IMPACT OF STRESS ON ACADEMIC STAFF: IMPLICATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Adebayo Saheed Adewale[*], Simin Ghavifekr (PhD) &
Ishaq Abdulsalam

Faculty of Education
University of Malaya
MALAYSIA

Corresponding Author:
University of Malaya
MALAYSIA
Email:
adebayo_saheed@siswa.um.edu.my

ABSTRACT

Stress influences staff performance as well as attainment of organizational goals. Members of academic staff in higher education institutions in Nigeria undergo a lot of stress when discharging their daily responsibilities. Their stress range from teaching, learning to other non-teaching responsibilities which have great influence on staff commitment and effectiveness in teaching and learning activities within the university system. This study therefore explores the impact of stress on academic staff performance in Nigerian universities. It adopted a qualitative approach in exploring the impact of stress factors on academic staff in Nigerian universities. A total of 10 academic staff members were randomly selected from 10 public universities in both Northern and South-Western Nigeria for this study. The findings of this study revealed that academic staffs in Nigerian universities are going through academic, administrative, job-related, student-imposed, social and psychological stress. In order to reduce academic staff stress and improve performance in Nigerian universities, school administrators, policy makers and Ministry of Education need to provide an enabling environment for academic staff, increase teachers' motivation, support them in achieving their set goals and facilitate their job satisfaction.

Keywords: *Stress, academic staff, management, leadership, higher education, Nigeria.*

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a vital role in national development. It creates awareness and uplifts the social-economic position of individuals and their communities (Emeh & Ogaboh, 2010). It accounts for societal reforms and transformation in Nigerian society (Odeleye, 2012). Higher learning institutions are known for producing the right human capital skills needed to attain economic, social, political and technological development in a country (Bloom, Canning, Chan, & Luca, 2006; Kruss et al*.,* 2015). Their contribution to societal reforms and development cannot be over emphasized (DeBloom et al., 2006). Higher learning institutions provide countries with required human capital needed to attain sustainable development (Alam, 2009; Fernandez-Sanchez et al., 2014; Lawal &Wahab, 2011). The role of teachers in actualizing the goals and objectives of education is immense. Teachers are responsible for training the human resources needed for national development (Okemakinde et al., 2013), promoting a healthy teaching and learning environment, and enhancing smooth and cordial relationships in school setting (Hughes & Chen, 2011).

Teaching is a complicated job, especially in this modern changing world where social-economic responsibilities are increasing by the day. The teaching profession is one of the most stressful professions (Lambert et al., 2006). Teachers are undergoing a lot of stress which impact on their performance (Richards, 2012). Stress was found to be responsible for the high attrition rate among teachers (Hanushek, 2007; Minarik et al., 2003). The stress that teachers encounter occurs as a result of their constant interactions with students, parents, colleagues, government and school management (Kyriacou, 1987). Teachers play the most important role in national development by training and educating future leaders. They not only have to teach but are also responsible for student behavior, academic achievement, implementing school policies and ensuring classroom management (Valli & Buese, 2007). Improving the school may positively affect teachers' psychological and physiological well-being (Jin et al., 2008).

Staffs in Nigerian higher education institutions are facing serious challenges which revolve round stress. One of these challenges is inadequate facilities. Inadequate teaching and learning facilities affects the performance of lecturers in Nigerian universities (Senimetu, 2015). Some of the academic staff are found to be taking a large number of students; this means their classes suffer an unconducive environment (Babatope, 2010). Furthermore, stress has manifested in the way lecturers respond to forces in the academic environment. Some of them are expected to meet some unrealistic targets without facilities being provided (Odetunde, 2004). Facilities provided in Nigerian universities are insufficient for student and teacher needs (Adeyemi & Igbineweka, 2000; Babatope, 2010). Also, recreation facilities in Nigerian universities do not match the need and status of the university system (Iheanacho et al., 2013).This can be seen in the case where lecturers were given mandate to publish high impact papers without having access to good libraries, Internet facilities and adequate training in using software to meet the demands of high impact research. All these are done in the name of quality assurance without considering the impact on lecturers (Ojerinde, 2000). In addition, the pressure on lecturers created by students in Nigerian universities is another serious stress factor (Abosede, 2004). Some students are not serious in learning. They do not want to work but wish to pass and excel. When students are not ready to build themselves and develop their curiosity to learn, it poses a big threat to teachers (Nwiwo & Onwunaka, 2015).

For higher learning institution responsiveness to society needs for producing competent skilled manpower, it is urgent to enhance academic staff capabilities, understand the impact of work stress on their performance and devise alternative measure for reducing staff stress in Nigerian universities. Different researchers have conducted research on the impact of teacher stress in Nigeria (Ekundayo & Kolawole, 2013; Nwimo & Onwunaka, 2015). Little has been done on lecturers' stress. Hence, this research study therefore investigated the sources of stress to academic staff in Nigerian universities and examined the role of administrators and leadership in managing and reducing staff stress and finally looked at the implication of this stress on higher education management, leadership and policy.

THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The theory underlying this research study is the Selye Theory of Stress (1976). Hans Selye was a Hungarian endocrinologist who lived between 1907 and 1982. He was the first to give a scientific explanation for biological stress. He explained his stress model based on physiology and psychobiology as the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS).

The General Adaptation Syndrome provides a framework for understanding our physiological responses to stressful events and explains the relationship between stress and illness (Baron, 1995). Selye's model states that an event that threatens an organism's well-being (a stressor) leads to a three-stage body response. The stages are: alarm stage, resistance stage and exhaustion stage.

Selye further explained the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis (HPA axis) system which prepares the body to cope with stress. He also explained about a local adaptation syndrome which refers to the inflammatory response and repair processes occurring at the local site of tissue injury as in small, topical injuries, such as contact dermatitis which may lead to GAS if the local injury is severe enough. According to Selye (1976), at the first stage (the alarm stage), when the human body is exposed to a stressor, it reacts back with "fight-or-flight". Then, the sympathetic nervous system and response will be developed. As a result, hormones such as adrenalin and cortisol will be released into the bloodstream to attack the danger or threat which will later mobilize the human body.

The second stage is the resistance stage. Here, physiological functions are returned back to normal level through the parasympathetic nervous system. With this, the body will be able to harness its resources against stressors. In addition, adrenalin and cortisol will continue to increase due to the high glucose in the blood, but the outward look of man seems normal. Also, the breathing, blood pressure and entire body will be on red alert which signifies a great danger.

The exhaustion stage is the final stage proposed by Selye. He opined that the organism will become susceptible to disease and death once the stressor is beyond the bearable level. The organism will finally get exhausted which may lead to death. Selye's theory sees the stressor as anything that is perceived as challenging, threatening or demanding. According to this theory, stress could be positive or negative. He called positive stress eustress. This is stress that can lead to growth and enhanced competence while the negative stress (distress) is uncontrollable, prolonged and overwhelming. Negative stress could be destructive.

Selye's theory profoundly influenced the scientific study of stress. He conceived stress as a state produced by a change in the environment and the nature of the stressor is variable. The individual appraises and copes with stress, to reach the goal of adaptation. The process is called coping with the stress, and it is achieved through a compensatory process with physiological and psychological components. This research used this theory in order to identify the impact of the stress on lecturers in some selected Nigerian universities.

In summary, the Selye theory says, the first is the alarm stage, in which the body prepares itself for immediate action; arousal of the sympathetic nervous system releases hormones that help prepare our body to meet threats or dangers (Selye, 1976). If the stress is prolonged, however, the resistance stage begins. During the second stage, arousal is lower than during the alarm stage, but our bodies continue to draw on resources at above- normal rate in order to cope effectively with the stressor. Continued exposure to the same stressor or additional stressors drains the body of its resources and leads to the third stage, exhaustion. During the exhaustion stage, our capacity to resist is depleted, and our susceptibility to illness increases. In severe cases of prolonged physical stress, the result can be death. Based on Hans Selye's theory, the following conceptual framework has been developed to guide this study:
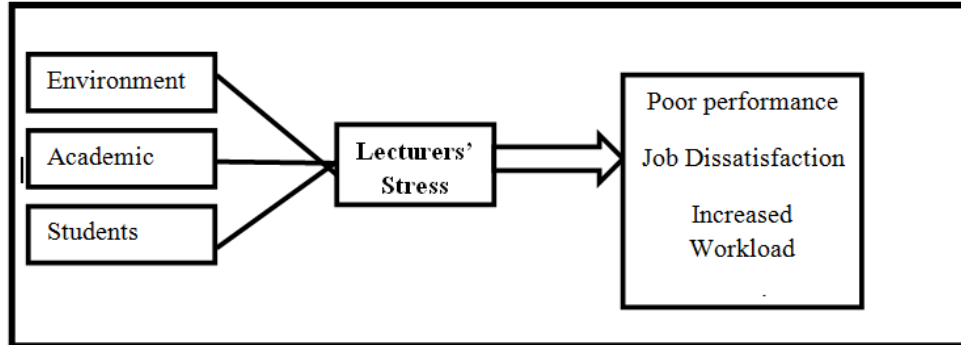
Figure 1. A Conceptual framework on lecturers stress and its outcome.

Figure 1 shows that lecturers in Nigerian universities are continuously exposed to stress coming from their environment, workplace and the students they teach. They also pass through the three stages of stress discussed before. The effect of this stress is that it results in poor performance, job dissatisfaction, increased workload and ultimately death. Therefore, there is need to find a solution to this threat which may claim lives of lecturers as proposed by this research study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Stress

Stress is one of the most interesting and mysterious subjects encountered since the beginning of time. Its study is not only limited to what happens to the body during a stressful situation, but also to what occurs in the psyche of an individual (Troman & Woods, 2001). Also, Fisher (2011) in a study found that stress and burnout are significant determinants of secondary school teachers' job satisfaction. Stress has a lot of meaning. Its definition is not restricted to a generally accepted term but means different things to different people. Stress is not something strange to our daily life nowadays. Everybody may feel stress when facing bad situations.

Teacher stress is defined as an uncomfortable feeling, negative emotion such as anger, anxiety, pressure and disappointment sourced from the work aspects as a teacher (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978). Teaching is a profession full of stressful activities (Lambert et al., 2006). A stressed teacher is someone with uncontrollable emotion towards changes in education culture which requires a teacher to give their knowledge, and at the same time, they have to educate students to be good community members. Teachers have to work more, doing clerical jobs, preparing teaching aid materials, and attending courses or educational workshops (Blasé et al., 2008). Furthermore, Fisher (2011) argued that teachers' stress leads to ineffective teaching, and increases teacher workload. Increased class size will later result in serious complaints from school management and parents. These require teachers to adapt themselves with new teaching techniques.

Causes of Academic Stress

Ekundayo and Kolawole (2013) found that delay in payment of teachers' salaries; unconducive working condition and poor treatment of teachers by their leaders are the major sources and causes of stress to teachers in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Poor state of the economy: Economic imbalance resulting from economic recession has posed a big threat to the development of the Nigerian economy and Nigerians (Emeh & Ogaboh, 2010). University lecturers, non-academic staff and students are also affected by the state of the economy. Everyone needs to look for means of survival in this harsh period. Trying to devise a means of survival results in stress for them. This is in line with the finding of Al-Khutaba (2013) who found that economic and social factors impact greatly on student academic achievement. Furthermore, Cox et al. (2007) discovered in their study that poor working condition is responsible for employee's stress and burnout.

Lack of administrative support: This is another cause of stress to lecturers in higher education institutions. Lecturers just like teachers will get higher stress if they are not receiving adequate support from their administrators and leaders (Blasé et al., 2008).

Student Attitude: Students often stress out their lecturers and teachers with some of their attitude. In their study, Greene et al. (1997) found that misbehavior by pupils is seen by their teachers as disrupting their teaching and learning process. They argued that the amount of teachers' stress generated by pupil's misbehavior affects pupil-teacher compatibility.

Effects of Academic Stress on Organizational Performance

Poor performance**:** Lecturers' performance will be reduced in a situation where these lecturers are going through a series of stress and stressful exercises (Ekundayo & Kolawole, 2013). This is accountable for poor performance of some teachers (Manabete et al., 2016).

Diseases and poor state of health: Selye (1976) maintained that when employees are exposed to continuous and constant stress, it will impact greatly on their state of health and general well-being. This may also lead to death (Selye, 1976).

Roles of Leadership and Higher Education Managers in Reducing and Managing Stress

Motivation: Leaders in academic communities are saddled with the responsibility of motivating their subordinates in accomplishing the tedious and numerous tasks ahead of them. Motivation is essential in organizational performance and vital for developing educational institutions (Etor & Etudor-Eyo, 2016; Peretemode, 2003). If staff are duly motivated, they will increase their productivity (Oredein & Awodun, 2013). This motivation can come in the form of appreciation of teachers, giving them their salaries on time, ensuring timely promotion and other forms of motivation (McCaffery, 2004).

Provision of facilities: Staff in higher learning institutions need adequate resources such as well- equipped lecture rooms, good offices, well-equipped laboratories, language laboratories and other social amenities that will promote staff effectiveness.

Adequacy of instructional facilities has direct impact and influences teaching and learning in schools (Senimetu, 2015). In addition, administrators of higher education must provide adequate housing and other social facilities needed for staff if they want to increase their productivity.

Support staff training and research: Training and development are vital tools for organizational development (Shen, 2004). Training has a great impact on staff productivity, health and safety (Goldstein & Ford, 2002). It is the responsibility of the leaders, policy makers and higher education managers to provide adequate support for their staff (McCaferry, 2006). This can be done by exposing academic staffs to various research tools and software such as the Statistical Packages for the Social Science (SPSS), Atlas.ti, Nvivo, Rasch Model, Matlab and a host of other software that will improve the quality of their research and facilitate easy journal publication. Staff training has a great impact on the employee productivity level in an organization (Ballot et al., 2006; Milhem et al., 2014). Management must also support lecturers by providing grants for conferences, seminars and workshops outside the country without giving preference to some staff over others. Exposing employees to various skills, training and development programs will impact positively on their current work and increase the overall performance of their organization (Kempton, 1995; Warr, 2002).

Plan for staff relaxation and rest: Staff relaxation, rest and recreation must constitute a large part of university managers' concern. Lecturers must be advised and compelled to take a break everyday between 1pm to 2pm or any convenient time. This will allow them to relax their brains and prepare for the next session of the day. All university activities must be suspended during the break time. In addition, separate recreation facilities must be provided for staff. Separate time must be allocated for recreation in the school time-table. This will enable staff to relax, take part in exercise or activities which will improve their state of health, make them forget their sorrow, have fun and feel healthy.

Enlightenment: The university management, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and government must collaborate in organizing enlightenment programs for staff in universities and other higher education institutions on how they can maintain good health, manage stress and improve their well-being. These will help to restore hope in the lecturers and re-engineer them toward their duty.

METHOD

Research Design: This study adopted a qualitative case study research design. The case study research design enables researchers to focus on the emergent case with the aim of providing solution to the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2012; Fraenkel et al., 2015). Therefore, five federal universities including 3 from South-West Nigeria and 2 from Northern Nigeria were used as a case study.

Population and Sampling: The population of this study consists of academic staff members in federal universities in South-Western and Northern Nigeria. Respondents from top federal universities were selected, including: University of Lagos, University of Ibadan, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University. A total of 10 respondents were sampled for this study. Two lecturers from each of these five federal universities were selected by random sampling for this study. Random sampling gives equal opportunity to each member of the group to be selected for the study (Priviteria, 2014).

Research Instrument: A semi-structured interview protocol developed by the researchers was used to explore the perception of lecturers on the impact of stress on members of academic staff in Nigerian universities. The interview protocol consisting of 7 questions was used to gather information from the respondents. Apart from the interview, observation was made on academic staff in selected universities and this was supported with documents. In essence, the study used three instruments: interview, observation and documentation.

Validity/Reliability of the Instrument: The semi-structured interview protocol was validated by three independent experts and professionals in the field of Education and Social Sciences before it was administered. Hence, the validity and reliability were assured.

Data Collection Procedure: The study was conducted over three months. The researchers visited the lecturers in their normal setting on three different occasions to discuss the aim of the study with them and solicit their support to take part in the interview. Phone calls were made to confirm availability of these lecturers and, finally, interview dates were fixed. The interview lasted for around 50 to 55 minutes. After the interview, the results were transcribed, coded and analyzed accordingly. The result of the analysis will be presented next.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results obtained from the interview, observation and documents on stress in higher education institutions in Nigeria. The result of the findings cut across all the three research questions set for this study.

Research Question 1: What are the sources of stress to lecturers in Nigerian higher institutions?

On the sources of stress to lecturers in Nigerian higher learning institutions, the result of the interview shows that lecturers in Nigerian higher learning institutions are going through academic stress, administrative stress, student-imposed stress and psychological stress. These can be seen in their statements:

Academic Workload

One of the major sources of stress to lecturers in Nigerian higher learning institutions is the academic workload. Some of them argued that they need to teach large classes in an unconducive environment unsuitable for effective teaching and learning. All the 10 respondents commented and complained bitterly about the academic stress. It is hitting so hard on them. Some responses derived from respondents on their sources of stress are:

> *''I think teaching stress is a major source of stress. As a lecturer in College of Education, you have to teach over 1000 students in marathon classes. This is a real problem and stressful situation''* (R3, 260516, DU- 9).

> *''…..At times, whenever I remember I have to take faculty courses or general courses, I always develop headache because it is going to be another tough day for me because the classes are always over populated. You can imagine how stressful that will be?''(R7, 010716, DU-7).*

Another respondent argued that teaching in an unconducive environment is a cause of stress:

> *''Teaching in an unconducive environment, addressing over 300 students in a lecture theatre with a small microphone which cannot even reach out to all the students. My brother, this troubles me a lot'' (R5, 100616, DU-7).*

Furthermore, respondent 8 argued that the number of courses lecturers take is a major cause of stress as indicated below:

> *''To me the courses and workload on lecturers is a major problem. Some of us are taking 7 to 8 courses per semester in both full-time and part-time classes across different levels'' (R8,060716, DU-9).*

Another aspect of workload seen as academic stress to lecturers is the need for lecturers to meet their key performance indicators. To this respondent, the KPI in addition to other academic activities constitute what he tagged as academic stress.

> ''Thank you, meeting up with the KPI in academic circle is a great challenge in my own opinion. We need to write papers, attend conferences, seminars and others in addition to the numerous workload in the university. Automatically, remembering all these constitute stress to most lecturers in my university'' (R1, 030516, DU-6).

In addition, some respondents see marking of large students scripts as a source of workload constituting stress to lecturers. They considered marking of students' examination script as one stressful part of academic stress among lecturers. The following comments support this.

> ''I need to mark over 3000 scripts per academic semester after going through over 11 weeks of rigorous teaching. In fact, this is a serious area of stress'' (R6, 150616, DU-8).

> ''I am taking a general course which all students in the faculty will offer, 6 courses for full time students and 3 for part-time classes with numerous supervisees. Imagine, reading and marking plenty manuscripts. Then, the institution is imposing a deadline need….Not only marking, you need to deliver at a very short period of time'' (R9, 180716, DU-10).

Preparing note of lesson objectively without repetition is also considered an integral aspect of academic stress. This is the view of respondent 3 below.

> ''Well em.. em. I will say preparing for the classes is a stressful exercise. As a sincere and dedicated teacher in higher institution, I always ensure that my notes are not the same. I even go extra mile to source for textbooks outside my university, prepare a separate note different from what I taught last year. Doing this is really stressful for me. I think it will be so for any serious teacher who really wants to impact on learners'' (R3, 26516, DU-8).

Administrative Stress

Some lecturers are saddled with the responsibility of taking administrative work, committee work and other appointment in their respective institute. Despite the administrative work, these lecturers are still expected to take their normal classroom teaching. Therefore they need to combine both administrative and academic work and meet up with the challenges and targets of both. This act constitutes stress to lecturers in Nigerian universities as it has a lot of impact on their primary duty. The following statements of respondent 4 and 10 enunciated more on this.

> ''…Some of us are working as lecturers and also members of some committees in the university. Being a member of convocation committee, I need to attend series of meetings, prepare note of lesson, teach my students, mark and submit result. All these I have to do'' (R4, 060616, DU-13).

> ''I will say administrative in the sense that these lecturers who are basically employed to teach and conduct research are also used in doing some administrative work. This now make some lecturers hide under administrative work to avoid their teaching and research'' (R10, 210716, DU-15).

Students-Imposed Stress

These lecturers argued that student do contribute to their stress level. They argued that student's attitude like laziness, moral and upbringing varies and they display different behaviour which results to stress to their teachers in various ways as presented below:

> ''To me, the stress I get from students is the major burden I have. Some students are not serious, they are not ready to learn rather they will try all avenue to get their lecturers. This is a serious source of stress'' (R2, 110216, DU-11).

> ''Some students are willing to give themselves for mark at all cost. Most especially the female students. They don't want to work but rather prefer to use what they have to get whatever they want. This has landed a lot of male lecturers into trouble and harassment'' (R3, 260516, DU-14).

> ''When you look at what students in universities are giving us in terms of stress, you will pity the lecturers. Some are lazy and not ready to do anything but wish to pass and get [the] certificate. They will not do assignment, miss test and even be bold enough to come and plead with you claiming that they have family problems . . . disturbing them. . . .'' (R5, 100616, DU-12).

Students joining some illegal societies in campuses are a source of stress to their lecturers. This is the view of respondent 8:

> ''Some students are joining secret cult today. These sets of students do threaten lecturers who fail their members. They now see cultism as a way to escape from their primary duty and an avenue to get everything they want in the university'' (R8, 060716, DU-14).

At times students display immoral behaviour or attitude which they learnt from their societies to academic community. This is a concern to lecturers because these bad and negative attitude have effect on their performance and students-lecturer relationship as expressed by respondent 9:

> ''The fact that students came from different homes, cultural background and society has reflected in their attitude to their study and attitude at school. Some show immoral attitude which serves as a great concern to me'' (R9, 180716, DU-15).

Psychological Stress

At times lecturers have their own issues which constitute stress to them. These issues range from family, social needs and others. Respondent 3 acknowledged this fact in the following statement:

> ''Lecturers are human being. We have our own problems just like everyone in the street. These problems often results into stress for us too…'' (R3, 260516, DU-14).

Family issues, organizational politics and conflict often constitute stress to lecturers as reported by respondents 4 and 7:

> *''When I have issue with my wife or need to get some things for my children whom I am unable to get at that time, it leads to psychological stress for me because my mind will be there. I will be thinking about how to meet up with my domestic needs and settle my family. When this conflicts with the office stress, then it increases the psychological stress I am facing'' (R4, 060616, DU-15).*

> *''…thinking alone is enough a stress. When you sit down and start thinking of how to meet up with your colleague, social needs like building a house, sending your children to best schools just like others, at least live a comfortable life above the lower class, it gives me more stress which at times leads to headache and serious pressure in my mind'' (R7,010716, DU-15).*

Observation of this issue shows that lecturers in these universities are seriously going through this stress. The researchers checked lecture time tables and found that some lecturers have to take all levels of students. Similarly, students keep coming to make clarification and assistance on their courses from these lecturers. Yet, these lecturers need to conduct research and publish according to the university guideline. All these were observed in these universities. The finding is in line with the result and view of Richard (2012), Lambert et al. (2006) who agreed that teachers undergo a lot of stress and stressful conditions. In addition, other findings by Ekundayo and Kolawole (2013), and Fisher (2011) underscored that student-imposed stress, teaching stress and other forms of stress disrupt the performance of teachers and the teaching learning process.

Research Question 2: What are the impacts of stress on lecturers in Nigerian higher institutions?

Commenting on the second research question, the respondents maintained that stress leads to low productivity, low morale and sickness among lecturers in Nigerian higher education institutions. These will be elaborated further in the following sub-headings:

Low Productivity

Some of the respondents adjudged that stress on lecturers results in low performance and productivity. This is evident in the following comments:

> *''When teachers are working under a stressful condition and sorry situation, it will definitely result into poor performance. This is what we witness here in my institute and other similar institutions in Nigeria'' (R1, 030516, DU-16).*

> *''….all of us need to teach, write high impact papers, attend seminars, workshops, and prepare lesson notes and all other things within a short semester. To do a quality research, it will take you seven months to fifteen months, collecting data, analyzing. I think all these cannot be combined with university assignments and teaching… No lecturer can objectively do all these within a short time. Hence, the reason for poor quality of research in our universities'' (R4, 060616, DU-20).*

> *''Well, I think too much workload on lecturers has result into the poor and low productivity which we witness in Nigerian universities today. Lecturers are working under stress and serious pressure and the result does not impact on the economy….'' (R7, 010716, DU-18).*

Low Morale

Morale of teachers towards teaching and academic work is hindered by stress. This is the view of three lecturers who strongly maintained that their morale is seriously affected with the stressful nature of their work. Some comments are:

''To me, I will say the major effect of stress is low teacher morale. Teachers in higher institutions are not encouraged to overcome the stress associated with the teaching activities'' (R8, 060716, DU-17).

''The stress at times affects my morale towards work but I think we don't have option as a teacher in higher institution of learning. You just need to cope'' (R10, 210716, DU-20).

Sickness

Respondents argued that when their stress level is high [and] it often results in sickness and poor state of health. The following responses confirm this.

''When I am under serious pressure and stressful situation, I usually develop high fever and headache which often result into sickness'' (R1,030516, DU-17).

''Some of our staff are battling series of ill-health and diseases which I think occur due to the stress of this work'' (R2, 110516, DU-19).

''… even lecturer who retire from the system often don't live long as some of them battled with some diseases who are result of the stressful conditions [they] have been subject to. In fact, this scares serving lecturers in my university. I think this may account for the reason why some lecturers show negative attitude to their work…'' (R6, 150616, DU-19).

Our observation of these lecturers shows that some of them are down with stress. One of the lecturers postponed his interview because he was exhausted for the day. Some developed headache after taking large classes like faculty courses. These findings are in line with the position of Selye (1976) who opined that stress impact on the well-being of employees and even results in death of workers.

Research Question 3: What should be the role of administrators and leadership in curbing stress in higher education institutions?

Relating to the expected role of administrators, managers and policy makers in managing staff stress in universities, the respondents maintained that motivation, sympathy, sincerity and transparency, provision of facilities are their key roles.

Motivation

Respondents argued that motivation is the first thing they need from their administrators, government and policy makers. They argued that once they are motivated they are ready to increase their productivity level, as shown in the following responses:

''My brother, the first thing they need to do is to encourage lecturers. Lecturers are working tirelessly in pathetic situation. After working so hard, teaching, writing papers and marking, what you see is that some lecturers are not paid. Can you imagine how terrible it will be if a lecturer has not been paid for over four months? Owing and delaying lecturers' salary is wickedness and injustice to these teachers who suffered and put their best in their work. They should pay teachers' salary on time. This is the first role and the first thing that can reduce our stress'' (R3, 260516, DU-23).

''I will say encouragement in form of motivation. Lecturers need to be encouraged at all times. This encouragement include appreciation of their good work in producing skilled manpower needed in the country, striving to pay our salaries as at when due, granting promotion to lecturers at appropriate time without having to pass through rigorous process and waiting over donkey years before you get promoted because you do not belong to the caucus of the leaders….''(R4, 060616, DU-28).

This motivation can come in various ways or dimension as reported by respondent 10 in the next excerpt:

''To me, lecturers can be motivated in various ways. The leaders, managers of higher education and policy makers must take good care of our family, accommodation, health. As I speak to you now, there some lecturers who have been applying for accommodation in the university staff quarters for over five years and have not received any positive response. Some of us live outside the campus and we pay heavily for rent, fuel [for] our cars and spend a lot of time in the traffic. If our university leaders and government can see to providing more quarters for staff, it will motivate lecturers a lot in my university'' (R10, 210716, DU-27).

Sympathy

Some respondents belief that educational administrators, leaders and policy makers should show sympathy for teachers in universities. This sympathy can come in various forms like setting realistic and achievable targets. This is the view of respondents 8 and 9:

''They need to be considerate, sympathetic and realistic. They must set realistic target bearing in mind that this teaching task is not easy. So, they must give achievable, attainable and realistic target'' (R8, 060716, DU-26).

''I think it is high time leaders and policy makers get things right. They want us to meet up with developed countries. Fine, but giving us some difficult target, deadlines, assignment without support is a great havoc to the system. Therefore, they can help us by giving assignment, tasks based on what we are going through'' (R9, 180716, DU-27).

Provision of facilities

These respondents maintained that provision of facilities in universities will promote effective teaching and learning:

''When there are enough materials in the library, lecturers can easily publish in any international journals. So, they should improve the library with modern, latest and world class materials. This is one of their roles'' (R2, 110516, DU-25).

''To me, I think they need to fix our lecture halls and auditorium because teaching a large crowd is seriously frustrating'' (R5, 100616, DU-28).

''As a health professional, I will suggest the university management create recreation center for staff if they want us to deliver objectively and grant us time to do physical exercise. In my university some lecturers do come to office on Saturdays in order to complete their unfinished work. I think there should be [a]recreation center to ward away their stress'' (R6, 150616, DU-29).

Sincerity and Transparency

Others urged their management to be sincere and transparent in their dealings with staff. To them, this will help to reduce lecturers' stress in Nigerian universities:

''Our leaders must be fair and transparent in their dealings with lecturers. When there is an allocation or allowance to be paid, they must do it objectively and sincerely. They must not favour some group at the expense of others. Those who are not favoured will be demotivated, stressed and feel cheated. Therefore, they may reduce their loyalty to the leadership. I will say that sincerity and fairness must be upheld by leaders and policy makers'' (R2, 110516, DU-28).

''….with promotion, they must be open and faithful. What you see is that some lecturers are favoured by leaders because they are their boys or allied. These staff will quickly get promoted while those who are actually working, using their own money to make research will not be because they are not in their caucus. It implies that leaders in universities and policy makers must treat lecturers with honesty, fairness and transparency'' (R10, 210716, DU-29).

Observation shows that some lecturers from departments with few facilities and small classes are having a nice time and are not under severe pressure unlike their counterpart from faculties with large student populations. These findings are in line with the position of Iheanacho et al. (2013) who opined and argued that recreation facilities must be upgraded in Nigerian universities. Also, it conforms with the view of Adeyemi and Igbineweka (2000); Babatope (2010) who maintained that facilities must be provided and effectively utilized in order to attain the goals of university education. Furthermore, motivation plays a vital role in teacher's satisfaction, as observed in the study by Oredein and Awodun(2013) who suggested that teachers must be motivated in order to increase their level of productivity. Finally, McCaffery (2004) also suggested that university leaders must be transparent and dynamic in their operation as a way of improving the educational system.

In summary, educational administrators in universities, policy makers, planners and government must ensure that adequate facilities are provided for lecturers, pay their salaries on time and ensure fairness and transparency in their dealings. All these will reduce the stress of lecturers in Nigerian universities as found in this study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to make higher education institutions in Nigeria productive and attain the goals set for them as contained in the National Policy on Education (2004), the following measures must be put in place:

1. Management in various higher learning institutions must provide an enabling environment for staff to develop by providing required facilities needed for effective teaching and learning.
2. Lecturers must not be overloaded with a lot of administrative responsibilities if we want them to be productive and effective.
3. Higher learning institutions must uphold disciplinary measures on student indiscipline across all levels without giving preference to anyone irrespective of their background, ethnic or social status.
4. Also, management and leaders in higher learning institutions must set attainable, realistic and achievable standards for lecturers especially for research publication and promotion.
5. Effective monitoring of staff must be done fairly and strategically.
6. Lecturers should be given adequate training and support in order to accomplish their numerous and difficult tasks.

7. Any academic staff member who does not meet his or her Key Performance Indicator after all necessary assistance and support should be disengaged from the service. This will serve as lesson to some lecturers who only see teaching in higher institutions as an opportunity to enrich themselves.

8. Competent, skilled and serious students should be trained and put in a succession tray in all faculties, schools and colleges. This will serve as a way of reducing the work stress on lecturers. This must be done sincerely without giving preference to religious, ethnic, political or social factor.

CONCLUSION

Stress is a vital factor in employee performance. Lecturers in higher learning institutions are not exempted from the effect of stress. In order to achieve the goals of higher education in Nigeria, there is need to manage lecturers' stress. Lecturers themselves must take their work seriously, ensure effective daily plan of their activities, and collaborate with their colleagues in teaching, learning and research. Higher education managers, leaders and policy makers must give their support in reducing and managing stress of lecturers in higher learning institutions as a way of making higher education responsive to the human capital needs of society and enhancing economic, social, political and technological development of Nigeria.

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