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EDITORIAL

The West African Journal of Physical and Health Education (WAJOPHE) is an interdisciplinary journal that publishes articles, research findings and position papers in physical and health education, recreation, sports and dance. The journal was initially the innovation or brainchild of the Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education in the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Today, it serves as a forum where scholars in Education, Exercise, Sports, Recreation, Dance and other health professionals contribute towards the full development of man and his environment, especially with regards to the entire West African sub-region.

Among the articles in Volume 21 are: Strategies for Grassroots Sport Revival in South-South Nigeria, Talent Identification and Development Literature; Lessons for Sports Development in Nigeria, Injury Control Variables as Correlates Of Health Promotion Practices In School Sports Participation Among Secondary Schools In Numan, Adamawa State, Evaluation Of The Place Of Instructional Materials In The Teaching Of Health Education In Secondary Schools , Fitness and Law, A Panacea of Sport Performance in Nigeria, A Survey of the Causes of Early Mortality of Spouses among Survivors in Ogun State, Nigeria , Relationships Of Big-Five Personality Characteristics Variables And Sport Preference Among Student-Athletes In Universities In North-East Zone, Nigeria, Academic Pressure and Stress Coping Strategies among Undergraduate Students Universities in Ondo State. Others are: Influence Of Recreational Activities As Work Stress Coping Strategies Among Female Academic Staff In University Of Lagos, Health Education on Knowledge and Attitude towards Hepatitis B Disease among Secondary School Teachers in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, Influence of Rural Communities Attributes on the Implementation of Primary Health Care in Edo North Senatorial District, Nigeria, Marijuana Use: The Health Consequences, Evaluation of fire safety preparedness among residential students of the University of Ibadan, Recreation Participation as Correlate of Job Capability Enhancement among Non-Academic Staff of the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria and Influence Of School Absenteeism Peer Influence And Parental Factors On Students' Achievement In Basic Science And Technology In Ibadan Metropolis, we also have articles such as The Stakeholder's Influence on oil pollution, natural resources security and sustainable development in Nigeria, Effect of Home Therapy Exercise Programme in the Management of Mechanical Low Back Pain, influence Of Safety Signs And Risk Assessments On Occupational Accidents In Selected Plastic Industries In Lagos State, Effects of Goal Setting and Pre-

Performance Routine on Accurate Execution of Lay-up Shot among Basketball Players of the Polytechnic, Ibadan, Oyo State and Parenting Styles as Predictors of Health Risk Behaviours among First Year Resident Students of University of Ibadan

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J. F. Babalola

Editor-in-chief

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ARTICLES

1. Strategies for Grassroots Sport Revival in South South Nigeria..... 1
2. Talent Identification and Development Literature; Lessons for Sports Development in Nigeria 14
3. Injury Control Variables as Correlates Of Health Promotion Practices In School Sports Participation Among Secondary Schools in Numan, Adamawa State 31
4. Evaluation Of The Place Of Instructional Materials In The Teaching Of Health Education In Secondary Schools 40
5. Fitness and Law, A Panacea of Sport Performance in Nigeria 53
6. A Survey of the Causes of Early Mortality of Spouses among Survivors in Ogun State, Nigeria..... 67
7. Relationships Of Big-Five Personality Characteristics Variables And Sport Preference Among Student-Athletes In Universities In North-East Zone, Nigeria 80
8. Academic Pressure and Stress Coping Strategies among Undergraduate Students Universities in Ondo State 94
9. Influence Of Recreational Activities As Work Stress Coping Strategies Among Female Academic Staff In University Of Lagos 100
10. Health Education on Knowledge and Attitude towards Hepatitis B Disease among Secondary School Teachers in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria 110
11. Influence of Rural Communities Attributes on the Implementation of Primary Health Care in Edo North Senatorial District, Nigeria 122

Influence of Recreational Activities as Work Stress Coping Strategies among Female Academic Staff in University of Lagos

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Abstract

Stress is known to have deleterious effects on human motivations and strive to accomplish life ambition in conquering the environment, human performance, health and psycho-physiologically wellbeing. This study examined the influence of recreational activities as work stress level coping strategies among female academic staff in University of Lagos. It aimed at addressing the issue on how work stress can be effectively managed, reduced or prevent through recreational activities in order to enhance health and improve personal and work behaviours of the female academic staff of the University of Lagos.

Descriptive survey research method was adopted for this study. Two hundred permanent female academic staff were randomly selected from 12 faculties. The instrument for the study was self-developed. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study using chi-square (χ^2) and Pearson r correlation statistical technique at 0.05 level of significance. Based on these findings, it was concluded that certain situational variables were significantly correlate of stress among female academic staff in the University of Lagos. Therefore, it is recommended that female academic staff should endeavor to create time to exercise regularly, get enough sleep, learn to relax, eat healthfully, managing time and finances and reduce work stress.

Keywords: *Work stress, Coping strategies, Recreational activities, Academic*

Introduction

Stress is that emotional reaction or body response to events, happenings, conditions and experiences that threaten ones well-being which is difficult to easily overcome. Stress is an unavoidable characteristic of life and work (Adeyemo & Ogunyemi, 2005). Stress is an important psychological concept that can affect health, well-being and job performance in negative dimensions, (Mojoyinola, 1984; and Olaleye, 2002). Stress according to Arnold, Cooper and Robertson (1995), is a word derived from Latin word "Stingere" meaning to draw tight. It is regarded as a force that pushes a physical or psychological factor beyond its range of stability, producing a strain within the individual.

Stress experienced by workers at work is called job stress such as Excessive/high work load, long hours of work, role ambiguity, role conflicts, poor relationships. Students, colleagues or subordinate officers/management, hectic traffic from home, accommodation issues, risk and danger, to mention a few. But in other situations, individuals may respond differently to the same event, what is a stressor for one person may not be stressful for another. Job stress describes mental, emotion and physical wear brought about by incongruence between the requirement of the job and the capabilities, resources and needs of the employees to cope with job demands (Akinboye, Akinboye & Adeyemo, 2002). Quenk (1993) shows that the workplace is an arena where people demonstrate their best and worst selves. Stress that is chronic in most situations can thwart our best efforts and elicit our own and others' least effective side.

Stress in the workplace can ultimately rob people of their spirit and passion for the job, resulting in impaired individual functioning (Fairbrother & Warn, 2003), low motivation (Vakola & Nikolaou 2005), decreased morale, (Salmond & Ropis 2005), dampened initiative, reduced interest in working (Fairbrother & Warn, 2003), high absenteeism rates (Ho 1997), decreased capacity to perform (Michie, 2002), poor job performance (Jepson & Forrest 2006), reduced efficiency (Shain 1999), poor quality control, decline in productivity (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005) as highlighted by Thabo Fako (2010). This situation is not peculiar to tertiary institutions in the developed nations only, but in a developing one like Nigeria. Despite the

nation's declaration of importance of university education in national development and the role it plays in satisfying human needs. There are growing evidences that no Nigerian university either private or government owned can genuinely claim to be immune from stress (Adebiyi, 2011).

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

As posited by Fako (2010), there is increase and expansion in education while resource levels have not kept pace with it. In most part of the world the education sector has experienced a great measure of changes and re-orientation, this sector being the major source of all innovations and creativity. Hence, personnel in these fields are expected to keep up with the pace of the change and not just keeping up to but to significantly contribute to the wealth of knowledge in providing solution to problems facing human. Tytherleigh (2005) viewed that these major change initiatives; excessive work hours, heavy workloads, poor management, diminishing resources, unfavorable student: staff ratios, pressure to attract external funds, job insecurity, lack of recognition and reward, and role ambiguity, have frequently been reported by academic staff in the universities.

Long term exposure to stress can lead to serious health problems such as, high blood pressure, suppression of the immune system, increased risk of heart attack and stroke, infertility, acceleration of aging process and vulnerability to anxiety and depression (Dada, 2010). Research showed that while husbands go to clubs and other relaxation centers to unwind, the female lecturers goes home to work and attend domestic chores and care for the children. He posited that stress and stress related outcomes do have serious consequences on individual's mental, psychological and physical health. Especially on the part of females, thereby making them nagging mothers, having difficulties and cooperating with co-workers and highly intolerant to everyone.

Stress on the other hand can be positive and it is referred to as eustress and therefore strengthening to an individual under certain

situations. Very low level of personal control have been found to be psychologically harmful whereas greater control has been associated with better mental health Evans and Carver (1991). The actual level of control an individual have over their job to cope with stressful working situation is a determinant of their health and well-being.

It is imperative to know that signs and symptoms of stress can also be caused by other psychological or medical problems. If one is experiencing any of the warning signs of stress, it is important to see a doctor for a full evaluation. Doctors can help you determine whether or not the symptoms are stress-related.

The following are common warning signs and symptoms of stress:

Cognitive Symptoms: Memory problems, Inability to concentrate, Poor judgement, Seeing only the negative, anxious or racing thoughts and Constant worrying

Emotional Symptoms: Moodiness, Irritability or short temper, agitation, inability to relax, feeling overwhelmed, sense of loneliness and isolation and Depression or general unhappiness

Physical Symptoms: aches and pains, diarrhea or constipation, Nausea, dizziness, chest pain, rapid heartbeat, loss of sex drive and frequent colds

Behavioural Symptoms: eating more or less, sleeping too much or too little, isolating yourself from others, Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities, using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relax, nervous habits (e.g. nail biting, pacing).

Recreational activities can be defined as activities that facilitate refreshment of one's mind and body after work. recreational activities can be communal or solitary, active or passive, healthy and useful for both individual and the society at large, and can be done indoors and outdoors. They include activities such as listening to music, gardening, hunting, swimming and traveling. Furthermore, recreational activities can also be defined as activities that are aimed at providing a refreshing break from normal routine. These activities are known to stimulate and rejuvenate the body and mind. They include sports of all kinds such as volleyball, basketball, swimming, fishing, hockey and football among many others. Regular participation in sports and recreational activities are extremely important and beneficial for a long term health and wellbeing as well

as Health benefits, physical benefits, physiological benefits, economical benefits and social benefits.

Recreation is an activity that people engage in during their free time, enjoy, recognise as having socially redeeming values. Recreation has a connotation of being morally acceptable not just to the individual but also to society as a whole, and thus, programmes for those activities within that context. While recreational activities can take many forms, they must contribute to society in a way that society deems acceptable for recreation can change over time. Examples of recreational activities are endless and include sports, music, games, travel, reading, arts and crafts, and dance (Rogers, 2005).

It has been proposed that recreational activities are outlets for expression of excess energy which brings about satisfaction and pleasure to the participants without compulsion. Rogers (2005) opined that recreation creates a medium to express excess energy channeling such into socially acceptable activities that fulfil individual as well as societal needs, without need for compulsion, and providing satisfaction and pleasure for the participants. Kulkarni and Smith (2000) believes that there is a traditional view which holds that work is supported by recreation being useful to "recharge the battery" so that work performance can be improved.

Recreation is seen as a social instrument which underpins human capabilities in discharging one's duties effectively because it contributes immensely to the development of the society. Professionals have long used recreation programmes and services to produce socially desirable outcomes, such as the wise use of free time, physical fitness and positive development. Participants in recreational activities hope that their recreation pursuits can help them to balance their lives and refresh themselves from work as well as other mandated activities such as house cleaning, child bearing and so on (Kulkarni & Smith, 2000).

The stress response results in mental and physical symptoms. All the body systems are geared up to face the real or perceived danger when the stress hormones cortisol and adrenaline are released. The heart rate speeds up, one may begin to sweat or tremble, one starts breathing more rapidly and feels readily to face whatever threat is coming (Segal, 2013). If one does not learn to properly manage stress, its long-term effects can become damaging to both mental and

physical health. Chronic stress can cause serious mental disorders such as anxiety or panic disorders, depression or sleep problems like insomnia. According to HelpGuide.org (2016), physical symptoms that are commonly exacerbated or caused by stress include heart and digestive problems, obesity and skin disorders like eczema.

Coping is the act of managing events or conditions to lessen the physical or psychological effects of excess stress. One of the most effective ways to combat stressors is to build coping strategies and skills, known collectively as stress-management techniques. Relaxation techniques to reduce stress have been practiced for centuries, and there is a wide array of practices from which to choose. Common techniques include yoga, qigong, tai chi, deep breathing, meditation, visualization, progressive muscle relaxation, massage therapy, biofeedback, and hypnosis.

Method

The study adopted the descriptive survey research method. The study involved a total of two hundred (200) females selected randomly from the 12 faculties of the University of Lagos. From the rank of Assistant Lecturer to the post of Professorship with minimum of 3 years working experiences. A self-constructed and validated thirty-two item questionnaire served as the research instrument and was used to collect information from the respondents. The instrument was in two sections. Section A sought the respondents' demographic data while section B inquired into the variables selected for the study. Five hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study using chi-square (χ^2) and Pearson correlation statistical technique at 0.05 level of significance. Four (4) research assistants helped in the administration of the questionnaire. All the returned questionnaire was found usable. Data collected were analyzed to test the relationship that exist between the variables tested.

Research Hypotheses

1. Recreational activities will not significantly influence the stress level of female staff of University of Lagos.
2. Interaction with environment will not significantly increase stress level among female academic staff of the University of Lagos.
3. Accommodation problems will not significantly increase stress level among female academic staff in the University of Lagos.

Results

Hypothesis One:

Recreational activities will not be a significant cause of stress among female staff of University of Lagos. This was tested using Chi-square Correlation and the result is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Chi-square cross tabulation summary showing the association between Stress and Recreational activities

Variable	N	Recreation activities		Df	χ^2	Sig.
		Low	High			
Stress	Low	50(69.4%)	22(30.6%)	1	2.576	>.05
	High	61 (47.7%)	67 (52.3%)			
Total	200					

Table 1 presents the chi square relationship between stress and recreational activities among female staff in University of Lagos. This study reported no significant relationship between stress and recreational activities among female staff in University of Lagos at (N=200; df (1, 200); $\chi^2_{\text{value}} = 2.576$; $p > .05$).

Hypothesis two:

Interaction with environment will not significantly increase stress level among female academic staff. This was tested using chi-square statistics and the result is presented on table 2.

Table 2: Chi square cross tabulation summary showing the association between stress and interaction with environment

Variable	N	Interaction with environment		Df	χ^2	Sig.
		Low	High			
Stress	Low	43(59.7%)	29(40.3%)	1	-30.224	<.05
	High	27 (21.1%)	101 (78.9%)			
Total	200					

Table 2 presented the chi square relationship between stress and interaction with environment among female staff in University of Lagos. This study reported a significant relationship between stress

and interaction with environment among female staff in University of Lagos at ($N=200$; $df(1,200)$; $\chi^2_{\text{value}} = -30.224$; $p < .05$).

Hypothesis Three: *Accommodation problems will not significantly increase stress level of female academic staff of University of Lagos.*

Table 3: Summary of PPMC showing the relationship between stress and accommodation problem

Variables	1	2	Mean	SD
1. Accommodation problem	-	-	13.73	3.37
2. Stress	.296**	-	11.94	3.28

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

This was tested using Pearson Product Correlation coefficient (Pearson r) and the result is presented on table 3. Table 3 displays the relationship between stress and accommodation problem among female staff in University of Lagos. It was found that stress had significant and positive relationship with accommodation problem at ($r = .296$; $p < .05$).

Discussion

The major purpose of the study was to find out the influence recreational activities as work stress coping strategies among female academic staff of the University of Lagos. Recreational activities will not be a significant cause of stress among female staff of University of Lagos. It was found that, stress had no significant relationship with recreation activities. This confirms the stated hypothesis, hence was retained in this study. This implied that the higher the respondent's interaction with the environment, the lower their perceived job stress. This negated the stated hypothesis, hence was rejected in this study. Hypothesis two stated that, interaction with their environment will not significantly increase stress. This was tested using chi-square (χ^2) statistical technique and it was revealed that stress had significant and inverse relationship with interaction with environment. This implies that, increase in cordial interaction with environment will lead to significant decrease in perceived stress at work. By implication increase in the interaction with the environment will reduce female academic staff stress level. By implication increase in accommodation problem will increase stress level among female academic staff. Coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.0876$) revealed that

accommodation problem accounts for 8.8% increase in female academic staff stress level. Similarly, Repetti (1993) also found that poor relationship between the superior and the workers contribute to the level of stress experienced by the workers. He found that the workers experienced more negative moods on the day when they had distressing interaction with their superiors and co-workers.

Conclusion and Recommendation

It is concluded from the above study that accommodation problems and interaction with environment factors are responsible for work stress in the University. Work stress is negatively associated with increases symptoms of ill-health. To ensure the reduction of sources of stress in the female academic staff of University of Lagos the following recommendations were made:

1. That government and other concerned agency campaign the necessity of regular exercise which includes increased life expectancies.
2. Provision of accommodation in the campus should be improved upon.
3. Promotion of staff should be done as at when due to boost their morale.

It is hoped that when all the academic staff are given adequate support by their employers or when their needs are adequately met there will be less stress at work. They will become less aggressive or hostile to the environment.

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