

## **Career Progress Requirements Stress and Job Effectiveness of Federal University Lecturers in Cross River and Akwa Ibom States, Nigeria.**

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**Abstract:** This study investigates career progress requirement stress and the job effectiveness of Federal University Lecturers in Cross River and Akwa Ibom states. The study adopted the Cross sectional research design. The stratified random sample technique was employed and a sample size of 584 lecturers was used for the study. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 significance level. Job Stress Scale and Job Effectiveness questionnaires were administered. Data generated were analysed using simple percentages for demographic data, and One Way Analysis of Variance to test the hypothesis. The findings revealed that stress from career progress requirements do not influence job effectiveness at all. The study recommended among other measures that, university administration should provide facilities for a research conducive environment. Also inflation sensitive compensation package should be designed for universities so as to avert strikes and make long term vacation possible for umgelchtutilization for research purposes.

**Key words:** job stress, job effectiveness, university lecturers

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Date of Submission: 18-06-2018

Date of acceptance: 03-07-2018

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Lecturers are employed by universities to; teach, research, and carryout community development. Job effectiveness for a university lecturer is therefore measured in terms of the ability to impart knowledge, the ability to publish, and the ability to transform society. However, promotion is crucially dependent on publication. Again a key criterion for ranking of universities is the visibility of the research exploits of their faculties. For human resources as a factor input to be able to contribute maximally to productivity, whatever affects it adversely must be taken care of. Job stress has been identified as counterproductive for workers productivity and ought therefore to be kept at the lowest level.

Job stress is a phrase used as the name for continuous stress connected to the workplace. This stress may be intrinsic to the job, that is, it may be triggered by the responsibility that goes with the work, or it may be by circumstances that are found in the organisational culture or inter-personal conflicts. The lecturer is also faced with occupational stress. Gmelch, Wilke and Lovrich (1983) listed the ten most stressful areas for academics as followings: self imposed extremely high expectations, obtaining funds for research; insufficiency of time to be up to date with new happenings in the field; poor remuneration; struggle to publish for individual research; work overload; conflict work demands with personal tasks; stagnation in worker's career; telephone interruptions and unexpected visitors; and meetings.

Contemporary Nigerian educational institutions have not been immune from emerging forces of occupational stress in Nigeria. The NUC programme evaluation form (2005:20) states that institutional facilities should be such that lecturers should have well ventilated adequate offices, furnished with basic items of furniture and storage. In the case of the sciences, academic staff should have adequate office/ research laboratory space. The libraries (e-library and print) should be well stocked. The environment should be clean and the buildings safe. By contrast in actual fact; many lecturers share office space, library facilities are inadequate, internet services are undependable if they are available at all, electricity supply is epileptic, and laboratories poorly equipped. Yet lecturers are expected to carry out research if they are to progress.

Given the dynamic nature of the knowledge sector (in which universities are key players) and in order to meet standards for ranking of universities, the career progress requirements for lecturers are reviewed upwards from time to time with the potentials to generate job stress which can affect job effectiveness. The rising high cost of living and the reluctance of government to review collective agreements as at when due, the resultant strikes have resulted in distortions of the normal school year and brought pressure to streamline

individual university's current academic calendar in line with October to July. This makes it difficult for lecturers to have long vacations which can be dedicated to research. Sequels, the frequent industrial face-offs in universities, internal and national, do not encourage a conducive organisational climate for research. All these factors can generate job stress for lecturers which can adversely affect their job effectiveness. This is the lacuna this study derives its relevance from.

### 1.2 Statement of the problem

The ultimate goal of a lecturer is to grow in knowledge and in career. This goal, NUC expects institutions to attain in their staff development programmes through mentoring, publication, attendance of seminars and conferences, higher degrees, scholarships and exchange programmes. The situation is that most lecturers to prepare themselves to be promoted fund their staff development programmes by themselves either wholly or partly, while the stakes for promotion is hiked higher and higher regularly by management. This predisposes lecturers to stress and may affect their effectiveness on their job.

Generally, it is believed that there is a high intensity of occupational stress among lecturers in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Studies such as Ekennia (2000) in Agulanna (2007) and Anyaduba (2004), focused on level, causes and management of stress. There is however hardly any empirical evidence to show the effect of career growth requirements stress on job effectiveness of lecturers in Nigerian tertiary institutions. This study is an effort to fill that gap in knowledge for federal university lecturers in Cross River and Akwa Ibom States.

### 1.3 Objectives and Research questions

The objective of this study was to assess how career progress requirements stress affects the job effectiveness of lecturers. The research question that guided this study was: To what extent does career progress requirements stress affect the job effectiveness of university lecturers?

### 1.5 Hypotheses

The following null hypothesis derived from the research question was tested in this study.

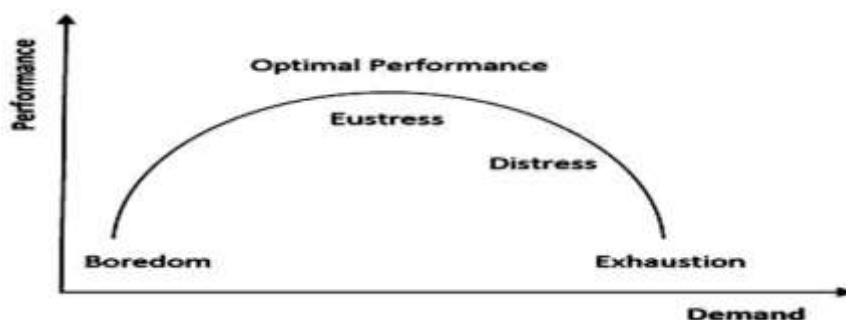
Ho: Stress arising from career progress requirements does not significantly affect the job effectiveness of university lecturers.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 The concept, process and nature of stress

Other names for job stress are work stress or occupational stress. Usoro (2018) stated that job stress as a phenomenon is subjective, multi-faceted and happens when workers' physical, emotional and attitudinal capabilities do not match job demands, constraints and/or opportunities. Melgosa (2004) posit that stress is made up of a combination of physiological and psychological reaction of the body when subjected to heavy demands. Kyriacou (1987) posit that teachers can be job stressed when they experience unpleasant emotions from teaching activities.

The two major types of stress are eustress (good stress) and distress (bad stress). Eustress is moderate or low stress which is known to increase positive work life, while distress is high stress level that decrease quality of work life (Fevre, Matheney & Kolt, 2003; and Millward, 2005). It is factual that achievement is subject to some pressure occasioned by the efforts to attain set goals. There is therefore need to strike the right balance if job effectiveness or the health of the lecturer is not to be affected. This is illustrated in the following diagram.



**Fig 2.1** Human Performance Curve

Source : McQuillan (2008) Introduction to Stress theory

Levi (1971) and Selye (1976) identified three stages that stress passes through, from the time it appears to the time it reaches its most acute level; these stages formed the General Adaptation Syndrome. The first stage is labelled the alarm stage where physical reactions are the first to warn the worker that there is need to be on guard. If at this stage measures are taken to resolve the problem(s) stress will not materialise. However by the time an unresolved stressful situation becomes overwhelming the worker may be classified as being in the alarm stage of stress.

Agulanna (2007) states that in the second stage called the Resistance stage the worker involved tries to resist the stress by either a mental adjustment or a coping technique. Failure to adapt, leads to the final stage of stress - the exhaustion phase. This stage as elucidated by Melgosa (2004) is characterised by fatigue, anxiety and depression which may occur sequentially or concurrently. Denga and Ekpo (1994) stated that at this exhaustion stage, there will be low productivity.

Stress by nature builds up over time. This study posits that the characteristics of stress though everywhere differ from person to person. According to Usoro and Udongwo (2018), stress is universal, inevitable (unavoidable) and transferable. It differs in presentation and intensity from person to person. Stress could also be infectious. Hockenbury and Hockenbury (1997) opined that stress is additive in that, individually daily hassles, not be that important, however, after a day full of these little hassles the effects accumulate.

## **2.2 Elements of job effectiveness of lecturers**

Aregbeyen (2010) in a study on students' perceptions of effective teaching and effective lecturer characteristics at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, ranked the first ten rated elements of effective teaching out of the thirty-five he listed. The order of ranking was: clear explanations, showing interest and concern in quality of teaching, knowing if the class is understanding or not, coming well prepared to class, having an interesting style of presentation, discussing recent developments in the field, respect for students as persons, identification of what is considered important in lectures, being careful and precise in answering questions and laying emphasis on conceptual understanding. He concluded that teaching effectively depends on a lecturer properly balancing teaching methodology with his personality traits.

Denga (1988) stated that the qualities of an effective lecturer include:

- (i) Good understanding of students.
- (ii) Interest in helping people and performing other social services capable of motivating students.
- (iii) Patience and tolerance.
- (iv) Good and balanced judgment (fairness).
- (v) Flexibility.

Some of these criteria when not there are identified as stressors that may make lecturers ineffective.

Research, the end result of which is often publication, is the major career growth requirement for university lecturers. Creswell (2008), defined research as a process of steps used in collecting and analyzing information in order to improve understanding of a topic or issue. Creswell (2008) posits further that it is made up of three steps: you ask a question, collection of data to answer the question, and lastly presentation of an answer to the question. An elaborate definition of research is given in the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (2011) as "a studious inquiry or examination; especially investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, revision of accepted theories or laws in the light of new facts, or practical application of such new or revised theories or laws."

Research could be basic, applied or developmental research. The aim of basic research is to increase scientific knowledge by discovering fundamental principles. Applied research involves searching for new ways of applying scientific knowledge to solve a problem. Developmental research is a decision-focused research that uses scientific procedure in improving present practices.

The third occupational function of lecturers is community service. Community service workload includes service to various university associations, the community and to the larger society. In the view of Joshua (2012) a university is socially responsible to serve its immediate and adjoining communities in areas such as public enlightenment and in times of national assignments where expert knowledge and skills and high levels of responsibilities and integrity are required, like national elections supervision and monitoring of national examinations etc.

## **2.3 Career progress requirements and job effectiveness**

Concerns over career progress or unfair performance appraisal have been described by Agulanna (2007) as a formidable organisational stressor. Given the ever changing promotion criteria in universities, promotion requirements predispose lecturers to stress from work overload. A common slogan among Nigerian academics is "Publish or Perish" (Idaka & Joshua 2006:33). It is interesting to note that publication is the main promotion criteria for lecturers. No matter how adept an academic is at delivering lectures, student- counseling, and preparation of results and no matter the work load of the lecturer, the final arbiter in the court of promotion

is the ability to present the requisite number of publications according to the guidelines for promotion adopted by the senate of that institution. In collaboration, Denga and Ekpo (1994), Nelson and Quick (2003) to mention but a few have emphasized the importance of employee appraisal as a source of stress, in that employee appraisal is the measure of effectiveness of performance.

Also the professionalisation of tertiary institutions through the giving of deadline for non-PhD holders will have the same effect as downsizing as many who cannot attain this degree will either leave or be weeded out if the deadline is adhered to. Decision latitude is a critical factor in occupational stress. This is defined by Wood and Wood (1999) as the 'extent to which workers may take initiatives and utilise skills to control their conditions of work' (p.5). Studies by Karasek and Theorell (1990), Savter, Murphy and Hurrell (1996), lay credence to the harm that inadequacy of decision latitude as a factor could do. Inability to take part in decision making is a stressor. Bearing credence to the importance of decision latitude is the ongoing stand of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) for university autonomy.

Another promotion requirements cultured stressor which is driven by individual differences is the 'The need to Achieve'. Denga and Ekpo (1994) described this type of employee as an employee who really wants to outdo others; who spends much time thinking of ways to beat others; he/ she do not go on annual leaves so as to maintain organisational efficiency; he may come home with work physically or mentally or both; such a worker works for many hours on end in order to be ahead of others. A lecturer who wants to be ahead of his peers by all means may fall into this category. Many lecturers have not gone on annual leave for many years. Unfortunately, while the annual leave accumulates, stress also builds up due to the fatigue accompanying the extended period of physical exertion. The family feels alienated, the wife starts trouble and these social stressors combine with the physiological stressors to torment the worker/lecturer. According to Boyd and Grummet (1983) the stress arising from the need to achieve is directly proportional to the activity undertaken.

Finally, Denga (1991b) identified lack of education in any form as a source of stress. The researcher observed that many lecturers are yet to become computer literate. Often not being IT compliant and yet working in the present day dynamic, computer based knowledge sector with their career progress dependent on publication, predisposes lecturers in tertiary institutions to stress. According to Kinman and Jones (2008), lack of personal development is significantly associated with stress. This study is thus an effort to establish the influence of stress from career progress requirements on the job effectiveness of federal university lecturers in Cross River and Akwa Ibom states.

Okwuagwu (2010) contributed that high stress level can impair performance especially when there is no motivation, no possible reward for performing the job well, or no ambition on the part of the individual, such that minimum effort will be expended by the worker. He stated further that, however, with increases in motivation, the level of stress rises along with productivity and efficiency, with the right amount of stress leading to creativity, interest, and optimal performance. Okwuagwu (2010) added that if the person becomes too achievement oriented or the job is too unrealistic and unreasonable, performance will begin to decline as too much stress will snap a person's health and mental ability. It is the view of the researcher however that the peak differs from person to person and that frequently others notice the early warning symptoms of stress before the victim.

Pelsma and Richard (1988), indicated in their study that there is a strong correlation between job satisfaction and teacher stress. Furthermore, they observed that stress level and extent of job satisfaction experienced by teachers influences teachers' job performance. Terry (1997) indicated that a teacher's stress level and capacity to deal with stress is determined by: extent to which the teacher is prepared for the occupation, satisfied with the work, satisfied with life, sickness, locus of control and self-esteem. Kirk and Brown (2003), posit that policy changes, language difficulties, computer illiteracy, extent accepted by students, rigid supervision, ability to manage time and equipment, workload and students performance are the major contributors to teaching stress.

## **2.4 Theoretical framework**

Interactional theories of stress are concerned with structural features of the worker's interaction with their work environment and are relevant to this study.

Maslach and Leiter's Job-person fit theory of stress

Maslach and Leiter (1997) used the concept of the job – person fit model in broader perspectives to explain the extreme form of occupational stress- burnout. Person here has to do with how emotions, motivations, job expectations and values match the job, while the job most generally encompasses organisational environment.

Maslach and Leiter (1997) identified six mismatches briefly described thus:

- i. When job demands are more than limits, you have work overload.

- ii. There is lack of control when workers have little of their duties/tasks may be due to stringent policies or close supervision, or as a result of complete disorder at work.
- iii. Inadequate rewards means absence of commensurate compensation for workers.
- iv. Community breakdown is when workers no longer work cordially with colleagues as a result of conflict.
- v. Fairness is absent arises when injustice and lack of fairness permeates the system such that there is no respect for one another at work.
- vi. There is value conflict when job demands conflict with workers' personal behaviour rules.

The mismatches identified in the Job-Person Fit theory can be used to explain the job stressors experienced by lecturers in federal universities, especially as career growth requirements represents both workload and a measure for reward. Hence, the choice of the theory as the theoretical framework for this study. There is job mismatch when an employee does not have the skill required on a job which leads to job incompetence and subsequently stress. Globalisation is generating drastic work changes and producing job pressures and stress (Friedman, 2000). Research and publications are required more and more to be as visible as possible to be acceptable for promotion purposes. Thus lecturers may need further education, training, and skills. Indeed, actually meant to ease work life, the paradoxical effect of information technology is that if one is not adept at its usage it may be a stress-inducer rather than being a stress-reliever. These stressors represent mismatches related to career progress requirements which may affect job effectiveness.

### **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

3.1 The Cross Sectional survey research design was adopted in this study. The survey design is noted by Babbie (2007) to have a definitive nature of its conclusion which allows for reliability and generalisation. It allows for the examination of independent variables in terms of dependent variables. For this study, career growth requirements stress was the independent variable while the dependent variable was job effectiveness. The study area was Akwa Ibom and Cross River States. Two federal universities were in Cross River and Akwa Ibom States and they were: University of Uyo and University of Calabar.

The total population of lecturers in these institutions was two thousand one hundred and sixty eight (2,168). This figure was derived from the population of lecturers on the payroll of these universities as at the time of the survey. In order to obtain a sample that properly represents the population; a stratified random sampling technique was used to select the lecturers involved. Faculties of each institution were regarded as the strata. The sample from each stratum was drawn randomly. As the populations of academics differed from one institution to another, the samples drawn from these institutions also differed in size. In drawing the sample, every faculty was represented. University of Uyo had twelve faculties while University of Calabar had ten faculties. Given that the population under study is finite, the Taro Yamene formula was used in determining the sample size. The sample size for University of Calabar is two hundred and eighty six lecturers while University of Uyo's sample size used for the study is two hundred and ninety eight lecturers. The total sample for the study was five hundred and eighty four lecturers drawn using stratified random sampling technique.

#### **3.2 Research instrument**

This study utilized as research instrument the Job Stress Scale (JSS) and Job Effectiveness Questionnaires (JEQ) constructed for the study. The Job Stress and Job Effectiveness Scale had three sections A to C. Section A, was concerned with demographics of the lecturers. Section B elicited for information to assess stress intensity experienced by lecturers in tertiary institutions. Each item had four options: Very Stressful, Stressful, Mildly stressful and Not Stressful. Section C was four point Likert type scale designed to measure the job effectiveness of lecturers with options: Always, Often, Sometimes and Never.

The split-half reliability method was adopted in carrying out the reliability analysis, and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analytical procedure. Correlation coefficients ( $r_{xy}$ ) ranged from 0.58 to 0.71. Using the Spearman Brown prophecy formula, these coefficients were converted to estimates of reliability ( $r_{tt}$ ) ranging from 0.70 to 0.94. These high values were considered sufficient for research work in social and behavioural sciences. Hence, the instruments were accepted for usage for this study.

### **IV. TEST OF HYPOTHESIS**

4.1 One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used in analysing the hypothesis. ANOVA according to Dewberry (2004) is used when there are two or more groups of respondents, a random sample, a continuous dependent variable and parametric data. The data for this study satisfied these conditions, hence the choice of ANOVA.

The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

$H_0$ : Stress arising from career progress requirements does not significantly affect the job effectiveness of university lecturers.

H<sub>A</sub>: Stress arising from career progress requirements significantly affects the job effectiveness of university lecturers.

The dependent variable in this hypothesis is job effectiveness categorized into publication, community service, teaching effectiveness while the independent variable is stress arising from career progress requirement. Stress arising from career progress requirements was classified into low, average and high according to the lecturers mean response score. Based on this, lecturers with scores below the mean as their response score were classified as low, lecturers with scores within the mean range were classified as average and lecturers

**Table 4.1**

Descriptive statistics and one way ANOVA of influence of stress arising from career progress requirements on job effectiveness in terms publication, community service and teaching effectiveness

Job effectiveness	Stress arising from career development	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Publication	Low	133	17.87	2.21
	Average	162	16.13	2.28
	High	264	17.42	2.11
	Total	559	17.14	2.245
Community service	Low	133	16.21	2.38
	Average	162	15.71	3.29
	High	264	16.21	2.19
	Total	559	16.04	2.62
Teaching effectiveness	Low	133	16.34	2.18
	Average	162	17.18	2.11
	High	264	17.28	2.02
	Total	559	16.93	2.10

Job effectiveness	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Publication	Between Groups	122.86	2	61.43		.132
	Within Groups	14107.	556	25.37	2.42	
	Total	14230.	558			
		13				
Community service	Between Groups	147.32	2	73.66		.220
	Within Groups	15828.	556	28.47	2.59	
	Total	15975.	558			
		6				
Teaching effectiveness	Between Groups	120.64	2	60.32		.257
	Within Groups	15932.	556	28.66	2.11	
	Total	16052.	558			
		95				

\*Significant at .05 Level (critical  $F_{2,556} = 3.14$ )

Source: Researcher's computation, 2012

with scores above the mean range were classified as being highly stressed from career progress requirements. The influence of stress arising from career progress requirements on job effectiveness in terms of publication, community service and teaching effectiveness was computed using the one Way Analysis of Variance. The analysis results are shown in Table 4.16.

The result in Table 4.16 showed that there is no significant influence of stress from career progress requirements on job effectiveness in terms of publication ( $F=2.42, P>.05$ ), community service ( $F=2.59, P>.05$ ), teaching effectiveness ( $F=2.11, P>.05$ ). The null hypothesis was retained and the alternate hypothesis rejected as the calculated F-ratios of 2.42, 2.59 and 2.11 were smaller than the critical F-ratio of 3.14 at .05 alpha level and two and 556 degrees of freedom. This finding means that lecturers perceived stress arising from career progress requirements as having no significant effect on the job effectiveness in terms of publication, community service and teaching effectiveness.

#### **4.2 Discussion of findings**

The fourth hypothesis stated that stress arising from career progress requirements does not significantly affect the job effectiveness of lecturers. The result of research analysis shows that stress from career progress requirements does not significantly affect the job effectiveness of lecturers in terms of publication, community development and teaching effectiveness. Employees' appraisal is the very measure of effectiveness of job performance for any employee. Denga and Ekpo (1994), Idaka and Joshua (2006) and Nelson and Quick (2003) alluded to this fact in their studies. It is relevant to note that the staff appraisal form of universities is at present lopsided in favour of publication. The tendency therefore is for lecturers to be more effective in publication to the detriment of teaching if such lecturers are very much promotion conscious. From the study it is obvious that many lecturers do not pay attention to community service. In the appraisal form it is interesting to note that the criteria for promotion is silent on community service despite the fact that community service is one of the tripartite terms of employment. It is therefore not surprising that hardly any attention is given to community service by lecturers.

### **V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following conclusion was reached from the research findings: Career progress requirements do not affect the job effectiveness of university lecturers. Given the result of this study these recommendations were made:

1. University proprietors should provide adequate facilities such as offices, laboratories, equipment and materials that provide a conducive atmosphere for research. Provision of facilities will ensure that lecturers have the tools and technology to work at their true potential at relative ease. This will yield huge dividends in terms of reduced stress related costs (health costs, loss of staff) and enhanced job effectiveness.
2. More avenues to have access to funds for research should be provided and information on the ones available well broadcasted. Alumni should be encouraged to support research chairs.
3. The new trend towards collaborative research should be encouraged. This will encourage team work, mentoring and shared research burden as well as enrich research output.
4. Lecturers should learn to monitor their stress symptoms. Effective self-monitoring will aid the adoption of combative behaviours at the early stage of the stress cycle.
5. Periodic mandatory medical checkup should be initiated. Health talks and relevant on the spot checkups will also help in reducing stress.
6. Effective recruitment of faculty, new hire orientation, and relevant training and retraining will produce employees that are well suited for the job and can keep abreast of the dynamism academics.
7. Inflation sensitive, competitive salary structure/ working conditions should be designed and put in place to reduce the incessant union strikes and bring stability to the school system. The long vacation gives room for lecturers to concentrate on their research.
8. Management of universities should device a method of obtaining feedback from their workers regarding the work situation so as to be able to redesign jobs to enhance job performance effectiveness.

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