)

Source: Online Survey 2024

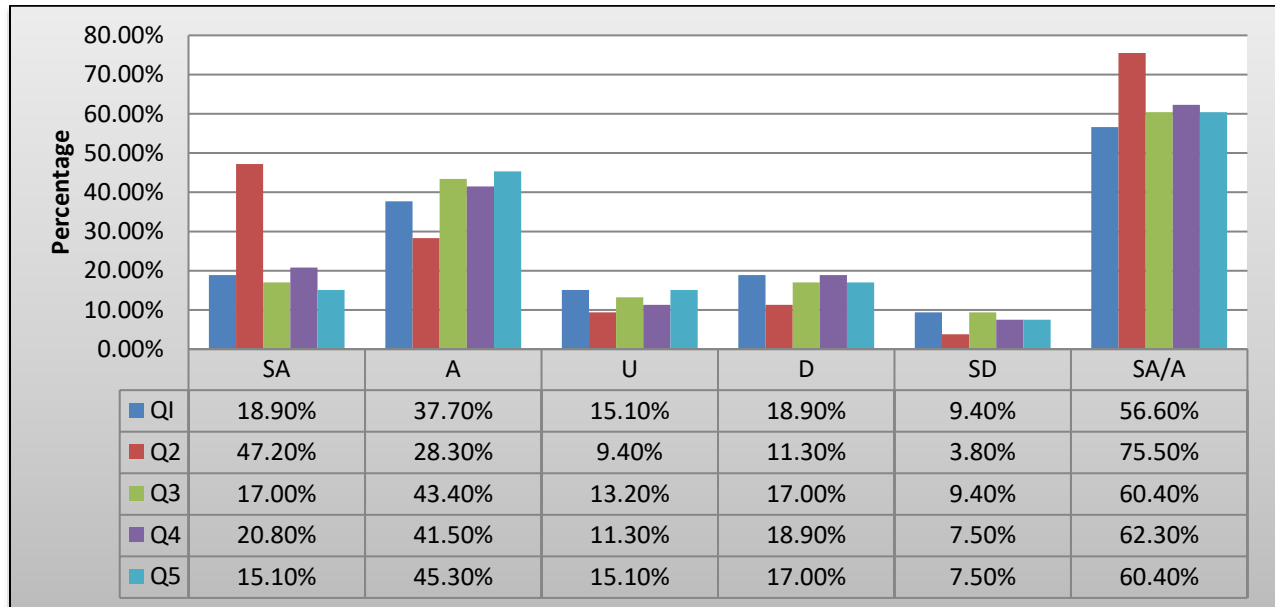


Figure 1: Chart showing responses on how the work environment in SMEs in Lagos affects their mental health and well-being.

4.1.2 Descriptive Data on Research Question Two

Table 3: Relationship between job satisfaction and the mental health and well-being

	Job Satisfaction	SA	A	U	D	SD
Q1	I am happy with my current employment,	36 (22.6%)	60 (37.7%)	21 (13.2%)	27 (17.0%)	15 (9.4%)
Q2	My mental health benefits from my job satisfaction.	45 (28.3%)	54 (34.0%)	24 (15.1%)	21 (13.2%)	15 (9.4%)
Q3	My job dissatisfaction is a major source of stress for me.	60 (37.7%)	51 (32.1%)	18 (11.3%)	18 (11.3%)	12 (7.5%)
Q4	My emotional well-being has improved when I started to feel satisfied with my job.	30 (18.9%)	75 (47.2%)	24 (15.1%)	21 (13.2%)	9 (5.7%)
Q5	Having a fulfilling job allows me to have a good work-life balance.	42 (26.4%)	66 (41.5%)	15 (9.4%)	24 (15.1%)	12 (7.5%)

Source: Online Survey 2024

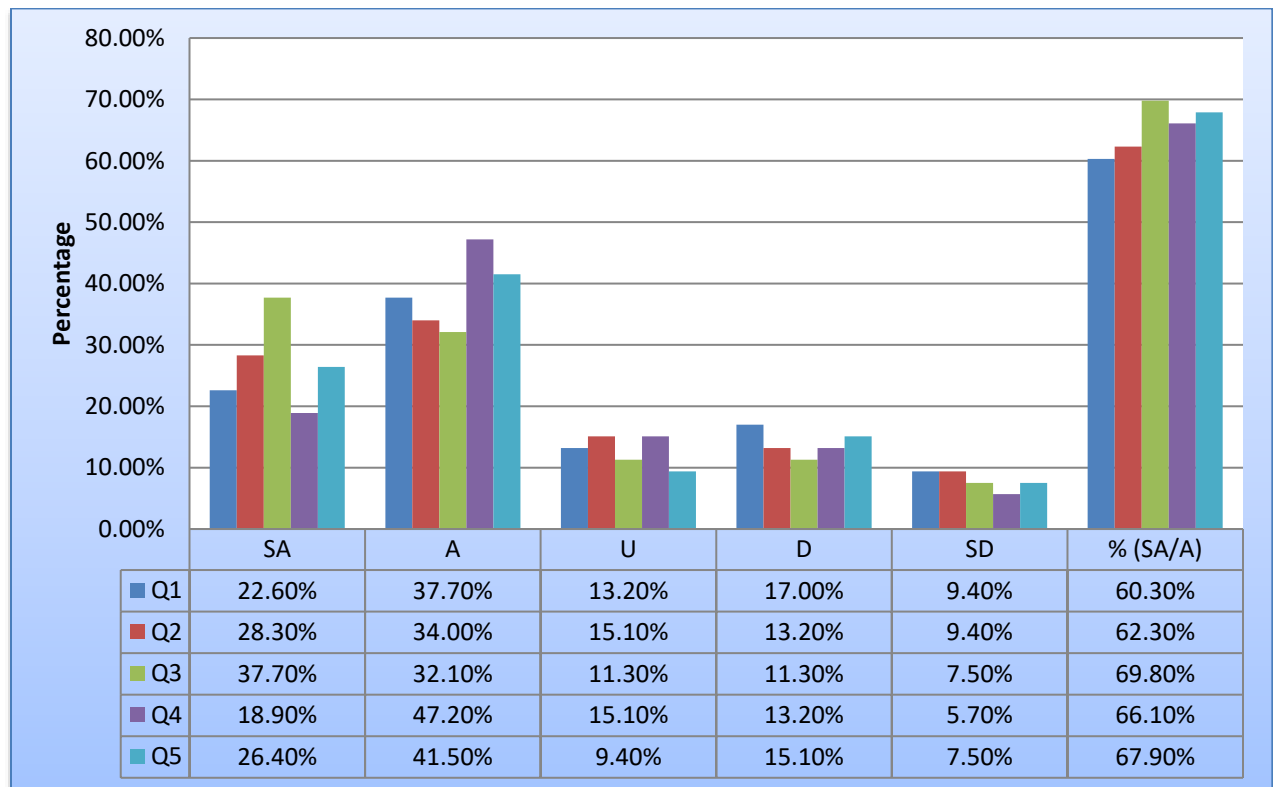


Figure 2: Chart showing responses on the relationship between job satisfaction and employee mental health and well-being in SMEs in Lagos

4.1.3 Descriptive Data on Research Question three

Table 4: Effect of stress levels on employee mental health and well-being in SMEs in Lagos

	Stress Levels	SA	A	U	D	SD
Q1	My mental health is badly impacted by my stress levels.	39 (24.5%)	63 (39.6%)	18 (11.3%)	24 (15.1%)	15 (9.4%)
Q2	Stress at work overwhelms me a lot of the time.	51 (32.1%)	57 (35.8%)	15 (9.4%)	21 (13.2%)	15 (9.4%)
Q3	Enough assistance is available to handle stress at work.	36 (22.6%)	54 (34.0%)	30 (18.9%)	27 (17.0%)	12 (7.5%)
Q4	My performance and work satisfaction are impacted by stress.	45 (28.3%)	69 (43.4%)	15 (9.4%)	18 (11.3%)	12 (7.5%)
Q5	My employer offers tools for stress management.	42 (26.4%)	60 (37.7%)	24 (15.1%)	21 (13.2%)	12 (7.5%)

Source: Online Survey 2024

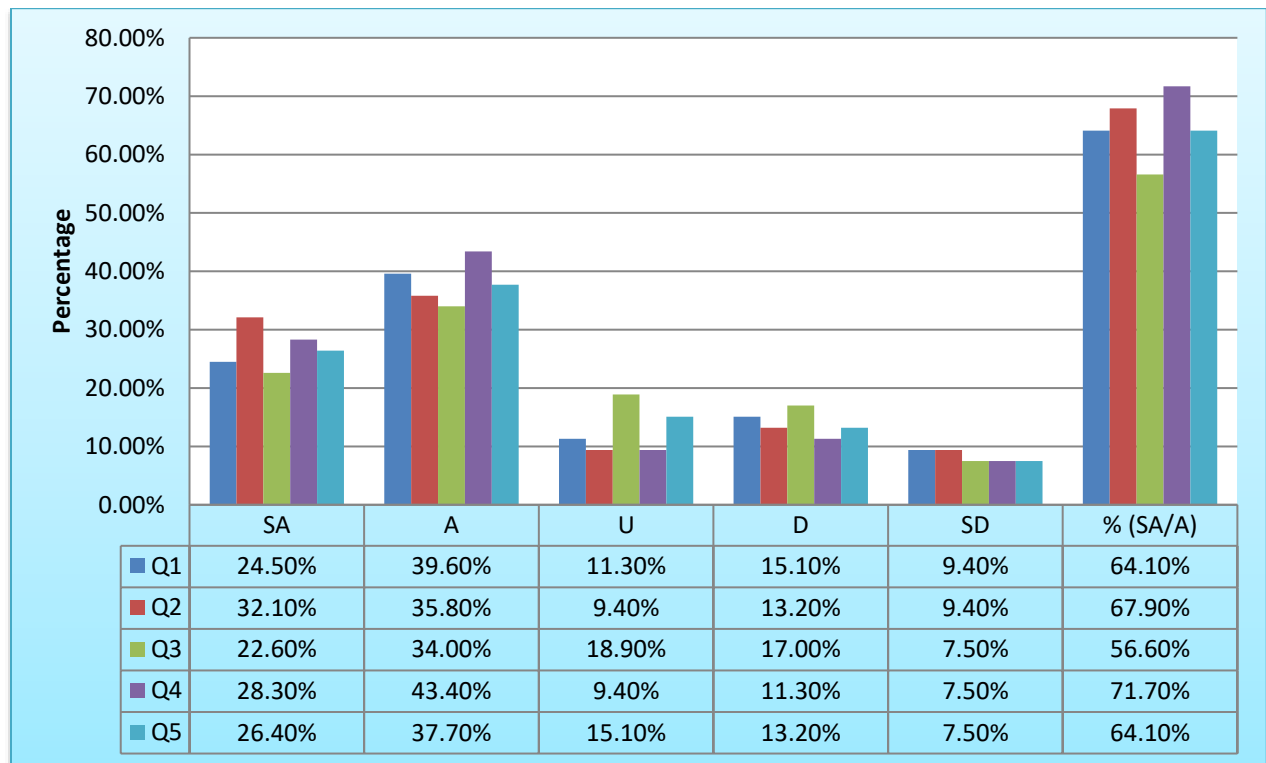


Figure 3: Chart showing responses on the effect of stress levels on employee mental health and well-being in SMEs in Lagos

4.2 Inferential Data Analysis

The research study's hypotheses are tested using the data gathered from the questionnaires. A number of statistical approaches may be employed to examine hypotheses. In this dissertation study, the research hypotheses were analyzed using Microsoft Excel 365. This was used since it was easy to use and could lower residual squares when doing a basic regression.

Decision Rule: The null hypothesis must be accepted, and the alternative hypothesis should be rejected if the p-value is greater than the 0.05 significance threshold applied in this study. Otherwise, the alternative hypothesis should be accepted. The choice rule described earlier will be utilized in the examination and discourse of the research outcomes.

4.2.1 Results for the Test of Hypothesis One

H₁: The work environment has a significant impact on employees' mental health and well-being in SMEs in Lagos.

Table 5: Regression Results for Hypothesis One

SUMMARY OUTPUT

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.9399
R Square	0.883412
Adjusted R Square	0.880384
Standard Error	0.463914
Observations	159

ANOVA

	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	4	251.1335	62.78337	291.7228	9.36E-71
Residual	154	33.14324	0.215216		
Total	158	284.2767			

	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>	
Intercept	-1.45369	0.198979	-7.30576	1.39E-11	-1.84678	-1.06061	-
work Environment	1.083765	0.037129	29.18956	1.21E-64	1.010418	1.157112	1
Age	0.058654	0.046951	1.249262	0.213465	-0.0341	0.151405	
Gender	0.534181	0.072164	7.402306	8.15E-12	0.391621	0.67674	0
Marital Status	0.051743	0.044386	1.165752	0.245517	-0.03594	0.139428	-

4.2.2 Results for the Test of Hypothesis Two

H₂: There is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and the mental health and well-being of employees in SMEs in Lagos.

Table 6: Regression Results for Hypothesis Two

SUMMARY OUTPUT

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.969816
R Square	0.940543
Adjusted R Square	0.938998
Standard Error	0.331294
Observations	159

ANOVA					
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	4	267.3744	66.84359	609.0216	3.02E-93
Residual	154	16.90238	0.109756		
Total	158	284.2767			

	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>	<i>Lower 95.0%</i>
Intercept	0.181894	0.10429	1.744119	0.083134	-0.02413	0.387917	-0.02413
Job Satisfaction	0.966531	0.022664	42.64608	3.5E-87	0.921758	1.011303	0.921758
Age	-0.18177	0.030726	-5.91586	2.06E-08	-0.24247	-0.12107	-0.24247
Gender	0.033129	0.052022	0.636822	0.525186	-0.06964	0.135897	-0.06964
Marital Status	-0.07173	0.03173	-2.26069	0.02518	-0.13442	-0.00905	-0.13442

4.2.3 Results for the Test of Hypothesis Three

H₃: Stress levels are significantly influence of employees' mental health and well-being in SMEs in Lagos.

Table 7: Regression Results for Hypothesis Three

SUMMARY OUTPUT

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.957284
R Square	0.916392
Adjusted R Square	0.914221
Standard Error	0.392856
Observations	159

<i>ANOVA</i>					
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	4	260.509	65.12726	421.9845	7.37E-82
Residual	154	23.76769	0.154336		
Total	158	284.2767			

	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>	<i>Lower 95.0%</i>
Intercept	0.188151	0.124971	1.50556	0.134229	-0.05873	0.435029	-0.05873
Stress Level	0.907492	0.025679	35.33943	8.93E-76	0.856762	0.958221	0.856762
Age	-0.25079	0.035856	-6.99433	7.64E-11	-0.32162	-0.17996	-0.32162
Gender	0.250663	0.061047	4.106086	6.51E-05	0.130066	0.37126	0.130066
Marital Status	-0.12714	0.037753	-3.36773	0.000957	-0.20172	-0.05256	-0.20172

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter of the study, the findings from the previous chapter (chapter four) will be discussed and reviewed. These findings are being discussed, reviewed and cross-referenced with those of previous research on the same or similar topic. Discussing findings would cover the inferential (simple linear regression) findings of this research study covered in the previous chapter four.

5.1 Discussion of Inferential (Simple Linear Regression) Results

5.1.1 Discussion of Findings from Table Five

The results of the regression analysis in Table 5 of chapter four are the test results of this study's first hypothesis, which examines whether work environment has a significant impact on employee's mental health and well-being in SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria. The test of hypotheses one result presented in table 5 reported a R statistics value of 0.939, which indicates a moderate to high positive relationship (about 93.9%), linking the work environment of an employee's place of employment to their mental health and well-being.

The hypothesis one test result in table 5 further reported an R-Square (coefficient of determination) statistics value of 0.883, which indicates that work environment explains 88.3% of the variation in employee's mental health and wellbeing; however, additional variables, not included in the model, may account for remaining 21.7% of the variation. Considering the number of predictors (constant) in the model, the Adjusted R Square comes out to be a statistical value of 0.880. With an adjusted R-squared value of about 88%, work environment explains a considerable amount of the variance in employee's mental health and wellbeing. The model's standard error statistics is 0.463.

A substantial ($p = 0.001$) F-value of 291.723 and a regression sum of squares of 251.134 from the ANOVA results lend credence to the model's significance. With such a low p-value, it is clear that the work environment has a significant impact on employee's mental health and well-being in SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria.

The p-value for the test of hypothesis one is 0.000 (1.21E-64 as contained in the excel result), which is significantly lower than the 0.05 threshold for statistical significance. This provides strong evidence that the model is statistically significant. Consequently, we accept the alternative hypothesis and reject the null hypothesis. This highlights the significance of establishing a friendly and helpful work environment in order to enhance employee well-being, since the test result of hypotheses one shows that work environments in SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria significantly impacts employees' mental health and overall welfare. This is present study's findings is in support of what Heeley (2024) study found: that small businesses can improve their performance, satisfaction, and productivity by creating a favourable work environment and implementing regulations that help their employees. Similarly, Oluwafunmi et. al., (2024) highlighted the importance of ongoing assessment, feedback systems, and advancements in mental health programs in order to establish work environments that prioritize the overall welfare of their employees. The research focuses on how the work environment impacts on employee's mental health and wellbeing, most importantly with the limitation of resource for mental health and wellbeing initiatives.

Monteiro and Joseph (2023) research findings further established that positive work environment cultures that support mental health and wellbeing can have beneficial effects on employees' mental performance and productivity. Poor work-life balance, high job expectations, inadequate policies, unsupportive leadership, and a lack of social support are all signs of an unproductive work environment. A positive work environment that brings about positive mental health and wellbeing, resulting to increase in employee productivity can be achieved through reasonable workloads, opportunities for training and development, relationships among colleagues, attractive incentives, and supervisor support (Abdul, 2015). According to Akinyele (2010) work environment issues are often leading to low employee productivity.

Taking everything into account, the result indicates that while working in SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria has its benefits, there are also significant problems with stress, a lack of comprehensive assistance, and work-life balance due to the work environment. Staff retention, output, and job satisfaction may all rise by resolving these issues. Heeley (2024) argues that a more positive work environment can have a multiplicative effect on productivity, retention, and morale. A positive impact on employee well-being can be achieved with a strong emphasis on work environment. A number of studies have shown that encouraging employees to take pride in their work, celebrating their

achievements, and acknowledging their contributions can go a long way toward making the work environment a more pleasant and supportive place to be (Das and Pattanayak 2023; Koon and Ho 2021; Walsh and Arnold 2020).

5.1.2 Discussion of Findings from Table Six

The second hypothesis, which examined the relationship between job satisfaction and the mental health and well-being of employees in SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria, was represented by the regression findings in Table 6. From the table 6, the R has a statistical value is 0.969, suggesting that there is a significant positive relationship (about 96.9%) between employees' mental health and well-being and job satisfaction.

The results presented in the table further revealed that with a coefficient of determination (R Square) of 0.9405, job satisfaction accounts for 94.05% of the variation in employees' mental health and well-being. There are additional possible explanations for the remaining 5.95%, which are not covered by the model. The Adjusted R Square statistical value is 0.0939, meaning that job satisfaction continues to explain a significant 93.9% of the variance in employees' mental health and well-being even after taking into consideration the number of factors in the model. The model's standard error statistics is 0.331.

With a regression sum of squares of 267.374 and an F-value of 609.022, which is statistically significant ($p = 0.000$), the ANOVA findings support the model's relevance. The substantial relationship between job satisfaction and the mental health and well-being of employees is indicated by the low p-value.

Since the p-value for the second hypothesis is 0.000 (3.5E-87, as reported in the Excel output), which is far lower than the significance criterion of 0.05, we can conclude that it is very significant statistically. Consequently, we accept the alternative hypothesis and reject the null hypothesis. As a result, it is clear that increasing job satisfaction can have a positive effect on employees' mental health and overall well-being, which is especially important for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Lagos, Nigeria. The study conducted by Karim et al. (2013) sheds light on the areas that require improvement in order to decrease stress and promote job satisfaction. It demonstrates that there is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and mental health and

well-being. The research by Karim et al. (2013) further showed that grief, social isolation, and job dissatisfaction all go hand in hand with mental health complications. Furthermore, women in the workforce report higher levels of job satisfaction than men. This agrees with the findings of the study by Lu et al. (2022), which show that creative activity and work engagement have a good effect on employee mental health and job performance. The connection between creative behaviour, mental health, work engagement, and job success is strengthened by these findings, which also enhance our understanding of mental health in relation to the job satisfaction, productivity and growing economy.

This study's findings on the relationship between job satisfaction and the mental health and well-being, lines up with the findings of Faragher et al. (2014), who found that employees job satisfaction had a significant impact on the health of employees. When it comes to the mental health of workers in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), Muhammad and Azlan (2023) stress the significance of connections and continuous work and learning opportunities, especially in crisis situations. Improved mental health and well-being among employees, along with job satisfaction, should be a priority for small and medium-sized business owners and managers looking to make the most of their people resources in growing markets.

5.1.3 Discussion of Findings from Table Seven

The third hypothesis, which looks at how stress levels affect employees' mental health and well-being in SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria, is represented by the regression findings in Table 7. The hypothesis's R correlation value is 0.9573, suggesting a robust relationship (about 95.7%) between stress levels and the mental health and well-being of employees.

With a coefficient of determination (R Square) of 0.9164, stress levels account for 91.6% of the variation in employees' mental health and well-being. Other factors that are not accounted for in the model may account for the remaining 8.4%. The Adjusted R Square value is 0.9142, meaning that stress levels continue to explain a significant 91.4% of the variance in employees' mental health and well-being even after taking the number of factors in the model into consideration. The model's standard error statistics is 0.393.

With a regression sum of squares of 260.509 and an F-value of 421.985, which is statistically significant ($p = 0.000$), the ANOVA findings provide additional evidence for the model's significance. The substantial relationship between stress levels and the mental health and well-being of employees is indicated by the low p-value.

Finally, the third hypothesis has a p-value of 0.000 (8.93E-76, as reported in the Excel output), which is far lower than the critical 0.05. Indicating that the model is highly significant statistically. Consequently, we accept the alternative hypothesis and reject the null hypothesis. There is a clear need for stress management approaches to promote worker welfare, as this indicates that the level of stress that SMEs' employees in Lagos experience significantly impacts their mental health and wellbeing. Chen et al. (2022) found that stress on the job had a negative impact on both the mental health of employees and their performance. Additionally, they highlighted the ways in which servant leadership may foster a supportive environment inside SMEs and lessen the negative effects of stress on employees. According to Bakker et. al., (2022), a high employment expectations and inadequate control over work are two major factors that negatively impact mental health. Based on Bakker et. al., (2022) suggestions, fostering strong leadership and clear communication could help reduce stress in the workplace and improve employee wellness.

The results for the third hypothesis testing reveal that stress have an impact on people's mental health and wellbeing, demonstrating how important it is for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Lagos State, Nigeria to create stress-reduction programs and support networks for their employees. Large corporations often implement beneficial measures such employee support programs, stress management, and mental health literacy (Conard, 2019). Managers and owners of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) rarely use these tactics, and they could be challenging to apply in SMEs (De Angelis et al., 2020).

5.2 Chapter Summary

This chapter effectively presented the discussions of the descriptive and inferential findings of the dissertation study with a cross-reference to previous research that was examined for this research study. The study's summary of findings, recommendations, and conclusion are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.0 Introduction

The dissertation study's summary of its findings, recommendations, and conclusion are presented in this chapter.

6.1 Summary of Findings

Based on the regression results of this research study, the following are the summary of findings that:

- i. The work environment has a significant impact on employees' mental health and well-being in SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria, since the p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$ level of significant, the model is statistically significant.
- ii. There is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and the mental health and well-being of employees in SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria, since the p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$ level of significant, the model is statistically significant.
- iii. Stress levels are significantly influence of employees' mental health and well-being in SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria, since the p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$ level of significant, the model is statistically significant.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the above findings of this dissertation study, the following recommendations were made to SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria:

- i. SMEs should concentrate on developing a friendly and inclusive work environment by enhancing physical spaces, encouraging work-life balance, and increasing communication, given the enormous influence that the work environment has on employee mental health and well-being in SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria.
- ii. SMEs should put tactics to increase job satisfaction into practice, such as rewarding employee accomplishments, providing possibilities for career growth, and guaranteeing equitable

remuneration, since there is a substantial correlation between job satisfaction and employee mental health and well-being.

- iii. Since stress levels have a substantial impact on employees' mental health and wellbeing, SMEs should implement stress management initiatives, give employees access to mental health services, and promote a work-life balance culture in order to assist employees in effectively managing stress.

6.3 Limitations of the study

The major limitation of this study was the collection of data, as the researcher was in a different country while having to collect data from Nigeria. This study was able to overcome this limitation by deploying the study research questionnaire on Google Form and links to the questionnaire sent to the Lagos representative of the Nigerian government agency in charge of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is SMEDAN. SMEDAN then sent the Google Form link to employees of SMEs in Lagos Nigeria.

This study findings is as well limited to SMEs in Lagos state, Nigeria as this was the area covered by the study. A further study could be done to evaluation of mental health and well-being initiatives in the workplace: case study of SMEs in other states in Nigeria.

6.4 Conclusion

This research study was successful in the evaluation of mental health and well-being initiatives in the workplace: case study of SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria. The study adopted the positivism research philosophy, quantitative data, collected primary data via online survey questionnaire deployed on Google Form, and analyzed the data gathered using Microsoft excel to perform the regression analysis. Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that there are numbers of variables that have a significant relationship and impact on employee's mental health and wellbeing. The fact that the p-value is statistically significant suggests that the work environment is important and that improving it might have a positive effect on employee health. Improving job satisfaction may also have a beneficial effect on employees' mental health, as there is a strong correlation between the variables. Furthermore, stress has negative

effects on workers' mental health, which highlights the need for stress management programs in SMEs to enhance worker well-being and productivity.

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SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A

Bio-Data

1. Gender
Male
Female
Prefer not to say
Others
2. Age
18yrs – 25yrs
26yrs – 34yrs
35yrs – 44yrs
45yrs and above
3. Marital Status
Single
Married
Divorced

Section B

4. How would you rate the state of your mental health and wellbeing on a scale of 1-5 (where 1 is the worst and 5 is the best)?
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
 - e. 5
5. On a scale of 1-5, kindly rate the state of the workplace work environment (where 1 is the worst and 5 is the best).

- a. 1
- b. 2
- c. 3
- d. 4
- e. 5

6. Rate your level of job satisfaction at your workplace on a scale of 1-5 (where 1 is not satisfied and 5 very satisfied).

- a. 1
- b. 2
- c. 3
- d. 4
- e. 5

7. How would you rate the level of stress at your place of work on a scale of 1-5 (where 1 is low stress and 5 high stress).

- a. 1
- b. 2
- c. 3
- d. 4
- e. 5

Section C

Kindly, indicate the extent to which you agree to the following statements, (where SA is strongly agree; A is Agreed; U is Undecided; D is Disagreed; SD is Strongly Disagreed)

Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD
My mental health is favourably impacted by my work environment.					
I'm stressed out because of my work environment.					
There is a supportive atmosphere at work.					
The physical design of my workspace encourages wellbeing.					
A good work-life balance is possible in my work environment.					

Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD
I am happy with my current employment,					
My mental health benefits from my job satisfaction.					
My job dissatisfaction is a major source of stress for me.					
My emotional well-being has improved when I started to feel satisfied with my job.					
Having a fulfilling job allows me to have a good work-life balance.					

Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD
My mental health is badly impacted by my stress levels.					
Stress at work overwhelms me a lot of the time.					
Enough assistance is available to handle stress at work.					
My performance and work satisfaction are impacted by stress.					
My employer offers tools for stress management.					

The End

Thank You

Microsoft Excel Simple Linear Regression Output

SUMMARY OUTPUT

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.9399
R Square	0.883412
Adjusted R Square	0.880384
Standard Error	0.463914
Observations	159

ANOVA

	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	4	251.1335	62.78337	291.7228	9.36E-71
Residual	154	33.14324	0.215216		
Total	158	284.2767			

	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>	
Intercept	-1.45369	0.198979	-7.30576	1.39E-11	-1.84678	-1.06061	-
work Environment	1.083765	0.037129	29.18956	1.21E-64	1.010418	1.157112	1
Age	0.058654	0.046951	1.249262	0.213465	-0.0341	0.151405	
Gender	0.534181	0.072164	7.402306	8.15E-12	0.391621	0.67674	0
Marital Status	0.051743	0.044386	1.165752	0.245517	-0.03594	0.139428	-

SUMMARY OUTPUT

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.969816
R Square	0.940543
Adjusted R Square	0.938998
Standard Error	0.331294
Observations	159

<i>ANOVA</i>					
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	4	267.3744	66.84359	609.0216	3.02E-93
Residual	154	16.90238	0.109756		
Total	158	284.2767			

	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>	<i>Lower 95.0%</i>
Intercept	0.181894	0.10429	1.744119	0.083134	-0.02413	0.387917	-0.02413
Job Satisfaction	0.966531	0.022664	42.64608	3.5E-87	0.921758	1.011303	0.921758
Age	-0.18177	0.030726	-5.91586	2.06E-08	-0.24247	-0.12107	-0.24247
Gender	0.033129	0.052022	0.636822	0.525186	-0.06964	0.135897	-0.06964
Marital Status	-0.07173	0.03173	-2.26069	0.02518	-0.13442	-0.00905	-0.13442

SUMMARY OUTPUT

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.957284
R Square	0.916392
Adjusted R Square	0.914221
Standard Error	0.392856
Observations	159

<i>ANOVA</i>					
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	4	260.509	65.12726	421.9845	7.37E-82
Residual	154	23.76769	0.154336		
Total	158	284.2767			

	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>	<i>Lower 95.0%</i>
Intercept	0.188151	0.124971	1.50556	0.134229	-0.05873	0.435029	-0.05873
Stress Level	0.907492	0.025679	35.33943	8.93E-76	0.856762	0.958221	0.856762
Age	-0.25079	0.035856	-6.99433	7.64E-11	-0.32162	-0.17996	-0.32162
Gender	0.250663	0.061047	4.106086	6.51E-05	0.130066	0.37126	0.130066
Marital Status	-0.12714	0.037753	-3.36773	0.000957	-0.20172	-0.05256	-0.20172