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## Job Stress and Lecturers' Efficiency In Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

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### Abstract

*The roles of lecturers in universities cannot be underestimated. This is because lecturers are the bones who interpret the content of the curriculum. Hence, lecturers are expected to be efficient. This study however investigated job stress and lecturers' efficiency in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised all academic staff in all the 10 Faculties and two Colleges of the University. A sample of 50 participants was selected from each of the five purposively selected faculties. An adapted questionnaire titled 'Job Stress and Lecturers' Efficiency (JSLEQ) was used to collect information from the respondents. The instrument was validated and trial tested on population outside the sample. The reliability index of the instrument was 0.91 using Cronbach Alpha method of analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to answer the research question and test the hypothesis respectively. The results showed that anxiety was the most prominent stress of the six-stress found among lecturers in OAU and that stress has significant influence on lecturers' efficiency in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. The study recommends employment of seasoned counsellors and equipping the counselling unit with 21<sup>st</sup> century equipment that can be used to manage anxiety among the entire workers in the university*

**Keywords:** faculties, job stress, lecturer's efficiency, psychological stress, and physiological stress

### Introduction

The roles of lecturers cannot be underestimated in the university across the globe. This is unconnected to their contributions to interpret the content of the curriculum and in ensuring positive change in student's behavior. In addition, lecturers also assist the student to become a useful member and ambassador of the community and contribute to the economic development of the country. The success of any educational system depends on the efficiency of teachers that translate theory to practice (Omotoyinbo & Olaniyi, 2019). This implies that effective teaching and

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learning activities in the school cannot take place without teaching personnel. To buttress this, Adeagbo (2017) posited that if educational planners have the best educational policies and designs and government allocate largest percentage of its budget to education without efficient teachers, the goals of setting up schools will be a mirage.

An efficient lecturer is the one who is able to use educational facilities available in the university to enhance teaching and learning. Barkhuizen and Rothman (2013) informed that efficient lecturer has the capacity and ability to organise and deliver teaching which brings about increase in learner's cognitive and quantitative abilities. The extent to which a university lecturer achieves the goals of the university using minimum resources without compromising quality is known as efficiency. Lecturer's efficiency can also be described as the use of teaching and learning resources within the university to assist in the development of students cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains. Lecturer's efficiency is hinged on availability of requisite teaching and learning facilities. Institutions that provide needed teaching and learning facilities encourages lecturers to be efficient in discharging their primary responsibilities in the university.

In Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, lecturers seem stressed considering multi-faceted task assigned as a result of shortage of staff. In most cases, lecturers looked tired, unfriendly and unhappy. Most of the lecturers teaches many courses than required in a semester, teaches large classes without public address system, non-availability of technological aided instructional materials in the lecture rooms, supervises many undergraduate projects and graduate theses. They are also assigned with the responsibility of processing results, presenting the results at various committees, represent the Deans/Directors/Head of Departments at statutory meetings. They also perform other functions as may be assigned by the administration. These have implication on lecture delivery, response to student's request and giving feedback on student's continuous assessment at regular interval. The resultant effect of this stress is sudden brake down and untimely death of lecturers. There have been recurring cases of lecturer's death in the office in recent times at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria which may be traced to stress. In the year 2022 and 2023, the university recorded 12 deaths of academic staff, four of which occurred in the office (Obafemi Awolowo University Bulletin, 2024)

Villeza (2023) identified the following as stress that can be exhibited by individual worker: tiredness, unpleasant lifestyle, anxiety, unhappiness, anger, unfriendly and passivity. Kayode (2024) in her studies on job stress and teachers' efficiency in Osun State secondary schools identified student indiscipline, work overload, inadequate instructional materials, family issues, poor working conditions and relationship with colleagues as various stress experienced by teachers in public secondary schools in Osun State. Stress can be more experiences where workers are given jobs above their capabilities, work in unfriendly environment, without commensurate remuneration

Ricciotti and Hur (2018). According to Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP, 2018), stress can be positive or negative. It is positive when it encourages workers skill development. However, it is negative when it is prolonged and negatively affect workers efficiency. A worker that experienced negative stress cannot be equilibrium balanced because the state efficiency is affected. Scott (2020), informed that negative stress depleted workers emotionally, depersonalized their issues and increased their depression tendency. Stress can lead to insomnia, hyper/hypo tension depending on the nature of workers body chemistry.

Lecturer's efficiency goes a long way to turn things around in the university. It has to do with lecturer's using minimum resources to achieve the best possible results. It is the ability of lecturers in using the available resources to fulfill educational needs of the stakeholders and continuously improvement of university output. It can also be a professional prowess exhibited in planning carefully, using appropriate materials, communicate with the students, assess students regularly, give feedback and using varieties of teaching pedagogy to bring the best out of the students. Adebayo and Babajide (2018), defined lecturer's efficiency as the ability of a lecturer to perform his duty qualitatively. To Arshadi and Damiri (2017), it is the ability of lecturer to combine and use instructional materials in the university for qualitative teaching and learning Darr (2020), defined it as the capacity of lecturer to organise teaching to increase student's cognitive ability. In a study conducted by Ajadi and Fasanmi (2018) on trade union activities and administrative efficacy in universities in southwestern Nigeria, efficiency is defined as the ability of lecturer to work in line with the university administration with minimum resources without compromising the quality of outcome. Porter and Brophy (2018) concluded that efficient lecturer is the one who manages classroom and curriculum well as well as arranging other activities that will benefit the students in the school in an orderly manner. Many lecturers are not as efficient as expected as a result of various stress occasioned from their job according to Oyebanji (2021)

Stress as a concept has been defined by various authors. This is due to the fact that, everybody did not experience stress the same way. A stressful situation to a person may not be to the other. Roy, Kamath and Kamath (2018) defined it as the imprecise response of the body to any demand for change. It is a natural physical and mental reactions to life experiences and the body's response to anything that requires attention. The authors viewed stress as a reaction of the body system to changes happening within and around it which could be positive or negative. It is a state of tension experienced by individuals confronting with extra-ordinary demands, or constraints (Lehloo, 2017).

To Lazarus (2000), stress could be physiological or psychological. It is physiological when it is related to the physical reaction of the body to situations. To buttress this, Ayinde, Adeniyi and Thomson (2018) noted that physiological stress is experienced when there is a disturbance in the body state of equilibrium. Therefore,

stress can be regarded as physiological response to events and situations that causes an upset in the homeostasis of the body. Examples of physiological stress are: headache, migraines, body pains, fatigue, heart palpitation, inadequate sleep, muscle ache and chest pain. According to Ayinde, Adeniyi and Thomson, these manifestations directly and negatively affect worker's efficiency, and personal health

Psychological stress on its own directly affect the way situations are evaluated. According to Jacob (2018), psychological stress is an emotional reaction where individuals show symptoms like anxiety, depression, burnout, hostility, nervousness, irritability and frustration in response to real stimuli. Leung, Chan and Chen (2017), posited that psychological stress is a state of mind resulting from demands on individuals.

To Scott (2020), stress is a wide spread phenomenon during human life. Everybody at a point in time experience stress at different levels since stress is one of the special characteristics of life. It can be any type of change that causes physical, emotional or psychological strain. Auerberg and Adiele (2020) defined stress as the adverse reaction of a person to excessive pressure placed on him or her. Stress represents a negative life experience, closely followed by physiological, cognitive, emotional and behavioural changes that focus on changing the event. Therefore, stress is the result of a subjective assessment of a particular individual who do not have the capacity to manage the emerging situation. Every situation that requires adaptation can be referred to as stress. Summarily stress can be referred to as a personal experience caused by pressure on individual, and impact upon individual's ability to cope. Stress is part of human life experience. As a matter of fact, every individual regardless of race, cultural, gender, status, occupational or social background experiences stress in diverse ways. It is an inevitable part of challenges that prompt mastery of new skills and behavioural pattern. However, when stress becomes excessive, issues occur and individual's experience disrupted emotional, cognitive and physiological functioning. The cost of stress in terms of social and psychological cannot be estimated. Hence, it must be avoided as much as possible

In a study conducted by Subair, Abe, and Aliu. (2021) on job stress and teachers' coping strategies in Nigerian schools. The study concluded that, 60 – 90 percent of illness confronting lecturers in the Nigeria Universities, are stress related cases. This implies that stress may have devastating implication on efficiency of lecturers. Earlier Okeke and Diamini (2013) conducted a study on job stressors that impinge teachers' efficiency in secondary schools in Swaziland. The participants included 239 teachers selected from Hhohho region of Swaziland. The study found that teachers effectively delivered lesson, provide feedback on student take home assignment despite the shortage of teachers in most secondary schools in Swaziland. In a related development, Wade and Travis (2021), found no relationship between job stress and teacher's productivity at the adolescent class. Laibah (2017) conducted a study on stress and employee's performance in manufacturing sector in the United Kingdom

the study found a negative relationship between job stress and employees job performance in manufacturing sector in the United Kingdom.

In another study conducted by Wagner (2016) on stress and job performance of employees of private universities, Karachi, Pakistan. The study revealed reward system, leadership styles, employment policies as factors affecting employee's performance as against stress. Vanishree (2016) also found positive relationship between tiredness and time of response to student request in developed world. In the work of Panigrahi (2017), on managing stress at workplace. It was established that workers happiness is a motivation to attend to student request. In a study carried out by Wanjul (2017) on stress and teacher's efficiency in public secondary school in Wajir North district, Kenya. The study revealed negative impact of stress on time taken to give feedback on students take home assignment.

### **Problem**

Lecturers constitute essential component of the university. This is because, they translate curriculum to practice, teach allocated courses, respond to student's academic request without delay and provide timely feedback on student's performance in continuous assessment before the end of the semester examinations. In addition, there are other responsibilities of a lecturers in the university for the smooth operation of the institution. However, it seems the disposition of lecturers their primary and other responsibilities in Obafemi Awolowo University are not encouraging. This is evident from the lectures delivered, the time taken to respond to student's request, time taken to give feedback on continuous assessment, lecturer's reaction to situation on campus. This may be traced to stress being experienced as shown in their appearance and relationship with students. This need to be urgently looked into to avert sudden brake down and untimely death of lecturers in Obafemi Awolowo university, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

### **Study Objectives**

The study is set to address the following objectives

1. Identify the most prominent stress among lecturers in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria
2. Investigate the influence of stress on lecturer's efficiency in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

### **Methodology**

The descriptive research design of the *ex post facto* was adopted for this study. The design was appropriate because the study reported how job stress influences lecturers' efficiency in Obafemi Awolowo University without any form of manipulation by the researcher . The population for the study comprised all academic staff from the 10 Faculties (Administration, Agricultural Science, Arts,

Education, Environmental Design and Management, Law, Science, Social Sciences, Pharmacy, and Technology) and two Colleges (Health Science and Postgraduate Colleges) in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. The multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted for this study. The first stage was the use of purposive sampling technique to select five Faculties (Environmental Design and Management, Agricultural Science, Law, Technology and Pharmacy) with five-year programmes duration. The second stage was the use of disproportional sampling technique to select 50 participants from each of the selected Faculties making a total of 250 participants altogether.

An adapted questionnaire titled 'Job Stress and Lecturers' Efficiency (JSLEQ) was used to collect information relating to Lecturer's demographic data, types of stress as well as stress and lecturers' efficiency. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher with three sections (A, B and C). Section A comprised demographic information of the respondents with 5 items. The respondents are to choose an option that is most applicable to them among the options provided in this section. Section B in the instrument contained 6 items on the types of stress, while section C comprised 12 items to measure the influence of stress on lecturers' efficiency. These two sections are structured in 4-point Likert –scale format of Strongly Agreed (S/A), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD). The respondents are to respond to the items by indicating their level of agreement to each of the statements in the appropriate column provided for each of the scales

The instrument was validated and trial tested. To ensure that the instruments was reliable, test-retest of the instrument was carried out on 20 academic staff from the College of Health Science of the University, which was not part of the faculty where the sample was drawn for this study. The reliability index of 0.91. was obtained for the instrument which was considered adequate for the instrument. The data was collected with the assistance of two research assistants who were given orientation by the researcher for one day for effective administration and to ensure a high turnover of administration of the questionnaire

The research question was answered with percentage and mean of the descriptive statistics while the hypothesis was tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) of the inferential statistics using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The research assistants approached the respondents and voluntarily participated in the filling of the questionnaire. The items in the questionnaire does not conflict with respondents' interest, faith and belief. In addition, it did not have negative implications on their job, health and family.



## Results

Research Question: What is the most prominent stress among lecturers in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria?

**Table 1**

*Stress Among Lecturers (N=250)*

| S/N | Stress            | S/A (%)       | A (%)          | D (%)         | SD (%)       | Mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) | Rank            |
|-----|-------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|--------------------|-----------------|
|     | Headache          | 43<br>(17.2%) | 147<br>(58.8%) | 52<br>(20.8%) | 8<br>(3.2%)  | 2.79               | 4 <sup>th</sup> |
|     | Body Pain         | 31<br>(12.4%) | 141<br>(56.4%) | 65<br>(26%)   | 13<br>(5.2%) | 2.75               | 5 <sup>th</sup> |
|     | Heart Palpitation | 55<br>(22%)   | 135<br>(54%)   | 48<br>(19.2%) | 12<br>(4.8%) | 2.69               | 6 <sup>th</sup> |
|     | Anxiety           | 73<br>(29.2%) | 136<br>(54.4%) | 32<br>(12.8%) | 09<br>(3.6%) | 2.92               | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
|     | Depression        | 55<br>(22%)   | 133<br>(53.2%) | 60<br>(24%)   | 02<br>(0.8%) | 2.86               | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
|     | Burnout           | 50<br>(20%)   | 152<br>(60.8%) | 38<br>(15.2%) | 10<br>(4%)   | 2.83               | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |

Source: *Researcher's Field Work 2024*

Result presented in Table 1 showed that the most prominent stress among lecturers in Obafemi Awolowo University was Anxiety ( $\bar{x} = 2.92$ ). Seventy-three (29.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed that anxiety was most prominent stress, 136 (54.4%) of the respondents agreed, 32 (12.8%) disagreed while only nine (3.6%) strongly disagreed. This was followed by Depression ( $\bar{x} = 2.86$ ). Fifty-five (22%) of the respondents strongly agreed that depression was most prominent of the stress, 133 (53.2%) agreed, 60 (24%) disagreed while two (0.8%) strongly disagreed. The third most prominent stress according to this result was Burnout ( $\bar{x} = 2.83$ ). Fifty (20%) of the respondents strongly agreed that burnout was the most prominent of the stress, 152 (60.8%) agreed, 38 (15.2%) disagreed while 10 (4%) strongly disagreed. This was followed by Headache ( $\bar{x} = 2.79$ ). Forty-three (17.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed that headache was the most prominent of the stress, 147 (58.8%) agreed, 52 (20.8%) disagreed while eight (3.2%) strongly disagreed. Body pain was the fifth most prominent stress in Obafemi Awolowo University ( $\bar{x} = 2.75$ ). Thirty-One (12.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed that headache was the most prominent of the stress, 141 (56.4%) agreed, 65 (26%) disagreed while 13 (5.2%) strongly disagreed. This placed headache on the fifth position on the list of the most prominent of the six stresses on the list. The least most prominent among all the identified stresses among lecturers in Obafemi Awolowo University was Heart Palpitation ( $\bar{x} = 2.69$ ). Fifty-five (22%) of the respondents strongly agree to the assertion that heart palpitation was the most prominent of the

identified stresses, 135 (54%) agreed, 48 (19.2%) disagreed while 12 (4.8%) strongly disagreed.

### Hypothesis

Stress has no influence on lecturer's efficiency in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

**Table 2**

*Influence of stress on lecturer's efficiency in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria*

| Variables           | X     | SD    | N   | df | Cal. R | Critical R |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-----|----|--------|------------|
| Stress              | 32.65 | 16.31 | 250 | 96 | .54    | .157       |
| Lecturer Efficiency | 42.38 | 22.10 |     |    |        |            |

*Significant,  $P < 0.05$ .*

Result presented in Table 2 showed that stress has significant influence on lecturer's efficiency in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. The result showed that calculated value is greater than the critical,  $0.54 > 0.157$  at  $p < 0.05$ .

### Discussion of Results

The result to the research question answered by the respondents showed that stress among lecturers in Obafemi Awolowo University can either be psychological or physiological. The first three prominent stress are psychological in nature, while the last three are physiological. This supported the work of Lazarus (2000), who categorized stress into physiological and psychological. This might be because the basic needs of lecturers can no longer be met with the economic situation where fuel subsidy was removed and currency devalued without commensurate increase in lecturer's salary. The result might not be unconnected to the prevailing situation in the larger society where lecturer's salary can no longer sustain him or her, talk less of taken care of their immediate family. Payment of lecturers' ward school fees and satisfaction of other domestic needs at home can lead to anxiety which was identified to be the most prominent stress. The economic situation in the country where nobody (lecturers inclusive) can budget for anything, cannot be sure of getting needed items even for the children. These can trigger anxiety at any time. If anxiety is not properly managed, the next stage is depression. This result is in line with the work of Jacob (2018), who concluded that psychological stress is an emotional reaction where individuals show symptoms like anxiety, depression, burnout, hostility, anxiety, nervousness, irritability and frustration in response to real stimuli. In addition, it is in agreement with the work of Leung, Chan and Chen (2017), who posited that psychological stress is a state of mind resulting from demands on individuals.

The results revealed from the hypothesis tested might be a reason why lecturers in Obafemi Awolowo University are dropping dead in the offices. The study established



that stress has influence on lecturers' efficiency. This might be one of the reasons why stress have devastating effect on lecturers' ways of discharging their responsibilities in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. This might also be the reason why lecturers are unable to give their best in the class, give no continuous assessment scores to the students prior the examination and respond late to other students' requests. The finding is however against that of Okeke and Diamini (2013) who found that teachers effectively delivered lesson, provide feedback on student take home assignment despite the shortage of teachers in most secondary schools in Swaziland. In a related development. This finding also negated that of Wade and Travis (2021), who found no relationship between job stress and teacher's productivity. In addition, the result also negated that of Laibah (2017) who found a negative relationship between job stress and employees job performance in manufacturing sector in the United Kingdom. However, the study is in line with the findings of Vanishree (2016) who found positive relationship between tiredness and time of response to student request in developed world. The result is also in line with the finding of Panigrahi (2017), who conducted studies on managing stress at workplace and established that workers happiness is a motivation to attend to student request.

### **Suggestions/Recommendations**

The following are recommended based on the findings of this study:

1. University Administration should create internal reward system to be approved by the University Governing Council for lecturers
2. The University Administration should employ seasoned counsellors and equip the counselling unit with 21<sup>st</sup> century equipment that can be used to manage anxiety and other types of stress among the entire workers in the university
3. The government should improve the general working condition of lecturers in the university. Particularly, the salary of lecturers should commensurate with the economic reality in the country.
4. The government should adopt economic policies that will allow stability in the economy so that lecturers and other workers can plan on the expected salary.

### **Conclusion**

The study established that there are psychological and physiological stress among lecturers in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. It was also established that stress has devastating implications on lecturer's productivity and needed to be handled with urgency it deserves so that the lecturers will be able to put in their best into the system. This will allow lecturers to live a healthy live and assist the institution to achieve the aims of its establishment.

### Additional Scientific Contributions

This study has scientifically contributed to knowledge. There is little empirical work on job stress and university lecturer's efficiency. Previous studies on lecturers' efficiency focused largely on lecturers' job satisfaction, work environment, managerial skills. This study has tried to shift the focus. Additionally, this study provides a comprehensive assessment of types of stress, the most prominent stress among university lecturers at OAU, as well as the influence of stress on lecturers' efficiency in OAU. This exploration within Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria context, fills a critical gap in existing literature, which previously lacked extensive empirical data on how internal reward system, employment of 21<sup>st</sup> century counsellors with adequate facilities translate into improved lecturers' efficiency

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