

# WORK AND STRESS AMONG ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATORS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN DELTA STATE

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## Abstract

The study identified the sources and level of stress and how academic administrators of tertiary institutions in Delta State of Nigeria handle job related stress. The sample of 102 respondents comprised 68 Heads of Academic Departments, 17 Directors and 17 Deans of Faculties was selected from a population of 141 academic administrators in five institutions of higher learning based on stratified proportional random sampling technique. A questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The results showed that the determinants of stress among the administrators are numerous and varied, with compilation of results, time pressures, lack of infrastructure, overseeing the conduct of semester examinations, students indiscipline and the prevalence of all forms of examination malpractices among students as very high ranked stressors. The findings also revealed that the administrators experienced on the average a low to moderate level of stress and this did not negatively affect their performance. Physical exercise, relaxation, prayers, listening to music, talking positively to self and meeting with others are the strategies dominantly utilized by the academic administrators in coping with stress.

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**Keywords:** Work, Stress, Higher education, academic administrators

## Introduction

Stress as a concept has become a word not only used in physics, medicine, psychology and management sciences but also in educational administration. This can be attributed to the fact that as academic administrators carry out their day-to-day activities, they

do come to experience opportunities or threats they perceive so critical that they feel they might not be able to handle or deal with effectively. This situation may create a feeling of physical, psychological, mental, emotional and sometimes spiritual tension that threatens their ability to cope with these challenges, problems or opportunities associated with the job.

Stress is virtually impossible to avoid. For instance, Yamauchi (1986) expressed the view that stress is a very natural and important part of life and that without stress there would be no life at all. Selye (1981), a foremost writer in stress, put it poignantly when he stated that complete freedom from stress is death and that we all need stress but definitely not too much stress for too long.

Stress knows no barriers. The rich and the poor, women and men, the old and young, the employed and unemployed, paid and unpaid and every job has moments of stress. It is little wonder then that the 1992 United Nations Report called Stress the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Epidemic, and the World Health Organization referred to job stress as a “World Wide Epidemic”. It is not surprising, therefore when Mirella (1993) described stress as the Big S of the 1990s. This author believes that stress is still a big S in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In the developed world, so much work has been done in the area of stress, and organizations have begun to create work environments that will help reduce health risks of work stress. For instance, a 1998 survey by the families and Work institute found that 26 percent of workers in the United States said they were “often or very often” burned out or stressed by their work and this often negatively affected their work performance. In the U.S., the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health reports that stress related disorders are fast becoming the most prevalent reason for workers disability and that 40% of workers turnover is due to job stress.

Besides, job stress is estimated to cost American industries over 200 billion dollars annually as assessed by absenteeism, diminished productivity, employee turnover, accidents, direct medical, legal and insurance fees, workman’s compensation awards (Burns and Burns, 1996; Lee, 1997). Humphrey (1999), based on the Confederation to British Industry (CBI) statistics from the 1998 sickness and absence accounts, estimated the cost of stress-related absence to be over seven billion pounds. This did not include cost of poor productivity due to stress related illnesses.

Most of the studies in United States, Britain and Canada are conducted in the industries. Some of the sources of stress identified include work overload and work underload in terms of quality, quantity and speed, uncomfortable working conditions, meeting too many

deadlines, poor interpersonal relationships, role ambiguity, role conflict, leader behaviour, under or overpromotion, lack of job security, and overly restrictive work rules (Fadia, 1995; George and Jones, 1999; Mulins, 1996; Cooper and Straw, 1998; Mindtools, 2004).

In the education sector, a number of studies have been conducted on stress. For instance, a study by Kuehn (1990) revealed that more than 25% of teachers reported having high stress levels in certain provinces, including the province of British Columbia in Canada. King and Peart (1992) in their study reported that 55% of teachers in Canada reported feeling exhausted at the end of the day naturally. Ling (1991) conducted a study of occupational stress among Hong Kong aided secondary school teachers and found that the teaching profession in Hong Kong is highly stressful and this in turn negatively affected their teaching effectiveness.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Cases of stress are not restricted to the Americas, Europe and East Asia. In Africa, cases of stress have also been reported among workers. In Nigeria, for example, few studies on occupational stress have been conducted on teachers (Okebukola and Jegede, 1989, 1992; Famojuro, 1988; Ekpo, 1988; Omorogie, 1998). While Adeoye (1991) examined correlates of job stress among professors in two Universities in Nigeria, Salami (1995) investigated the sources and symptoms of stress among lecturers in two Colleges of Education and a Polytechnic in Kwara State.

At the tertiary level in Nigeria, only very few studies have been conducted on work performance and job stress among academic administrators. One only of such studies was Bamisaiye (1993) who investigated how educational administrators are coping with crisis, stress and tension. His study revealed that higher educational administrators starting from the head of department (HOD) to the Chief executive are being subjected to stress and tension and this stress negatively affected their job performance.

The position of the HOD is a very important one as it is the basic academic unit in the University. The occupant is usually a very busy person with variety of duties, some of which are complex and sometimes conflicting. The duties, for instance, include academic governance, instruction, staff and student affairs, external communications, budgeting, resources and office management and staff development. The academic administrators, are therefore, more vulnerable to stress than lecturers because they find themselves not only doing those things lecturers are expected to do – teach, research, publish, and extension

services, but more. The result is that they experience more work overload, role conflict, role ambiguity, numerous deadlines and numerous meetings and so on.

This study is on Delta State of Nigeria. The above potentially stressful situations are even further compounded by the fact that as a young State the occupants of most academic units in the institutions of higher learning in the State are relatively young in age, lack appropriate academic qualifications and professional experience. As relatively new State, there is an ever increasing demand for places by the indigenes in the State tertiary institutions. The result is that most academic programmes and departments have been over subscribed in terms of admission with out corresponding growth in facilities. These factors are not only capable of causing stress but are a major determinant of the level of stress which has been found to affect job performance (Lee, 2002). When academic administrators do not perform their statutory responsibilities effectively because of stress, the management of their academic units suffers. Similarly, academic excellence could be negatively affected. But what are the major determinants and level of stress, and how academic administrators in higher education deal with job stress or un-stress themselves in Delta State, is not quite known.

The purpose of this study, therefore, was to identify the sources and determine the level of stress and the coping strategies often utilized in combating job stress by academic administrators in the tertiary institutions in Delta State of Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

Four research questions were raised to guide the study as follows:

1. What are the sources of job stress that have impacted on the academic administrators' work performance? How do they rank?
2. What are the perceived levels of stress caused by the academic administrator's job stressors?
3. How do academic administrators react when they are experiencing work stress? How do they rank?
4. What are the coping strategies often utilized by academic administrators when they experience work stress? How do they rank?

### **Significance of the Study**

The results have revealed the main sources and level of stress being experienced by the majority of academic administrators in tertiary institutions of learning in Delta State. The recognition of these facts would enable the appropriate authorities take the necessary

intervention steps to reduce the job stressors and level of stress and the negative consequences associated with them, particularly among those who said they were under much and extreme stress. This would help academic administrators to adopt appropriate coping mechanisms and control stressors so that they would find and operate at a level that is most comfortable to them and this will enable them to be more productive, effective and efficient in the performance of their duties.

### **Method and Procedure**

This study was an analytical survey with an ex-post facto design in nature. According to information obtained from the academic sections of the registry divisions of the five institutions of higher learning in Delta State, there were 94 academic heads of departments, 23 deans of faculties and 24 directors of academic departments. The population of study, therefore, comprised 141 academic administrators. The sample of 102 respondents which represented 72% of the population consisted of 68 heads of academic departments, 17 directors of academic programmes, and 17 deans of faculties. The sample was based on proportional random sampling method, whereby 72% of the respondents were selected from each of the three categories of academic administrators.

An instrument titled “Job-Related Stressors and Stress Management Techniques of Academic Administrators Questionnaire” (JSSTACQ) was developed and used to obtain data from the respondents on the sources, level and stress coping strategies. The instrument has high content validity and a test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.82. The research instrument was personally administered on the respondents and retrieved from them. This ensured a high percentage return of the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics – frequency, percentage and mean, were used to analyse the data.

### **Analysis**

The analysis of data has been structured according to the specific research questions. Of the 102 questionnaires administered, 95 were retrieved representing 93% returns but 91 were usable. Analysis of the 91 usable questionnaires showed 87 (85.6%) were married, males (80) represented 87.9% while females represented 12.1%.

### **Research Question 1**

What are the sources of job stress that have impact on the academic administrators’ work performance? How do they rank?

S/N	STRESSOR							RANK ORDERS
		2	3	4	5	F	%	
1.	Compilation of students' results	19(21%)	20(22%)	26(29%)	15(16%)	80	88	1st
2.	Time pressures (too many deadlines)	12(13%)	29(32%)	19(21%)	19(21%)	79	87	2nd
3.	Lack of adequate infrastructure	14(15%)	24(26%)	22(24%)	19(21%)	79	87	2nd
4.	Examination malpractices among students	22(24%)	20(22%)	26(29%)	9(10%)	77	85	4th
5.	Overseeing the conduct of semester examinations	21(23%)	23(25%)	22(24%)	8(9%)	74	81	5th
6.	Students indiscipline	17(19%)	26(29%)	25(28%)	6(7%)	74	81	5th
7.	Failure of staff to perform their duties	14(15%)	25(28%)	27(30%)	7(8%)	73	80	7th
8.	Managing staff (people)	33(36%)	28(30%)	9(10%)	2(2%)	72	79	8th
9.	Demand of official work on private life	19(21%)	30(33%)	10(10%)	12(13%)	71	78	9th
10.	Make overload (work overload)	12(13%)	28(31%)	21(23%)	10(11%)	71	78	9th
11.	Making changes/decisions that affect me without my knowledge or involvement	15(17%)	24(26%)	19(21%)	9(10%)	67	74	11th
12.	Conflict between academic responsibilities and administrative roles	20(22%)	25(28%)	14(15%)	7(8%)	66	73	12th
13.	Overlapping responsibilities	24(26%)	28(31%)	11(12%)	3(3%)	66	73	12th

14.	Taking work home	32(35%)	18(20%)	7(8%)	9(10%)	66	73	12th
15.	Difficult tasks	18(20%)	20(22%)	13(14%)	14(15%)	65	72	15th
16.	Multiple decisions that must be made quickly	20(22%)	28(31%)	9(10%)	8(9%)	65	72	15th
17.	Office politics	23(25%)	23(25%)	15(17%)	4(4%)	65	71	17th
18.	Others demand for my time at work	25(28%)	28(31%)	7(8%)	5(6%)	65	71	17th
19.	Relationship with students	26(29%)	16(18%)	17(19%)	3(3%)	62	68	19th
20.	Inadequate teaching staff	18(20%)	22(24%)	14(15%)	7(8%)	61	67	20th
21.	Promotion prospects	16(18%)	28(31%)	10(11%)	7(8%)	61	67	20th
22.	Lack of advancement in organization	17(19%)	21(23%)	18(20%)	4(4%)	60	66	22nd
23.	Lack of management support	25(28%)	19(21%)	14(15%)	2(2%)	60	66	22nd
24.	Poor management style of administration	22(24%)	16(18%)	15(17%)	5(6%)	60	66	22nd
25.	Obnoxious policies of the institution	16(18%)	20(22%)	13(14%)	10(11%)	59	65	23rd
26.	Lack of needed information to carry on one's job	18(20%)	11(12%)	20(22%)	10(11%)	59	65	23rd
27.	Conflicting procedures	17(19%)	21(23%)	15(17%)	4(4%)	57	63	25th
28.	Getting feedback only when my performance is unsatisfactory	16(18%)	16(18%)	16(18%)	8(9%)	56	62	28th
29.	Not knowing what people you work with	22(24%)	22(24%)	9(10%)	2(2%)	55	60	29th

	expect of you							
30.	Lack of power and influence	24(26%)	16(18%)	9(10%)	6(7%)	55	60	29th
31.	Doing official things that are against your judgment	23(25%)	16(18%)	12(15%)	3(3%)	54	59	31st
32.	Relationships with subordinates	30(33%)	19(21%)	5 (6%)	0(0%)	54	59	31st

In order to answer the above research question, a list of specific sources of stress were provided and the respondents were requested to indicate in a five point Likert-type scale, the number that best reflected the degree to which the particular statement was a source of stress for them at work.

- 1 = Not a source of stress
- 2 = A source of little stress
- 3 = A source of moderate stress
- 4 = A source of much stress
- 5 = Most often a source of extreme stress.

Frequency and percentage were used to analyse the data. Items in which more than 59% of the respondents indicated “not a source of stress” were so considered as not being a stressor. Any item where more than 60% indicated as “a source of little, or moderate, or much and most often a source of extreme stress” was considered as a source of stress by virtue of the overwhelming majority so indicating it as a source of stress.

Presented in Table 1 are frequencies, percentages and rank order of the sources of stress among academic administrators. The result revealed that of the thirty (30) stressors identified, the stressor of compilation of students’ results ranked highest with a percentage of 88. This was closely followed by time pressures and lack of adequate infrastructure tying in the second place with a percentage score of 87. In fourth position was examination malpractice among students with a percentage score of 85. At the bottom of the rank order were two potential sources of stress tying with a percentage score of 59 but were not considered stressors among academic administrators. These sources were; doing official things that are against one’s judgment and poor relationships with subordinates.

Table 1: Frequencies and Percentages of Sources of Stress Of Academic Administrators

N = 91 and Rank Order

### Research Question 2:

What is the perceived level of stress experienced by academic administrators in the performance of their duties?

Table 2: Overall Level of Stress of Academic Administrators N = 91

Level of Stress	F	%	(X) $\bar{X}$	SD
Mild	37	40.77	1.791	.796
Moderate	39	42.9		
Much	12	13.2		
Extreme	3	3.2		
Total	91	100		

An inspection of Table 2 showed that all respondents reported some degree of stress. Thirty-seven (40.77%) of the respondents stated they experienced mild stress, 39 (42.9%) moderate stress, 12 (13.2%) much stress and 3 (3.2%) experienced extreme stress. With a mean (X) of 1.8 and standard deviation of .80, 84% of academic administrators of institutions of higher learning in Delta State experienced a low moderate level of stress in the performance of their responsibilities.

### Research Question 3:

How do academic administrators react when they experience intense job stress? How do they rank?

Shown in Table 3 are the frequencies and percentages of responses of the reactions of academic administrators to stress. These reactions have also been rank ordered in the table. The result of the analysis showed that having boundless energy (being very active) ranked highest as a reaction to stress by respondents with a percentage score of 66. Feeling exhilarated ranked 7<sup>th</sup> out of a total of 7 reactions with a percentage score of 52.

Table 3: Frequency of Responses of the Reaction of Academic Administrators to Stress

N = 91

S/NO	RESPONSES	NA	AS	AMT	F	%	RANKI
					A	A	NG
1.	Having boundless energy (being very active)	31(34%)	41(45%)	19(21%)	60	66	1st

2.	Lateness to important appointments	33(36%) )	52(57%) )	6(7%)	58	64	2nd
3.	Missing of important appointments	34(37%) )	51(56%) )	6(7%)	57	63	3rd
4.	Achieving far more work than usual (hard work)	35(39%) )	43(47%) )	13(14%)	56	61	4th
5.	Responds quickly to demands placed on one	37(41%) )	25(27%) )	29(32%)	54	59	5th
6.	Difficulty in concentrating on what one is doing	42(46%) )	24(26%) )	25(27%)	49	54	6th
7.	Feeling exhilarated	44(48%) )	42(46%) )	5(6%)	47	52	7th

KEY: NA = Not Applicable response

AS = Applicable Sometimes response

AMT = Applicable Most of the Time response

A = Applicable response (AS + AMT responses)

#### Research Question 4:

What are the stress coping strategies often utilized by academic administrators when they experience stress in their performance? How do they rank?

In order to address this research question, the respondents were requested to respond to a number of stress management strategies, indicating whether they do not use the method, or use it occasionally or frequently. Those who indicated that they used a particular strategy either occasionally or frequently were grouped together to indicate a “used” strategy. Table 4 shows seventeen useable stress coping strategies. Of these, taking off time for personal interest ranked the highest with a percentage score of 85. This was closely followed by the strategy of adequate sleep with a percentage score of 84 and in third position in stress management technique of setting realistic goals for oneself. At the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> positions are strategies rarely adopted by administrators to cope with stress. These three strategies are increased smoking getting angry, and telling at someone and drinking alcohol excessively. These three negative approaches and are adopted by a very few academic administrators.

Table 4: Frequency of Stress Management Strategies often Adopted by Academic Administrators N = 91 and Rank Order

S/N	COPING STRATEGY	NOT USED	OCCASION ALLY USED	FREQUEN TLY USED	NO. WHO USE STRATE GY	% OF THOSE WHO USED STRATE GY	RAN K
1.	Taking off time for personal interest	14(15%)	51(56%)	26(29%)	77	85	1 <sup>st</sup>
2.	Adequate Sleep	15(16%)	40(44%)	36(40%)	76	84	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3.	Setting realistic goals and standards for oneself	16(18%)	36(40%)	39(43%)	75	82	3 <sup>rd</sup>
4.	Talking positively to self/positive thinking	18(20%)	39(43%)	34(37%)	72	80	4 <sup>th</sup>
5.	Prayers	19(21%)	35(38%)	37(41%)	72	79	5 <sup>th</sup>
6.	Removing oneself from the stressful situation	19(21%)	46(50%)	26(29%)	72	79	5 <sup>th</sup>
7.	Balanced diet	20(22%)	42(46%)	29(32%)	71	78	7 <sup>th</sup>
8.	Keeping busy/hard work	21(23%)	46(50%)	24(27%)	70	77	8 <sup>th</sup>
9.	Avoid scheduling too	21(23%)	44(48%)	26(29%)	70	77	8 <sup>th</sup>

	many appointments						
10	Relaxation/listening to music	21(23%)	42(46%)	28(31%)	70	77	8 <sup>th</sup>
11	Reflection/meditation	27(30%)	38(42%)	26(29%)	64	70	11 <sup>th</sup>
12	Physical exercise	27(30%)	44(48%)	20(22%)	64	70	11 <sup>th</sup>
13	Social activities	31(34%)	37(41%)	23(25%)	60	66	13 <sup>th</sup>
14	Delegation of responsibilities	31(34%)	32(35%)	28(31%)	60	66	13 <sup>th</sup>
15	Increased smoking	73(80%)	13(14%)	5(6%)	18	20%	15 <sup>th</sup>
16	Getting angry and yelling at someone	76(84%)	10(10.5%)	5(5.5%)	15	16%	16 <sup>th</sup>
17	Drinking alcohol excessively	84(92%)	4(4%)	3(3%)	7	8%	17 <sup>th</sup>

## Discussion of Results

**Research Question 1** sought to identify the job stressors that affected the work performance of academic administrators in tertiary institutions in Delta State of Nigeria. A total of thirty (30) stressors were identified, pointing to the fact that the sources of stress are numerous and varied. This finding supported those of other researchers such as Parasuraman and Alutto (1981), Hellriegel, et al (1983), Cooper and Marshall (1979), Cranwell-ward (1987) and George and Jones (1999). The ten most reported sources of stress revealed in this study were similar to those of the investigations by Dunham (1986) and Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1977), and these can be put under the categories of *time pressures* (e.g. compilation of results, too many deadlines, work overload), *student misbehavior* (e.g. students indiscipline, examination malpractices), *poor working conditions* (e.g. lack of adequate infrastructure), and *managing people* (e.g. managing staff, failure of staff to perform their duties, overseeing the conduct of semester examinations).

Students' misbehavior, such as cultism, examination malpractice, general indiscipline and rudeness to lecturers and administrators, has become a common feature of our students at all levels of education today. It is therefore, little surprising that it is a major source of worry among academic administrators of tertiary institutions. For example, Omoregie's (1998) study of the analysis of job stress and some related variables on secondary school principals' job performance in Delta State also showed students indiscipline as a major source of stress among secondary school administrators. Similarly, the result of this study which identified relationships with subordinates, students, colleagues and superiors as sources of stress among academics administrators is consistent with the results of the investigation by Kemmer (1989), Kyriacou (1984), Swick and Hanley (1980) and Grossnickle (1980).

**Research Question 2** was raised to elicit data to determine the level of stress experienced by academic administrators in the performance of their duties in tertiary institutions. The result of the analysis of data showed that the administrators, on the whole, experienced a low – moderate level of stress. This is a comfortable level of stress which has been found to be positively associated with work performance. As Sutton (1999), Cooper and Straw (1998), Hanson (1985) and Hellriegel et al. (1983) studies have shown, at very low level of stress employees may not be sufficiently challenged to perform their best. But increasing low level of stress through a moderate level acts in a constructive manner to increase efforts, stimulate creativity and encourages diligence in one's work. To these researchers, excessive high stress may breakdown a person's physiological and mental system and consequently the individual's performance may begin to deteriorate.

**Research Question 3** sought to determine how academic administrators react to job stressful situations. The result showed a wide range of reactions to work pressures. The seven responses to stress exhibited by the academic administrators in this study fall into three of the five areas of human experience which Cox (1978), Levi (1990), Mullins (1996) and Sutton (1999) have grouped the symptoms of work stress most mentioned by managers. The categories they identified were mental symptoms, physiological symptoms, emotional symptoms, behavioral symptoms, and spiritual symptoms.

The result of this investigation revealed that the response of the administrators fall mostly into the *behavioral category* (e.g. having boundless energy and achieving far more work than usual when under stress, being late to, and missing important appointments, and responding quickly to demands placed on one). The *mental reactions* identified in this investigation is the difficulty in concentrating on what one is doing and this ranked very low with 54% of the respondents indicating it as a way of responding to stress. The response of

having feelings of exhilaration belonged to the category of the *physiological reactions* as identified by the authorities mentioned above and his ranked the last (7<sup>th</sup> position) with 52%.

The response pattern of the academic administrators such as being very active, responding quickly to demands placed on them and working harder and achieving far more than usual when they are under stress can be attributed to the overall low - moderate level of stress experienced by the administrators as revealed in research question1. Note that moderate level of stress has been found to be associated with alertness and hardwork and increased work performance, productivity and efficiency (Hellriegel et al, 1983; Crawnwellward, (1987).

**Research Question 4** identified the coping strategies often utilized by academic administrators when they experienced job stress. The results of the investigation showed that academic administrators were using a broad range of skills, techniques, experience, relationships and activities which corresponded to those Dunham (1986) collectively referred to as “resources”. These resources which could be classified into four categories can be fitted into the strategies identified in this study. For example, *personal resources* adopted by the academics administrators included taking off time for personal interest, having adequate sleep, positive thinking , personal prayers, setting realistic standards for oneself, balanced diet, keeping busy, physical exercise and reflection. The also used *interpersonal resources* such as when they engage in social activities such as talking to and meeting with others when they are under stress. *Organizational resources*, which they employ, include delegating responsibilities and discussing problems with colleagues and supporting departmental teams. When the academic administrators remove themselves from the stressful situation and get involved in outside activities, group prayers and church activities , they are employing what Dunham (1986) called *community recourses*’ as a coping strategy.

Further, the ten top more frequently used coping strategies identified in this investigation are similar to those coping actions identified by Masidlover (1981) in his study. Similarly, among the twenty (20) tips reported by Kyriacou (1981), fourteen stress management strategies adopted by the academic administrators in this study also can be found in the Kyriacou’s identifications. They can, therefore, be viewed as wisely utilised coping strategies by managers. They could also be considered as positive and desirable, more acceptable and mature methods of coping with stress. They are consistent with the findings of the study by Gallway et al (1988) who also asserted that some of the most effective ways of coping with stress including talk about the problem with a trusted one, use of relaxation techniques, exercising, positive thinking, withdrawing from the sources, and keeping busy.

**Conclusion:**

From the results of the study, the following conclusions were made;

- The stress experienced by academic administrators in tertiary institutions in Delta State of Nigeria are derived from different sources but mostly due to time pressure, lack of infrastructure, examination related activities and student related discipline problems.
- The academic administrators experienced stress in the performance of their duties but generally at a *low to moderate* levels.
- The academic administrators' response to stress situations falls into the behavioral dimension just as they used predominantly personal resources' related strategies in the management of stress. These coping methods were also generally positive, desirable, more mature and effective.

Based on the findings of this investigation and the conclusions derived therefrom, the following recommendations have been made to further improve the work performance of academic administrators and to enhance their skills, knowledge and techniques of more effectively coping with stress.

First, every tertiary institution should implement higher standards of conduct for all students, staff and lecturers and redesign the entire approach to discipline, teaching and learning. Effort should also be made to provide the necessary infrastructure in these institutions. All these will go a long way to making these institutions more attractive and conducive places for teaching and learning and this will lead to self discipline in both students and staff.

Besides, institutions of higher learning should set more realistic time-table for a semester's work, and examinations and for the submission of compiled results. This will help to reduce the time pressure and too many deadlines, tiredness, and problems associated with the tight schedules of semester examination time-tables and the overseeing of the conduct of semester examinations which are often the sources of stress.

Furthermore, each institution should establish its own stress-reduction programmes for staff regardless of sex, age, experience, and status. For example, provision of confidential counseling services to students, staff and academic administrators to prevent and/or cope with personal and work related stressors should be encouraged.

In addition, staff development programmes such as seminars, conferences and workshops on awareness and recognition of stressors and attendant health problems, anger management, stress reduction procedures and relaxation techniques should be encouraged and strengthened as organizational resources for stress management. Emphasis in such programmes, should also be given to helping staff develop their skills of communication, co-operation and social support and the growth of strong teamwork to achieve unit objectives and organizational goals. The stress management training being recommended should also emphasize stress preventing as opposed to curative programme.

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