STRESS MANAGEMENT AND ACADEMIC STAFF PRODUCTIVITY IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
The study examined the relationship between stress management and academic staff productivity in tertiary institutions in Ekiti State. The descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for the study. The population for this study consisted of all 2,147 academic staff in five public tertiary institutions in Ekiti State. The sample for this study consisted of 270 academic staff selected from 3 public tertiary institutions in Ekiti State. The sample was selected through multi stage sampling procedure. Two self-designed research instruments tagged Academic Staff Stress Management Questionnaire (ASSMQ) and Academic Staff Productivity Questionnaire (ASPQ) were used to collect relevant data for the instrument. The instruments used for the study were validated and ASSMQ and ASPQ had a reliability coefficient of 0.86 and 0.79 respectively. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that the level of stress management in tertiary institutions in Ekiti state was moderately favourable. The level of academic staff productivity was equally moderate. The findings also revealed that there was significant relationship between stress management and academic staff productivity. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that tertiary institution should put better stress management mechanisms so as to make academic staff more productive. It was recommended that school management should put in place necessary facilities to effectively tackle and reduce stress towards the achievement of educational goals.

Keywords: Education, Stress management, Academic staff, Productivity, Tertiary institution

Introduction

Education serves as the foundation for acquiring knowledge, skills, habits, and attitudes essential for constructive societal existence. Education empowers individuals with the essential skills for survival and societal advancement. Consequently, institutions of higher education are formed to provide students with comprehensive and high-quality education, enabling them to become more productive, self-fulfilling, and achieve self-actualization. The Federal Government of Nigeria (2004) in the National Policy on Education delineates the objectives of higher education as the acquisition, development, and instillation of appropriate value orientation for individual and societal survival; the enhancement of individuals' intellectual capacities to comprehend and appreciate their surroundings; the attainment of both physical and intellectual skills that facilitate responsible community membership; and the cultivation of an objective perspective on local and global environments.

Nigerian higher institutions are anticipated to fulfill these objectives through instruction, research, transmission of both current and novel information, community service, and serving as repositories of knowledge. Human beings are the ubiquitous resource present in all types of organizations, as no organization operates without individuals. Individuals generally designated as staff can frequently detect shortcomings in their job

performance and may enhance their skills by monitoring the performance of more experienced colleagues. Academic staff are pivotal in educational institutions, as the efficacy of a tertiary institution is contingent upon the caliber of teaching and learning. Productivity pertains to the comprehensive efficacy and efficiency of task completion. The achievement of commendable objectives in higher education depends on staff productivity, which reflects their efficacy and efficiency in service delivery and resource usage.

Productivity pertains to the efficacy, efficiency, and quality of goods and services produced in a manufacturing process (Boyle, Patel, and Gonzalez-Mule, 2022). According to Ogunode, Jegede, and Musa (2020), academic staff productivity is defined as the efficacy with which lecturers execute their diverse responsibilities encompassing learning (teaching), knowledge and scholarship (research and other scholarly endeavors), as well as institutional, community, and professional well-being (derived from shared governance, community service, and professional activities). The productivity of academic staff at Nigerian tertiary institutions include the volume of research undertaken by faculty, community services provided, and various performance evaluations employed by the university to assess staff effectiveness.

Adetomiwa, Akintola, Ejiwoye, and Olabisi (2023) asserted that research is a fundamental pillar of postsecondary education, alongside teaching and community service. The primary criterion for advancing lecturers from one level to another is their productivity, measured by research output or publications in peer-reviewed national and international journals and textbooks. The caliber of teaching, research, and community involvement by academic staff appears to be contingent upon their productivity levels. Udoh (2000) posits that the productivity of academic staff can be assessed through the efficacy of teaching techniques and procedures, mastery of subject matter, classroom management, record-keeping, student evaluation, and involvement in committees, publications, and community development.

Nevertheless, the researcher has noted over the years that certain academic professionals encounter challenges in doing research and producing quality papers for publishing. Several academic staff were found to have plagiarized or replicated the research of others, while many struggle to innovate. It was noted that several instructors have assumed an authoritative demeanor, resulting in students feeling apprehensive about engaging with them openly. An inadequate student-lecturer interaction may lead to inefficacy in the teaching and learning process. The researcher noted that the quality of community service is becoming impaired due to senior academic members being overburdened with teaching, grading examinations, conducting their own research, publishing, and managing their roles as section or departmental leaders. The significance of research, pedagogy, and community resources is paramount for academic staff in any higher education institution.

The reported fall in academic output raises the question of whether this decrease is indicative of inadequate stress management among academic staff. Insufficient stress management may account for the noted decrease in productivity among academic staff in higher education institutions.

Stress represents a significant occurrence in our daily existence. The strains of contemporary life, along with occupational expectations, might result in emotional imbalances commonly referred to as stress (Metreveli and Japaridze, 2022). Stress permeates all aspects of life and is inescapable. Stress has emerged as a global

concern impacting both individuals and groups in their personal and professional spheres (Sailo and Varghese, 2024). The term has evolved to encompass not only physics, medicine, psychology, and management sciences but also educational administration inside higher education institutions.

Stress Management encompasses a diverse array of approaches and psychotherapies designed to regulate an individual's stress levels, particularly chronic stress, with the objective of enhancing daily functioning. In this context, the term 'stress' exclusively denotes discomfort, which entails substantial negative repercussions, as opposed to eustress, characterized by beneficial or positive outcomes. Stress inside firms is a significant element that substantially diminishes staff productivity. A multitude of theories has been posited regarding the impact of this detrimental factor on workforce performance and productivity. Recently, several publications have emerged, illustrating the correlation between stress management and enhanced performance levels.

Nair (2024) highlighted that corporate entities are increasingly prioritizing stress management due to its correlation with employee productivity. He also noted that in industrialized nations such as the United States and the United Kingdom, teachers' stress has garnered attention since the 1970s due to its correlation with occupational stress and work efficacy, as well as to enhance teachers' professional lives and wellbeing.

Nonetheless, the teaching profession has been experiencing a profound crisis for an extended period, nearing a status that could be classified as dangerous. The jeopardy arises from the perception that, unlike in the past when the academic staff were regarded as a wellspring of knowledge for the community's intellectual dilemmas, society now views them as lacking in productivity (Ogunyemi, Ajayi, and Aina, 2023).

In Nigeria, the topic of educational stress has largely escaped the notice of educational planners and the government, despite study findings confirming its evident presence, indicators, and repercussions inside our educational system. There are indicators that academic staff at all levels are no longer efficient or productive. Stress is no longer confined to a certain profession; it is now acknowledged that all fields of employment encompass stress.

The study noted that certain instructors lack commitment to their responsibilities. Certain staff members frequently absent themselves from school, demonstrate insufficient research acumen, engage in unproductive student instruction, neglect classroom responsibilities, provide inadequate community service, and exhibit a lack of motivation to fulfill their jobs with enthusiasm. The researcher additionally noted that diminished productivity among academic workers may stem from inadequate stress management.

Productivity is a key facet of human endeavor. All organizations are presumed to have established objectives and are exerting efforts to attain them. Productivity in an educational context denotes the ratio of overall educational production to the resources employed, including the efficiency and efficacy of that output (Ogunyemi et al., 2023).

Stress management interventions are initiatives implemented by businesses to mitigate job stressors or assist individuals in alleviating the adverse effects associated with exposure to such stressors (Akinboye, Akinboye, and Adeyemo, 2002).

Robbins (2004) asserted that stress can be addressed through two methodologies: individual and organizational techniques. He stated that the personalized strategy encompasses

exercise. Employees can alleviate stress through walking, cycling, participating in aerobic classes, practicing yoga, jogging, swimming, playing tennis, and engaging in squash.

Stress management is the most efficacious method to prevent issues and acquire various skills designed to provide individuals with appropriate coping mechanisms for addressing psychological stress, which is characterized as a physiological response to an internal or external stimuli. Research indicates that those with greater work experience are more adept at managing stress than those who are new to the job. Stress management largely involves achieving equilibrium in individuals' lives.

Purpose of the Study

The study examined the relationship between stress management and academic staff productivity in tertiary institutions in Ekiti State. The study also examined the level of stress management and the level of academic staff productivity.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised for the study
1. What is the level of stress management in tertiary institutions in Ekiti State?
2. What is the level of academic staff productivity in tertiary institutions in Ekiti State?

Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis was generated to guide the study:
1. There is no significant relationship between Stress Management and Academic Staff productivity in Tertiary institutions in Ekiti State

Methodology

The descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for the study.

The population of the study consisted of all 3,147 academic staff in five public tertiary institutions in Ekiti State. The sample for the study consisted of 270 academic staff selected from 3 public tertiary institutions in Ekiti State. The sample was selected through multi stage sampling procedure. In stage one, three tertiary institutions were selected through stratified random sampling procedure. In stage two, 45 departments were selected from the tertiary institutions through proportionate sampling technique which led to the selection of 20 departments from Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, 15 departments from Federal University Oye-Ekiti and 10 departments from Bamidele Olomilua University of Science and Technology, Ikere-Ekiti. In stage three, five academic staff were selected from each of the departments through stratified random sampling technique while the Head of the Department of each of the departments were purposively selected to assess the productivity of academic staff. In all, 225 academic staff and 45 Head of Departments from three tertiary institutions) were selected from tertiary institutions in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Two self-designed research instruments tagged Academic Staff Stress Management Questionnaire (ASSMQ) and Academic Staff Productivity Questionnaire (ASPQ) were used to collect relevant data for the study. The instruments were validated by experts in Educational Management. The reliability of the instruments ASSMQ and ASPQ were determined through test-retest method having administered them on twenty academic staff outside the selected sample area. A coefficient of 0.86 and 0.79 were obtained respectively. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The hypothesis was tested using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

Result

Research Question 1: What is the level of stress management in tertiary institutions in Ekiti State?

Respondents' scores on stress management were utilized in the analysis of the question. Frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation were employed to analyze the responses to questions 1–35 in Section B of the Academic Staff Stress Management Questionnaire (ASSMQ). The mean score and standard deviation of the replies were utilized to ascertain the levels of stress management (low, moderate, and high).

The minimal stress management level was calculated by deducting the standard deviation from the mean score (102.00 – 2.76 = 99.24). The moderate level of stress management was established by the mean score of 102.00, while the high level was calculated by adding the mean score to the standard deviation (102.00 + 2.76 = 104.76). The low level of stress management ranges from 35.00 to 99.24, the moderate level spans from 99.25 to 104.75, and the high level extends from 104.76 to 140.00. The extent of stress management in tertiary institutions in Ekiti State is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Level of Stress Management in Tertiary Institutions in Ekiti State

Levels of Stress Management	No of Respondents	Percentage
Low (35.00 – 99.24)	49	21.80
Moderate (99.25 – 104.75)	129	57.30
High (104.76 – 140.00)	47	20.90
Total	**225**	**100**

Table 1 disclosed the stress management levels at higher education institutions in Ekiti State. The results indicated that, among 225 respondents, 49 individuals, constituting 21.80 percent, concurred that there was a low level of stress management. Of the respondents, 129, or 57.3 percent, concurred that stress management was at a moderate level, whereas only 47 respondents, accounting for 20.90 percent, affirmed that stress management was excessive. This indicated that the degree of stress management in higher education institutions was moderate.

Research Question 2: What is the level of academic staff productivity in tertiary institutions in Ekiti State?

Respondents' scores on academic staff productivity were utilized in the analysis of the question. Frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations were employed to represent the responses to items 1–20 in Section B of the Academic Staff Productivity Questionnaire (ASPQ). The mean score and standard deviation of the replies were utilized to ascertain the productivity levels of academic staff (low, moderate, and high). The diminished productivity of academic staff was calculated by deducting the standard deviation from the mean score (66.96 – 4.45 = 62.51). The moderate level of academic staff production was established by the mean score of 66.96, whereas the high level was defined by the sum of the mean score plus the standard deviation (66.96 + 4.45 = 71.41). The low level of academic staff productivity ranges from 20.00 to 62.51, the middle level from 62.52 to 71.40, and the high level from 71.41 to 80.00. Table 2 presents the productivity levels of academic staff in tertiary institutions within Ekiti State.

Table 2: Level of Academic Staff Productivity in Tertiary Institutions in Ekiti State

Levels of Academic Staff Productivity	No of Respondents	Percentage
Low (20.00 – 62.51)	0	0.0
Moderate (62.52 – 71.40)	143	63.60
High (71.41 – 80.00)	82	36.40
Total	**225**	**100**

Table 2 disclosed the productivity levels of academic staff in tertiary institutions within Ekiti State. The results indicated that among 225 academic staff evaluated by their Heads of Departments, none exhibited a low level of productivity. One hundred forty-three respondents, constituting 63.60 percent, exhibited a moderate level of productivity, whereas eighty-two respondents, representing 36.40 percent, demonstrated a high level of productivity. This indicated that the production level of academic staff in tertiary institutions was moderate.

Testing of Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between stress management and academic staff productivity.

To test the hypothesis, data regarding stress management were gathered from the responses to items 1 through 35 in Section B of the ASSMQ questionnaire. Data regarding the academic staff productivity of students were obtained from the responses to items 1 through 20 in Section B of the ASPQ questionnaire. Both were evaluated for statistical significance utilizing Pearson's Product Moment Correlation at a 0.05 significance threshold. The outcome is displayed in Table 3.

Table 3: Relationship between stress management and academic staff productivity

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	r-tab
Stress Management	225	102.00	2.76	0.757*	0.086
Academic Staff Productivity	225	66.96	4.45		

*$P<0.05$

Table 3 indicated that the r-cal value of 0.757 exceeds the r-table value of 0.086 at the 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was dismissed. This indicates a substantial correlation between stress management and the productivity of academic workers. Consequently, stress management correlates positively with the productivity of academic staff.

Discussion

The research indicated that the stress management levels in higher education institutions in Ekiti State were moderate. The productivity level of academic personnel in tertiary institutions in Ekiti State was moderate. The research indicated a substantial correlation between stress management and the productivity of academic staff. It suggested that superior stress management correlates with enhanced productivity among academic personnel. The likely explanation for this observation is that stress may diminish staff productivity. This finding aligns with the conclusions of Eze and Nwozu (2022), which indicated a substantial association between stress management and staff productivity. Also, Sakpaide (2024) supported this claim in his work on the stress management techniques and academic staff performance in Delta State University

Conclusion

The study concluded that stress management influences the productivity of academic staff; more manageability of

stress correlates with higher productivity at tertiary institutions.

Recommendations

In light of the study's findings, following recommendations were provided.

1. School management should identify and provide better stress management mechanisms, so as to make academic staff more productive.
2. The school management should put in place necessary facilities to effectively tackle and reduce stress, towards the achievement of educational goals.

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