

# **Job Stress and Coping Strategies among Academic Staff of Faculty of Education in Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba Akoko**

**Aina, S. I. Ph.D**

Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba-Akoko Ondo State, Nigeria  
email id: ainaileoye@googlemail.com ; +2348033736296

**Adeleke, O. R. M.ed**

Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba-Akoko Ondo State, Nigeria  
email id: rowylandy@gmail.com; +2347030538639

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**Abstract** – This study investigated job stress and coping strategies among academic staff of faculty of education in Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba Akoko. Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. Population comprised all academic staff of faculty of education Adekunle Ajasin University from which 100 respondents were purposely selected as sample. Self-constructed and validated questionnaire, with reliability index of 0.83 was used for data collection. Frequency table and simple percentage statistics were applied for analysis. The findings revealed that headache (62%) and insomnia (47%) were the major symptoms of job stress among academic staff. Furthermore, the study identified lack of resources at work (83%) and salary is not paid regularly (99%) as the major causes of job stress among academic staff in the faculty. Also, the study revealed that maintaining a healthy relationship with co-workers (100%) and keeping positive attitude at all time (100%) as the major coping strategies. Finally, the study recommended that academic staff should adapt to the increasing work demands by practicing the various coping strategies outlined and well plan policy should be developed by the university authority.

**Keywords** – Job Stress, Stressor, Coping Strategies and Academic Staff.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Job Stress has become an alarming disease amidst workers of different parastatals. This which is mostly borne by the conditions at work place negatively affects individual's performances and the overall well-being of both their mind and body. Stress arises as a result of an individual's inability to cope with the demand expected of him/her, thus disrupting the psychological equilibrium. As such, Stress is usually permanent in such environment as the university, where the staffs have to deal with a large number of students which result in heavy work load for the staffs. More so, staff of the university setting are most times promoted on the career progression and publications. All these build up pressure on staff and are termed 'Stressors'. Abouserie (1996) ; Adeyemo and Ogunyemi, (2005) opined that, heavy teaching schedules and lack of funds have been identified as major drawbacks to research and publication which leads to the delay in promotion of the academic staff.

Although, higher level of stress has been reported as life threatening to the staff general well-being, most of these stress are borne of fear and occupational pressure as numerous studies and surveys have confirmed by Thomas,

Collagen and Eileen (2006). Job stress is the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when there is disequilibrium or poor match between job demand and the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 1999). Job stress has become a modern life phenomenon which is prevalent in recent times. Job stress could occur among workers when activities move at a faster pace than ever before; this could be as a result of changing technology in the current information age. Other stress factors reported among agricultural teachers were poor working conditions, inadequate salary, poor promotion and poor staff relations (Abel and Swell, 1999). Ngoko (2000) opined that stress is a strained condition on somebody's emotion, thought process, and physical condition that threatens the individual ability to cope with an environment. Cosgrove (2000), opined that stress sometimes make individual fearful, angry, frustrated, sleeplessness and unable to relax. Job stress varies as activity varies, an office worker is likely to experience related stress interpersonal relationship on the job. Hence, the workplace has become a source of extreme job stress as a result of technological changes, mass retrenchments, mergers and acquisitions, information overload, demand for more productivity, fierce completion and uncertain future (NIOSH 1999). Stress could be as a result of excitement, inspiration to do well and perform at high levels. NIOSH (1999), further revealed that job stress poses a great threat to the health of workers and the health institution, it stress causes harmful physical and emotional response that occur when the requirement of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or need of the worker. Work experience can increase the chances of a variety of symptoms that can harm employee's health and job performance. Work is a necessity that involves both physical and mental exertion, which also attracts reward, despite this, it could result into stress and eventually strain which may be unfavorable to the individual in the work environment, hence job stress. This may lead to certain kinds of deviations from normal responses such as job dissatisfaction, anxiety and restlessness. The inadequate remuneration, work overload as well as physical and emotional exhaustion affects the productivity and overall well-being of employees (Ogunlade, Solagberu, Adefalu, and Aderinoye 2008). According to Cosgrove (2000), certain working conditions are inherently stress-inducing such as fear of job loss, excessive workload demands, lack of control or clear direction, poor physical working

condition, and inflexible working hours. In support, Oladele (2010) revealed that academic and non academic staff experience job stress characterized by emotional drain, the development of negative self concept and negative attitudes towards work, life and other people. He emphasized that Stress symptoms experienced by agricultural staff were headaches, weight loss, depression and low job performance. Also Levi (2009) who revealed existence of works related stress and stress related disorders such as headaches, fever and mental health stress are common among university academic staffs. The degree of stress a person actually experiences depends on the intensity, strength and duration of the stress and the individual's pattern of responding or coping with the stress. Emodi, Adesope, Albert, and Nwokoma (2012). Revealed in their study that improving themselves academically, maintaining a healthy relationship with co-workers as major coping strategies in job stress management of agriculture academic and non academic staff in university of Port Harcourt

It is necessary to take a closer look at the stress related conditions among academic staffs and coping strategies, this will help academic staffs identify, build, employ and retain a productive workforce. The specific objectives were to ascertain the symptoms of job stress among respondents; identify the various causes of job stress among respondents; and find out the coping strategies of job stress among respondents.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba Akoko. The target population consisted of all the academics staff of the Faculty of Education Adekunle Ajasin University. A total of 100 academic staff were purposively selected according to their core function in the Faculty of Education. Data for the study were collected from respondents through the use of questionnaire. The data were validated by lecturers in the Department of Human kinetic and Health Education Adekunle Ajasin University before field administration.

The final draft was subjected to test retest reliability procedure. The reliability index was 0.83. Data collected were analysed by means of descriptive statistics such as percentage, frequency, and tables to achieve the stated objectives.

To determine their socio economic characteristics, respondents were required to provide responses on variables regarding their age, sex, marital status, educational qualification, years in service, religion. A four point Likert-type scale with options ranging from “very severe”, “severe”, “less severe” and “not severe” was used to ascertain the symptoms of job stress; and “strongly agree” “agree” “disagree” and “strongly disagree” to identify the various causes of job stress; and to find out the coping strategies of job stress; and were scaled 1 to 4 respectively. The data were analysed by means of descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and simple percentage were used to achieve the stated objectives.

## III. RESULTS

This study was a descriptive survey that explored job stress and coping strategies Among Academic staff of faculty of Education in Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba Akoko Ondo State.

### *Stress symptoms among academic staff of faculty of education AAUA*

Table. 1

Research Questions	Frequency	percent %
<b>Weight loss</b>		
Very Severe	20	20.0
Severe	20	20.0
Less severe	41	41.0
Not Severe	19	19.0
<b>Pain of unexplained origin</b>		
	Frequency	percent %
Very Severe	17	17.0
Severe	21	21.0
Less severe	14	14.0
Not Severe	48	48.0
<b>Headaches</b>		
	Frequency	percent %
Very Severe	62	62.0
Severe	35	35.0
Less severe	3	3.0
<b>Insomnia</b>		
	Frequency	percent %
Severe	47	47.0
Less severe	33	33.0
Not Severe	20	20.0
<b>Depression</b>		
	Frequency	percent %
Severe	12	12.0
Less severe	38	38.0
Not Severe	50	50.0
Total	100	100.0
<b>Hopelessness</b>		
	Frequency	percent %
Less severe	60	60.0
Not Severe	40	40.0
<b>Boredom</b>		
	Frequency	percent %
Less severe	40	40.0
Not Severe	60	60.0
<b>Anxiety</b>		
	Frequency	percent %
Severe	20	20.0
Less severe	36	36.0
Not Severe	44	44.0
<b>Lack Confidence</b>		
	Frequency	percent %
Severe	20	20.0
Not Severe	80	80.0
Total	100	100.0
<b>Inability of make decision</b>		
	Frequency	percent %
Very Severe	20	20.0
Less severe	20	20.0
Not Severe	60	60.0
<b>Low job performance</b>		
	Frequency	percent %
Very Severe	20	20.0
Severe	20	20.0
Not Severe	60	60.0

<b>Forgetfulness</b>	Frequency	percent %
Very Severe	20	20.0
Not Severe	80	80.0
<b>Increase in drug use</b>	Frequency	percent %
Less severe	40	40.0
Not Severe	60	60.0
<b>Marital and family conflict</b>	Frequency	percent %
Severe	20	20.0
Less severe	40	40.0
Not Severe	40	40.0
<b>Feeling of withdrawal</b>	Frequency	percent %
Very Severe	20	20.0
Severe	20	20.0
Less severe	20	20.0
Not Severe	40	40.0
<b>Rigid to change</b>	Frequency	percent %
Very Severe	20	20.0
Severe	20	20.0
Not Severe	60	60.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1 shows that headache (62%) and insomnia (47%) are major stress symptoms among Academic staff of faculty of Education in Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba Akoko Ondo State.

*Causes of Job stress among respondents*

Table. 2.

<b>Never gone on vacation</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Agree	54	54.0
Disagree	41	41.0
Strongly disagree	5	5.0
<b>Lack confidence and ability to handle problems at work</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly agree	20	20.0
Agree	20	20.0
Disagree	20	20.0
Strongly disagree	40	40.0
<b>Feel weak at work due to lack of promotional opportunities</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Agree	41	40.0
Disagree	20	20.0
Strongly disagree	39	39.0
<b>Work load at home and work place</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly agree	50	50.0
Disagree	28	28.0
Strongly disagree	22	22.0
<b>Not sure of my career prospects</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly agree	20	20.0
Agree	40	40.0
Disagree	20	20.0
Strongly disagree	20	20.0
<b>Lack of resources at work</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly agree	43	43.0
Agree	40	40.0
Disagree	7	7.0
Strongly disagree	10	10.0
<b>Being undermined by the HOD</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly agree	20	20.0
Agree	10	10.0
Disagree	50	50.0

Strongly disagree	20	20.0
<b>Low social support among academics staff</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly agree	16	16.0
Agree	24	24.0
Disagree	30	30.0
Strongly disagree	20	20.0
<b>Never received over time payment</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly agree	20	20.0
Agree	60	60.0
Strongly disagree	20	20.0
<b>Salary is not paid regularly</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly agree	40	40.0
Agree	59	59.0
Strongly disagree	1	1.0
<b>My allowance is not paid regularly</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly agree	20	20.0
Agree	40	40.0
Strongly disagree	40	40.0
<b>Always answering query in the office</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly agree	10	10.0
Agree	5	5.0
Disagree	25	25.0
Strongly disagree	60	60.0
<b>There is tribal sentiment in my department</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly agree	20	20.0
Agree	20	20.0
Strongly disagree	60	60.0
<b>Work beyond normal working hours</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly agree	26	26.0
Agree	39	39.0
Disagree	20	20.0
Strongly disagree	15	15.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 2 shows that lack of resources at work (83%) and salary not paid regularly (99%) are major causes of job stress among Academic staff of faculty of Education in Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba Akoko Ondo.

*Coping strategies among respondents*

Table. 3.

<b>Keeping positive attitude at all time</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly agree	63	63.0
Agree	20	20.0
Disagree	7	7.0
Strongly disagree	10	10.0
<b>Go for medical checks often</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Agree	40	40.0
Disagree	40	40.0
Strongly disagree	20	20.0
<b>Set attainable goals for self</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly agree	20	20.0
Agree	33	33.0
Disagree	45	45.0
<b>Accept help with ease when offered</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Agree	100	100.0

<b>Maintain healthy relationship with co-workers</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly agree	40	40.0
Agree	60	60.0
<b>Highly receptive to new ideas</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly agree	40	40.0
Agree	60	60.0
<b>Interpret assignment with ease</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly agree	20	20.0
Agree	40	40.0
Disagree	20	20.0
Strongly disagree	20	20.0
<b>Take time out on break</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly agree	20	20.0
Agree	40	40.0
Disagree	20	20.0
Strongly disagree	20	20.0
<b>Prioritize task through time management</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly agree	20	20.0
Agree	20	20.0
Strongly disagree	60	60.0
<b>Look out for better opportunities</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly agree	29	29.0
Agree	11	11.0
Disagree	60	60.0
<b>Develop staff therapies (medication, religious meeting)</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly agree	20	20.0
Agree	28	28.0
Disagree	52	52.0
<b>Am naturally optimistic</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly agree	80	80.0
Disagree	20	20.0
<b>Hope in better tomorrow</b>	Frequency	Percent %
Strongly agree	80	80.0
Agree	20	20.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 3 shows that maintain healthy relationship with co-workers (100%), highly receptive to new ideas (100%), naturally optimistic (100%) and hope for a better tomorrow (100%) are major coping Strategies among Academic staff of faculty of Education in Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba Akoko Ondo State.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

This study revealed that headache and insomnia are major job stress symptoms experience by academic staff of faculty of education in Adekunle Ajasin University as indicated in table 1. This finding corroborated the assertion of Oladele (2010) who revealed that academic and non academic staff experience job stress characterized by emotional drain, the development of negative self concept and negative attitudes towards work, life and other people. He emphasized that Stress symptoms experienced by agricultural staff were headaches, weight loss, depression and low job performance. The finding further supported Levi (2009) who revealed existence of works related stress and stress related disorders such as headaches, fever and mental health stress are common among university academic staffs. Also

supported Cosgrove (2000), stress sometimes make individual fearful, angry, frustrated, sleeplessness and unable to relax.

The study also revealed that lack of resources at work, work beyond normal working hours and salary not pay paid regular are major causes of job stress among respondents (table 3). This finding therefore supported Abel and Swell (1999) who opined that other stress factors reported among agricultural teachers were poor working conditions, inadequate salary, poor promotion and poor staff relations. Moreover, the findings showed that improving themselves academically, keeping positive attitude at all time, maintaining a healthy relationship with co-workers as major coping strategies in job stress management among the academic staff of the faculty of education (table 3). This finding corroborated Emodi, Adesope, Albert, and Nwokoma (2012). Revealed in their study that improving themselves academically, maintaining a healthy relationship with co-workers as major coping strategies in job stress management of agriculture academic and non academic staff in university of Port Harcourt

The study reveals that majority of the academic staff of faculty of education in Adekunle Ajasin university experience job stress symptoms that includes headaches and insomnia. The respondents indicated causes of job stress as lack of resources at work, work beyond normal working hours and salary not pay paid regular. Results clearly show that academic workload, student-related issues, research and career development, interpersonal relationship, lack of promotion at as when due contribute significantly to the causes of stress experienced by academic staff. The findings further revealed improving themselves academically, keeping positive attitude at all time, maintaining a healthy relationship with co-workers as major coping strategies in job stress management among the academic staff of the faculty of education.

Base on this findings the following recommendations were made

Stress management seminars and programmes should be organized regularly among academic staff. These seminars and programmes should be geared towards continually updating academic staff on the most recent preventive measures and coping strategies that they could adopt to reduce work stress. The university management should promote academic staff as at when due

Salaries and allowances should be regular and prompt.

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## AUTHORS PROFILE'



First A, **Dr Stephen Ileoye Aina** is a certified Health Education practitioner, got his doctorate degree in environmental health and safety education from University of Benin, Nigeria, he has written several articles in national and international, journals, presently the HOD of Human Kinetics and Health Education Adekule Ajasin University.



Second B, **Mr Olasunkanmi Rowland Adeleke** is a certified Health Education practitioner, got his Master degree in Reproductive Health Education from Obafemi Awolowo University ile-ife.