

## **OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG ACADEMIC STAFF OF EKITI STATE UNIVERSITY, ADO-EKITI**

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### **Abstract**

This study examined occupational stress among Ekiti State university academic staff. The purpose of the study was to investigate the occupation-related stress and also to know the influence of gender, faculty and experience on stress experience in Lecturers. The study employed a descriptive research survey type. The research instrument was titled "Stress Questionnaire". The face and content validity was ascertained by psychologist and Guidance and Counselling experts. A reliability co-efficient of 0.72 was obtained. The population of the study includes all faculties in the university. Samples were selected through stratified sampling technique. Three (3) hypotheses were generated and tested using student t-test and ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that gender and years of experience does not influence stress on lecturers, but that stress experiences vary from faculty to faculty.

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**Keywords:** Occupational stress, academic staff, gender

### **Introduction**

Many interactions between individuals and the environment produce stress. It is popularly said that life is full of stress, that the ordinary daily activities of daily life which should naturally be a routine, sometimes becomes very difficult in carrying out the way one does normally (Adebisi, 2011).

Stress that is intrinsic or otherwise related to job or the organization is referred to as job or occupational stress (Okorie, 2007). The notion of stress in connection with the work environment became an important topic during the 1970's especially during industrial revolution (McGuire, 1999). Tytherleigh, (2005) in his own opinion posited that, major change initiatives; excessive work hours, heavy workloads, poor management, diminishing resources, unfavourable student to staff ratios, pressure to attract external funds, job

insecurity, lack of recognition and reward, and role ambiguity, have frequently been reported by academic staff in the universities as correlates of occupational stress.

Job stress is a condition in which job related factors interact with the workers to change his or her physiological condition such that he or she deviate from normal functioning (Felicia &Ofoegbu, 2006). Akinade (2008) in his work said that Nigerians are working harder and longer hours (especially those in some demanding professions) in which lecturing is part. There is increasing workload for employees in some places of work. The mountain of uncompleted work especially where there is poverty of time.

Several studies have shown that occupational stress can lead to various negative consequences for the individual and the workplace (Oginska-Bulik, 2006). Stress in the workplace can ultimately rob people of their spirit and passion for the job, resulting in impaired individual functioning (Fairbrother & Warn, 2003), low motivation (Vakola& Nikolaou, 2005), decreased morale (Faragher et al, 2004; Salmond&Ropis, 2005), dampened initiative, reduced interest in working (Fairbrother& Warn,2003), high absenteeism rates (Ho, 1997), decreased capacity to perform (Michie, 2002), poor job performance (Jepson & Forrest, 2006), reduced efficiency (Shain, 1999), poor quality control, decline in productivity (Faragher et al, 2004;) and low quality products and services (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005) as highlighted by Thabo Fako (2010).

This situation is not peculiar to tertiary institutions in the developed nations only, but in a developing one like the country Nigeria. Despite the nation's declaration of importance of university education in national development and the role it plays in satisfying human needs. There are growing evidences that no Nigerian university either private or government owned can genuinely claim to be immune from stress (Adebiyi, 2011).

In relating stress particularly to the teaching field, Kyriacou (2001) defined teacher stress as unpleasant emotions experienced by a teacher such as anger and depression resulting from aspect of his work as a teacher. Teachers have been identified as an occupational group that functions under high stress. United Kingdom Health and Safety Executive reported that two out of every five teachers were highly stressed as against one in every five in the other occupation such as nursing, security, management etc.

As posited by Thabo Fako (2010), there is increase and expansion in education while resource levels have not kept pace. In most part of the world the education sector has experienced a great and measure of changes and re-orientation, this sector been the major source of all innovation and creativity. Hence, personnel in these fields are expected to keep up with the pace of the change and not just keeping up to but to significantly contribute to the

wealth of knowledge in providing solution to problems facing human. Tytherleigh, (2005) views that these major change initiatives; excessive work hours, heavy workloads, poor management, diminishing resources, unfavourable student: staff ratios, pressure to attract external funds, job insecurity, lack of recognition and reward, and role ambiguity, have frequently been reported by academic staff in the universities.

Various researches have been conducted to investigate stress among professionals but few have correlated how gender issue relates to stress. Adeoye (2002), who worked on correlates of stress among female lecturers found out that the dual roles of female lecturers as wives and mothers as well as lecturers, is a major source of stress. Research showed that while husbands go to clubs and other relaxation centres to unwind, the female lecturer goes home to work and attend domestic chores and care for the children. He posited that stress and stress related outcomes do have serious consequences on individual's mental, psychological and physical health. Especially on the part of females, thereby making them nagging mothers, difficult and uncooperating with co-workers and highly intolerant to everyone. It is against this background that the study was carried out to answer the question; how prevalent is stress among academic staff of Ekiti State University.

### **Purpose of the study**

Many academic staff encounter different situations daily in their work life that generate stress, this is evidenced by absenteeism, low productivity, low morale and other related exhibited traits. Hence, this study examined the prevalence of stress among lecturers in the university. This study also investigated whether gender of lecturers, faculties and the number of years they have spent on the job influence stress experience in them.

### **Research hypotheses**

The following hypothesis were generated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference between stress in male and female lecturers
2. There is no significant difference between stress experiences by lecturers in faculties of the School.
3. There is no significant difference between outcome of stress on Lecturers who have spent long years on the job and those with lesser years.

### **Method**

The study employed a descriptive research of survey design. The population consisted of 100 lecturers who were selected with use of stratified random sampling technique from the 8 cognate faculties of the university.

A self-constructed research instrument titled “Stress Prevalence Questionnaire (SPQ)”. A 36-item questionnaire was divided into four parts; the first part consist of information about lecturers’ personal data; their age, sex, rank, length of years on the job etc. The second part comprised of items dealing with stressors at home and the work front; the third part, outcome of stressors on the lecturers and the fourth, various coping strategies.

A Likert scale of 1 to 4 of strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree was used in measuring responses of the lecturers. Content and face validity was ascertained by experts in Psychology and Guidance and Counselling. The reliability of this instrument was obtained with the use of split-half method. A reliability co-efficient of 0.72 was obtained.

Data collected were analyzed with inferential statistics. Student t-test was used to test hypotheses 1 and 3 while analysis of variance ANOVA was used to test hypothesis 2. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

## Results

**H<sub>01</sub>** There is no significant difference between stress experienced by male and female lecturers. This hypothesis was tested by stressors scores of the two groups using t-test. Table I shows the result of the analysis.

**Table 1:** Student t-test comparison of male and female lecturer on stress experienced.

Variable	N	Mean	Df	t <sub>cal</sub>	t <sub>crit</sub>
Male	74	99.46	98	1.566	1.980
Female	26	13.38			

P < 0.05

Table 1 shows that the mean of variables (males and female) as 99.46 and 13.38 respectively. The value of t-calculated (1.566) and t-critical as (1.980). This therefore evidently shown that t-calculated is less than t-table value. This hypothesis is then accepted at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore there is no significant difference in stress experience by male and female lecturers in Ekiti State University.

**H<sub>02</sub>** There is no significant difference between the stresses experienced by lecturers in different faculties of the school.

This hypothesis was tested by using one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and the result is presented in table II.

**Table 2:** Summarizing ANOVA comparison of stress experiences by lecturers in different Faculties

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean of squares	F <sub>cal</sub>	F <sub>crit</sub>
Between groups	2679.9	7	382.85	2.091	2.02
Within groups	16847.3	92	183.12		
Total	19527.2	99			

P < 0.05

Table 2 shows that F- calculated (2.091) is greater than F-critical (2.02). It then implies that the null hypothesis is thus rejected at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, there is a significant difference in the stress experience in various faculties.

**H<sub>03</sub>** There is no significant difference between stress outcome of Lecturers who have spent long years on the job and those with lesser years. This hypothesis was tested using the independent t- test statistical analysis.

**Table 3:** Student t-test comparison of difference in outcomes of stress on lecturers who have spent long years on the job and those with lesser years. The table below presents the results

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t <sub>cal</sub>	t <sub>crit</sub>
Below 11 years	46	27.04	6.77	98	1.762	1.980
11 years and above	54	28.92	3.66			

Table 3 shows that the mean of variables for lecturers below 11years to be 27.04 and 228.92 for those who have spent 11years and above. It further revealed that the value of t-calculated as 1.762 which is lesser than t-critical 1.980. Thus from this, it can be deduced that the null hypothesis is accepted; meaning that the outcome of stress in lecturers that have stayed for long years and for those who have not are the same.

### Discussion

The result from the first hypothesis showed that sex has no significant difference on stress experienced by male and female lecturers. The reason for such outcome is not far-fetched, in that both the male and female lecturers in Ekiti State University are exposed to the same organizational pressure. This result is consistent with the findings of Purvanova and Muros (2010) whose finding revealed that female and male employee experience equally experience stress. As against this opinion, Adeoye (2002), Jick and Mitz (1985) and other research work have believed women to be more stressed.

The findings revealed that there is no difference in stress experienced by lecturers in different faculties of the university. Thus by implication stress experience varies across the faculties. Adeoye (2002) found that stress experience in the various faculties vary across the University of Ilorin. Based on this finding, the researcher suggests that this could be as a result of variation in faculty administration across institution.

The study on outcome of stress on lecturers revealed that there is no difference in stress outcome of lecturers who have spent long years and those with lesser years. This finding is supported by the work of Adeoye (2002) and Salami (2003).

## **Conclusion**

The result of this study indicated that there is generally a very high prevalence of stress; this submission is as a result of high stress response correlated among male and female, across the faculties and rank.

## **Recommendation**

On the basis of this finding, it is recommended that educational planners and administrators should see how to infrastructures that alleviate stress would be provided in the university since both male and female lecturers correlated their stress experience to this factor. Again, measures such as increment in remuneration, provision of relaxation facilities should be provided and lecturers should be mandated to the university Counsellor from time to time; in order to facilitate productivity and efficiency in their work.

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