

Stress Management Strategies and Lecturers' Job Efficiency in Public Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

Prof. Eric C. Amadi & Emmanuel-Ichenwo, Datonjo

Department of Educational Management,
Faculty of Education

Rivers State University, Nkpulu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt.

Corresponding Author's Email: amadi.eric@ust.edu.ng; tjcyril.dei@gmail.com

Suggested Citation: Amadi, E.C. & Emmanuel-Ichenwo, D. (2024). Strategies for Managing Stress and Lecturers' Job Efficiency in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State. *International Journal of Contemporary Academic Research*, 5(4), 33-43

Abstract

The study investigated stress management strategies and lecturers' job efficiency in public tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Three specific objectives, three research questions and three hypotheses guided the conduct of the study. The study adopted correlational research design. The area where this study was carried out was Rivers State. The population of the study was 5611 academic staff in the six tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The sample size for this study was 420 lecturers selected from six tertiary institutions in Rivers State using cluster sampling technique. The questionnaires used in the study were titled "Stress Management Strategies Questionnaire" and "Lecturers' Efficiency Questionnaire". The instruments were validated by experts in Educational Management and the reliability of the instrument were established using Cronbach Alpha Reliability method which gave a reliability coefficient of 0.71, and 0.77 for each of the six clusters in first instrument while 0.88 was obtained for the second instrument. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to provide answer to the six research questions posed in the study. The null hypotheses were tested by comparing the p-value with the level 0.05 level of significance. The study found that stress management strategies such as positive work environment, and social interaction have significant relationship with lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended amongst others that government through the school administrators should ensure that a conducive and comfortable work environment such as spacious and furnished offices, availability of infrastructural resources amongst others, for lecturers. Availability of conducive work environment will enable lecturers' work effectively with minimal stress.

Keywords: Stress Management, Strategies, Lecturers', Job Efficiency

I. INTRODUCTION

Education in general and higher education in particular, are fundamental to the construction of a knowledge-based economy and society in all nations. As such, government has continued to increase resources allocated to education because it is a vital component of education (Maina, 2014). Although, there are various resources that are synergistically coordinated to ensure the delivery of tertiary education objectives, lecturers remain the primary resource that play crucial role in tertiary institutions. Therefore, in order to ensure lecturers' efficiency in tertiary institutions, they must be stress-free to be able to harness other educational resources for the achievement of tertiary education objectives.

The World Health Organization (2020), described stress as the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope. Timothy and Heidi (2018), stress is referred to the body's response to excessive or complicated work demands. Selye (2016)

defined stress as the non-specific response of the body to any demands made upon it. According to the researcher stress is not merely a synonym for distress. Martins (2011), described stress as any stimulus that places strain on a person's physical and physiological capacity to adjust. Stress occurs in a wide range of work environments but is often made worse when employees feel they have little support from supervisors and colleagues, as well as little control over work processes.

Stress management is the process of acquiring and practicing a variety of cognitive and behavioral techniques with the goal of managing and coping with stress. According to Bruce (2013), stress management strategies refer to a proven group of techniques for modifying stress, producing thoughts, relaxing away physical and emotional tension and learning how to make changes to the environment (or situation) whenever possible. Effective stress management strategy can help in resolving conflicts with others assertively and confidently becoming better problem solvers in the face of life's demands and to appreciate the helpfulness of exercise and recreation. Stress management strategies are necessary in order to reduce the impact of stress on lecturers and improve their productivity in tertiary institution.

The concept of efficiency involves the interplay of various elements in the workplace in the school while the inputs may be related to miscellaneous resources (labour, materials, and capital). The output is the outcome of the whole process in terms of student's achievement (Oduwaiye & Oyedepo, 2011). Efficiency refers to the capacity to accomplish predetermined goals within specified timeframes and constraints (Yusuf, Mohammed & Kazeem, 2014). If a lecturer's ability to be productive is impacted by personal issues, it is necessary for the employer, supervisor, or management to interfere by proffering means to reinstate the productivity of the employees.

In order to enable lecturers' manage stress, it is essential that a conducive work environment that could positively influence lecturers' work efficiency is provided. Work environment could be defined as a physical and emotional space where an employee performs their daily tasks (Perry, 2023). There are three components that makes up a work environment, these include the physical environment- involves the amenities of the place where an individual works such as desk space, lightning, power and other equipment needed for work. Work environment also include the working conditions, that is the terms under which an employee agrees to do. A positive work environment can help moderate stress lecturers are exposed

to in the course of their duties. Contrarily, Lukan, Bolliger, Pauwels, Bacquer and Clays (2022) posited that negative work environment can result to headaches, stomachaches, and other physiological disorders. A lecturer who undergoes disorder of any may less likely be efficient in their job performance. Therefore, it is important that lecturers are provided with good working condition to enhance their productivity.

In another development, social interaction is another stress management strategy that could help lecturers in their workplace. Social support as having friends and other people, including family, to turn to in times of need or crisis to give a broader focus and positive self-image (Sue, 2020). Social support enhances quality of life and provides a buffer against adverse life events. Lecturers' engaging in social interaction for social support can be an effective way of managing stress. A research have shown that people with high levels of social support seem to be more resilient in the face of stressful situations (Reid, 2023). The author further posited that people with strong social interaction have a lower perception of stress in general and have less of a physiological response to life's stressors. Social networks, whether formal (such as a church or social club) or informal (meeting with friends) provide a sense of belonging, security, and community. By having strong social connections with friends, interactions that could increase the happiness and counsel a stressed individual may arise.

Statement of the Problem

Stress has become an impeding factor to efficiency of employees in a given organization in which tertiary institution shares a part. Lecturers that happen to undergo stress at workplace may experience diminishing mental health which can hamper their levels of efficiency. Also, stress lends itself to increased rates of anxiety and depression, which can affect lecturers' efficiency and individual lives. For instance, in some tertiary institutions, a lecturer may be required to teach two or more courses across diverse academic programmes such as full-time, part-time, sandwich involving postgraduates and undergraduates. This shows a lecturer works all-round the season without significant rest. Academic programmes in some institutions are organized in such that while undergraduates' session is over, post-graduate session resumes. While others run undergraduate and postgraduate programmes simultaneously. This poses a great level of stress to lecturers who are the active factor in the programme. The question is, how could stress be managed among lecturers to enhance their work efficiency? In bid to provide answer to the questions above, the study will investigate

the relationship between Stress Management Strategies and Lecturers' Job Efficiency in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between stress management strategies and lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to;

1. determine the relationship between positive work environment and lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State
2. examine the relationship between lecturers' social interaction and lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between positive work environment and lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?
2. What is the relationship between social interaction and lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between positive work environment and lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant relationship between social interaction and lecturers' efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State

II. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted correlational research design. According to Amadi (2020) correlation survey research design is a suitable when a researcher intends to establish the relationship between two variables independently. In this study, the researcher investigated the relationship between stress management strategies and lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The area where this study was carried out was Rivers State. The population of the study was 5611 academic staff in the six tertiary institutions in Rivers State (Administrative Office of Tertiary Institutions, 2022). The sample size for this study was 420 lecturers from the six tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Taro Yamene formula

was used to determine the sample size of 373. However, for the purpose of easy sampling, the researcher adopted 420 as the sample size. In the sampling procedure, multistage sampling technique was adopted. At first stage, the tertiary institutions were grouped into six using cluster sampling technique. Secondly, simple random sampling was used to select 6 departments from each of the six tertiary institutions, to arrive at 42 departments that were involved in the study. Furthermore, 10 lecturers were selected from each of 42 departments, totaling 420 lecturers that were involved in the study. Hence, the sample size of the study was 420 lecturers in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Two research instruments were used to obtain data needed for the conduct of the study. The questionnaires used in the study were titled “Stress Management Strategies Questionnaire (SMSQ)” and “Lecturers’ Efficiency Questionnaire (LJEQ)”.

The SMSQ consisted of six clusters of items eliciting information on each of the variables in the research questions. The two instruments were subjected to validity by two experts in Educational Management and two in Measurement and Evaluation, Faculty of Education, Rivers State University. Cronbach Alpha reliability method was used to establish the reliability of the instruments which gave 0.71, 0.77, and 0.82, respectively for the two instruments consisting three clusters. 420 copies (100 percent) of the questionnaire were distributed however, only 382 (91.2 percent) were retrieved and usable for data analysis. This shows a high retrieval rate. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to provide answer to the six research questions posed in the study. The decision rule was correlation coefficient (r) from 0.00-0.30 was termed “very low relationship”, 0.31-0.49 was termed low relationship, 0.50-0.59 was termed “moderate relationship”, 0.60-0.79 was termed “high relationship” and 0.80-0.99 was termed “very high relationship”. Note that the correlation coefficient may be negative or positive. The null hypotheses were tested by comparing the p -value with the level 0.05 level of significance using the following decision rule; If the p -value is less than the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$): Decision: Reject the null hypothesis. If the p -value is NOT less than the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) Decision: Accept the null hypothesis.

III. RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between positive work environment and lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Table 1: PPMCC Analysis on the Relationship between Work Environment and Lecturers' Job Efficiency in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

Variables	N	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r-cal	Remark
Positive Work Environment (X)	382	9449	250623	266257	+0.85	High Positive
Lecturers' Efficiency (Y)		10099	289401			

Source: Field Survey Data, 2024

Table 1 presents the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis on the relationship between positive work environment and lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The analysis revealed that the calculated coefficient (r) value was 0.85. This indicates a high positive relationship between the two variables. That is, there is high positive relationship between positive work environment and lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between social interaction and lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Table 2: PPMCC Analysis on the Relationship Between Social Interaction and Lecturers' Job Efficiency in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

Variables	N	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r-cal	Remark
Social Interaction (X)	382	7758	171128	219509	+0.83	High Positive
Lecturers' Efficiency (Y)		10099	289401			

Source: Field Survey Data, 2024

Table 2 presents the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis on the relationship between social interaction and lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The analysis in table 2 showed that the r-value was +0.83 which indicates that there is high positive correlation between the two variables investigated in the study (social

interaction and lecturers' efficiency). To answer the research question, the analysis affirmed that there is high positive relationship between social interaction as a means of stress management and lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Test of Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between positive work environment and lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Table 3: Significance of the Relationship between Positive Work Environment and Lecturers' Job Efficiency in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

Variables	N	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r	α	df	P-value (Sig)	Remark
Work Environment (X)	382	9449	250623	266257	0.85	0.05	380	0.000	Rejected
Lecturers' Efficiency (Y)	382	10099	289401						

Source: Research Output, 2024

Table 3 shows the significance of the relationship work environment and lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The table revealed that r-value= 0.85, 2-tailed p- value =0.000 and df = 380. Therefore, the null hypothesis that "there is no significant relationship between positive work environment as a stress management strategy and lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State." is rejected as df=380, 2-tailed p = 0.000 > α = 0.05. This implies that there is statistically significant relationship between positive work environment as a stress management strategy and lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between social interaction and lecturers' efficiency in in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Table 4: Significance of the Relationship Between Social Interaction and Lecturers' Job Efficiency in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

Variables	N	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r-cal	α	df	p-value (Sig)	Remark
Social Interaction (X)	382	7758	171128						
				219509	0.83	0.05	380	0.000	Rejected
Lecturers' Efficiency (Y)	382	10099	289401						

Source: Research Output, 2024

Table 4 shows the significance of the relationship social interaction and lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The table revealed that r-value obtained was 0.83, at degrees of freedom 380 and 0.05 level of significance the 2- tailed p- value obtained was 0.000 which is "significant". Since the p-value (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.05), the null hypothesis is hence rejected. That is there is a significant relationship between social interaction as a stress management strategy and lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State." is rejected as $df=380$, 2-tailed $p = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from research question 1 as revealed in table 1 presents the Pearson Product moment correlation analysis on the relationship between work environment as a stress management strategy and lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The findings showed that there is a very high positive relationship between work environment as a stress management strategy and lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The strength of the relationship shows that when work environment is carefully prepared and structured to ease lecturers job stress, there would be a definite increase in lecturers' efficiency. The result of the hypothesis showed that the existing relationship is statistically significant. The finding is in tandem with Azumah, (2018) who examined the relationship between work environment and employees' performance in firms in Port Harcourt and found out work environment creates positive impact on employees' productivity towards performance efficiency of the servicing firms. The study further posited that the concept of work environment experience significant increase in employees' productivity, while those that neglect the concept experience decline in their performance efficiency. Yusuf, Olufunke and Valentine (2015) carried out a study

to examine the causes and impact of stress on lecturers' efficiency as expressed by primary school teachers in Nigeria. It was found that lack of job satisfaction, inadequate school facilities, were major causes of stress among primary school teachers. The study also revealed that stress had negative impacts on lecturers' efficiency.

Secondly, data from table 2 presents the Pearson Product moment correlation analysis on the relationship between social interaction as a stress management strategy and lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The correlation coefficient obtained revealed that there is a very high positive relationship between social interaction as a stress management strategy and lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. This implies that creating a social interaction atmosphere can help in relieving job stress among lecturers. The result of the null hypothesis tested showed that there is a significant relationship between social interaction as a stress management strategy and lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. This finding is in alignment with Aderinto and Adebayo (2021) investigated the relationship between stress management strategies and lecturers' job effectiveness in college of education Oyo State, Nigeria found that there was significant relationship between lecturer interaction and lecturers job effectiveness in college of education Oyo, State. In contrast, Sydney et al., (2010) have indicated that instead of employing the use of social support as a buffering strategy, perceived job insecurity itself must be dealt with directly for instance by appropriate human resource planning, caution recruitment, training, career counseling and career planning. Supporting the findings Moscovici (1984) holds that social support from colleagues enhances the development of a system of shared beliefs or social representation which might help in reducing the negative outcome of perceived job insecurity.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the finding of the study, it was concluded that stress is a major barrier to lecturers' productivity in tertiary institution. Therefore, strategies employed to mitigate work stress among lecturers have significant relationship to lecturers' efficiency in Rivers State. Specifically, the study concluded that stress management strategies such as work environment and social interaction have significant relationship with lecturers' job efficiency in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following were recommended based on the findings of the study;

1. Government through the school administrators should ensure that a conducive and comfortable work environment such as spacious and furnished offices, availability of infrastructural resources amongst others, for lecturers. Availability of conducive work environment will enable lecturers' work effectively with minimal stress.
2. Tertiary education administrators such as Head of Departments, Deans, Directors, Vice Chancellors amongst others should create an atmosphere that encourage social support, interaction and encouragement. In this kind of the environment, lecturers would be able to find necessary support when wearied with job demands.

References

- Aderinto, S. & Adebayo, B. A. (2021). Relationship between stress management strategies and lecturers' job effectiveness in college of education Oyo State, Nigeria. *Al-Hikmah Journal of Education*, 8(1), 236-244
- Azumah, U. I. (2018). Work environment and employees' performance in firms in Port Harcourt. *A seminar paper presented to the department of business education in partial fulfillment for the requirement for the course bed 911- office management and technology education*
- Bruce, T.R. (2013). Assessing the Sustained effects of Stress Management Interventions of Anxiety and Locus of Control. *Academy of Management Journal*, 18, (6) 151-203
- Lukan, J., Bolliger, L., Pauwels, N.S., Bacquer, D.D. & Clays, E. (2022) Work environment risk factors causing day-to-day stress in occupational settings: a systematic review. *BMC Public Health* 22, 240 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-12354-8>
- Maina, M. N. (2014). Quality and productivity of teachers in selected public secondary schools in kenya. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(5),103-115.
- Martins, B. (2011). *Abnormal Psychology (2 edition)* New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston
- Oduwaiye, R.O. & Oyedepo, B. (2011). Enhancing Nigerian lecturers' efficiency through effective personnel appraisal system. *African Journal of Studies in Education*, 8(1&2), 1-11
- Perry, E. (2023). How to build a healthy workplace environment. <https://www.betterup.com/blog/workplace-environments#:~:text=A%20work%20environment%20is%20a,space%2C%20lighting%2C%20and%20location>
- Reid, S. (2023). Social support for stress relief. Retrieved from <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/social-support-for-stress-relief.html>
- Selye, H. (2016). The evolution of stress concept. *American scientist*, 6(1), 692-699

- Sue, T. (2022). Social support. Retrieved from <https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/social-support>
- Timothy, J.I. & Heide, R. (2018). *Depression and stress management*. Healthline Media a Red Ventures Company.
- World Bank (2008). *Financing Education in Developing Countries: An Exploration of Policy Options*, Washington D.C.
- Yusuf, M.O., Muhammed, U.D., & Kazeem, A.O. (2014). Management of Leadership Style: An Approach to teacher productivity and Effectiveness in Nigeria. *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education*, 1(2), 17-29.