

## **GENDER INFLUENCE ON THE STRESS EXPERIENCE OF UNIVERSITY LECTURERS.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study investigates the influence of gender on stress experience of University Lecturers. The descriptive research design of the survey type was used while stratified random sampling technique was used to select 100 lecturers in all the Faculties of Ekiti State University.

A research instrument titled "Lecturers stress prevalence measuring scale (LSPM) was used to collect data. The face and content validity of the instrument was ensured by giving it to experts. In determining the reliability of the instrument test re-test reliability was used and a correlation coefficient of 0.72 was obtained using Pearson product moment correlation method and found significant at 0.05 level.

The result of the analysis showed that inadequate infrastructure in the University to contributed significantly to stress. It was also found that male and female lecturers experience stress as a result of workload. Based on the findings it is recommended that there should be reduction in the workload of lecturers. The concerned authorities should provide infrastructures both in offices and classroom where teaching is taking place. There should be relaxation centers or better social net-working to reduce the stress faced by lecturers in the University.

## Introduction

Stress seems to be a parashoot of human survival. It is part of the inevitable experience of man as they strive in the journey of life. That means that it is part of life which is also acceptable. People talk about it, discuss it with little or no attention being paid to it. The demand and challenges of everyday such as job, economic conditions, marriage, desire to survive and others appears to be part of the stressors of life. Man's response to a particular stressful situation determines whether the stress is good or bad. Chitty (2005) looked at stress as all the responses the body makes while striving to maintain equilibrium and deal with the demands of life.

Desirable response to stressful situation motivates individuals to grow and achieve his/her realistic expectations. Stress for instance related to institutional demands and self desires motivate many academic staff to develop their potentials and realize their ambitions. However, response to undesirable stressful situations and prolonged stress may result and affect the physical, emotional and cognitive areas of functioning. According to Chitty (2005) cognitively or intellectually prolonged stress of University lecturers causes decreased mental capacity, perpetual windled problem solving skills. The implication of this according to Edlin and Golanty (2007) is that prolonged stress affects the whole person.

Stress appears to be a silent killer which does not weigh people down in a day, therefore people seems to be careless about it or manage it the way it should. This is in agreement with the discovery of Gorman (2007), who admitted that unremitting stress does damage to the immune system and can reduce individual's life span. There have been instances in University whereby lecturers Slum after stressful activities. Lecturers are being saddled with lots of workloads, inadequate ventilated offices, noisy environment, multiple University programmes, inadequate lecture halls, keeping pace with Institutional demands, and others, appears to highten the stress experience of the lectures. Ignoring the risks of these prevailed stress means risking one's health which may result into untimely death. Responding to the demands of this complex academic lifestyle may disturb the psychological equilibrium of a person.

Stress is an inseparable experience in human life, it has both positive and negative consequences. It is positive when it induces success.

### Optimal stress

elicits challenge and motivates success. It becomes disabling and pathological when an individual lacks or forfeits the mechanisms or resources to handle and manage stress. The Lecturers in the University of Nigeria are bewildered with a lot of challenges that elongates their coping mechanisms. The environment where teaching is taking place appears not to be permissive for teaching learning situations. It appears as if most of the lecture rooms apart from been inadequate are in states of disrepair. The upsurge in the population of students with attendant problem, of the facilities for teaching has complicated the challenge or threatened the challenges of stress faced by University lecturers.

The situation of non regimentation of the nature of lecturers job seems to complicate the problem. Lecturers are made to perform virtually all the roles in the University systems. The lecturer of Ekiti State University is a Registrar, a teacher administrator, counselor in the University set up. All these arduous roles needs dedication, transparency and lots of commitment. The lecturer is accountable or answerable to all threats or demands imposed on him/her by the University authority and the Students.

Also, the offices of the lecturers in Ekiti State University appears not to be congenial as accommodation. The problem of electricity even though is a peculiar problem appears to need serious attention in the University establishment. The lecturers that are supposed to spend a lot of time in their offices found it difficult to do so because the environment is not habitable or congenial for their living. There are inadequate offices furniture to enhance performance of their duties.

The Researchers observed that it appears as if the susceptibility of Lecturers to stress appears to be different in Ekiti State University. The Gender role imposed on females which accrue to them additional roles seems to worsen the situation. A lot of lecturers that are females have been seen to perform the arduous academic roles performed by their males counterparts and they still have to meet up with their domestic chores or activities. A lot of these women are seen and appear to be irritable while performing their role and are seen often to complain about tiredness while on the job. Archibong, Bassey and Effiom (2010) found that students behaviour was the greatest source of stress to Academic staff and limitation of funds for research were the highest source of stress. They also found that career

development was one of stress source to Academic Staff Archibong et.al (2010) also reported that male and female academic staff perceived differently work

related stress level in daily activity as a teacher. In a study conducted by Hogan Carlson & Dua (2002) they found out that job and non work stress has positive significant effect with behavioural cognitive and physiological reactions to stress as well as with negative emotionality.

In a study conducted by Narayanan, Marion and Spector (1999) they found that interpersonal conflict played a greater role in causing job stress for women than for men.

Purvanova and Muros (2010) conducted a meta-analysis of the relationship between gender and burnout using 409 effect sizes from 183 studies. The findings contradicted the common belief that female employees tend to experience burnout more than male employees. Their findings showed that women are slightly more emotionally exhausted than men.

Adeoye (2002) researched into correlates of stress among female lecturers and found out that the dual roles of female lecturers as wife and mothers as well as lecturers is a major source of stress. A related study by Durosaro (1995) indicated that while the husbands go to clubs and other relaxation centres to unwind or reduce stress female lecturers goes home to work and attend to domestic chores and care for the children.

Durosaro (1995) also observed that stress and stress related outcomes do have serious consequence on individual's personal mental, psychological and physical health. This makes them to be nagging, uncooperative with co-worker and highly intolerant to people around them.

Adeoye (2002) found out that there was no significant difference in the stress experience by female lecturers and their male counterparts Okorie-Uguru (2007) reported that highly stressful situations generate a lot of symptoms to indicate its presence while task is being performed such symptoms' like low self esteem; defective judgment, lack of memory inability to concentrate and loss of perspective.

Chilty (2005) observed that cognitively or intellectually prolonged stress of University Lecturers causes decreased mental capacity, perpetual and reduced problem solving skills. The implication of this according to Edlin and Golanty (2007) is that prolonged stress affects the whole person.

Stress appears to be a silent killer which does not just weigh people down in a day.

Archibong, Bassey and Effiom (2010) in their study discovered that male and female lecturers perceived differently work – related stress level in their daily activity as teachers. It may not be

surprising that stress experience in daily academic activities of lecturers also affect their behavioural, cognitive and physiological reactions to issues Hogan, Carlson & Duo (2002) in their own submission reported that stress has significant effect on behavioural, cognitive and physiological reactions to stress as well as with negative emotionality.

### Methodology:

The study employed descriptive research design of survey type. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 100 lecturers across gender in all the faculties of the Ekiti State University.

The instrument for the study was “Lecturers Stress prevalence Measuring Scale (LSPM): The face and content validity of the Instrument was ensured. Test re-test reliability of the instrument was ensured. In determining the reliability of the Instrument, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used, a reliability co-efficient of 0.72 was obtained at 0.05 level of significance.

The study looked into the sources of lecturers’ stress and the gender influence on stress. Thus one general question was raised and one hypothesis was postulated.

Question 1: What are the various sources of stress within and outside the University that affect lecturers?

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between stress experienced by male and female lecturers.

The question raised was answered by descriptive statistics while the hypothesis postulated was tested through t-test inferential statistics. The results are therefore presented:

Table 1: Sources of stress among Ekiti State University Lecturers.

Items	Agree	%	Disagree	%
High workload	83	83	17	17
Teaching a large class	66	66	34	34
Marking large number of Scripts	62	62	38	38
Attending Seminars and workshops	29	29	71	71
Writing papers (articles)	60	60	40	40
Poor physical working condition	79	79	21	21
Poor Social Interaction among colleagues	45	45	55	55
Slow promotion	59	59	41	41
Poor remuneration	74	74	26	26
Inadequate Infrastructures	85	85	15	15
Family problems	38	38	62	62
Large number of children	16	16	84	84
Poor health	31	31	69	69
Little support from Spouse	41	41	59	59
Financial problem	43	43	57	57

The table shows some causes and sources of stress prevalent among Ekiti State University lecturers based on the opinions of 100 lecturers. The table showed that the lecturers considered inadequate infrastructure as the highest stressor with 85( 85%, workload) 83( 83%) poor physical working condition 79%, poor physical working condition 79 (79%) poor remuneration 74(74%). Other stressors that have low ratings on the other hand are: large number of children 16 (16%), poor health 31 (31%), attending seminars and workshops 29 (29%).

Table 2: t-test table showing stress experience between male and female lecturers.

Variables	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 2 shows that the mean of variables (Male and female) as 99.46 and 13.38 respectively. The table also shows the value of t-calculated (1.566) and t-table value (1.980). Here the t-calculated is less than the t-table value. Therefore the hypothesis is upheld, both male and female lecturers experience stress in their work levels.

Archibong, Bassey, & Effom (2010) in their study discovered that male and female lecturers perceived differently work – related stress in their daily activity as teachers. It may not be surprising then if stress experience in daily academic activities of lecturers also affect their behavioural, cognitive and physiological reactions to issues.

Hogan, Carlson, & Dua (2002) in their own submission from their findings reported that stress has significant effect on behavioural, cognitive, and physiological reactions to stress as well as with negative emotionality.

### **Research Rationale**

The researcher observed that University Lecturers are susceptible to stress. It appears as if the volume of work done by lecturers like academic work shortage of Facilities administrative work and domestic work imparts on the various life conditions of University Lecturers. All these impact appears to on

the disposition of lecturers to students, performance of job and their living conditional. On the basis of this the researches investigates the identified sources of stress within and outside the University that affects Lecturers. The researchers also found out if there is significant difference between stress experienced by Male and Female Lecturers.

### **Discussion**

The null hypothesis' there is no significant difference between stress experienced by male and female lecturer was accepted. This shows that female and male lecturers are susceptible to stress. This is in agreement with Adeoye (2002) finding that there was no significant difference in the stress experience by female lecturers and their male counterparts.

There are indications also that male and female lecturers are susceptible to stress as shown in the

large workload, large classes, marking of scripts and poor physical conditions. This is also in agreement with Eyupoglua and Sanerb (2009) study that indicated that Professors, Assistant Professors and Lecturers with Ph.D enjoy only moderate levels of job satisfaction while associate Professors and Lecturers with a Master degree enjoy even lower levels of job satisfaction. They found that job satisfaction did not increase progressively with academic rank. Also Oshagbemi (2003) found that overall job satisfaction increased progressively with academic rank. This may be because a higher level academic rank tends to be more complex and have better working conditions, promotion prospects, supervision and responsibility and all this condition may contribute to person's job satisfaction. Robie Ryan, Schmieder, Para & Smith (1998)

## RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings it is recommended that the work load of the lecturers should be reduced. Also there should be employment of more academic staff to reduce the workload of the lecturers. There should the relaxation centers on the University system to reduce the stress faced by the University lecturers. The Nigeria University Commission should also Censor and monitor the crash and part time programmes organized in the Nigeria Universities.

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