

Full Length Research Paper

Occupational stress coping strategies among lecturers in Ilorin metropolis, Nigeria

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This study investigated occupational stress coping strategies among lecturers in Ilorin metropolis. The descriptive research design was employed and a total of one hundred and fifty (150) lecturers were selected from three (3) institutions, using a simple random sampling technique. Questionnaire was validated before using test re-test method of reliability with co-efficient 'r' 0.78. Five research hypotheses were formulated and data collected were analyzed using percentage and chi-square at 0.05 level of significant. The findings showed that, all the hypotheses were rejected. Based on the findings, recommendations and suggestions were made that could increase the interest of lecturers in Ilorin metropolis to participate in exercise activities for enjoyment and as occupational stress relief.

Key words: Occupational stress, Coping strategies, Lecturers, Physical Exercise.

INTRODUCTION

According to latest health reports, stress is said to be one of the largest killer of man today (Health reports, 2008) Stress is now becoming more accepted as being crucially related to our total health-physical mental but emotional. According to the American Academy of Family Physician, majority of all physicians' visit are prompt by stress related symptoms that are known to cause or worse medical condition (Ayurveda, 2008). Occupational stress is our responses to specific stimuli called 'stress inducer' and they are the events that generally produce stress in a workplace. They may be temporary or chronic, leading to negative health consequence or outcome changing a person's life. Although life itself is dependent upon a certain form of stress, it is only when stress is handled

poorly by the body or mind that it becomes a health hazard (Olaitan, et al., 2010).

Two powerful body system cope with stress; the nervous system control the rapid body changes, While the endocrine system regulates the longer term pattern of stress response by relating hormones into the blood. The adrenal activities the sympathetic nervous system, reducing the normalizing effects of body function. This increase the metabolic rate, heart rate, circulation and blood pressure. In addition, effectiveness of the digestive system is diminished and disturbance in sleep patterns become common (Ayurveda, 2008).

A certain amount of occupational stress occurs every second of one's life in a workplace. There is no work

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without stress. However, crisis occurs when occupation stress is not manageable. Examples are students or works unrest, lecturer with load of teaching and make research work to be carried out in situation like this, it is the opinion of the researchers to draw attention of the general society, most especially lecturers to alert them on the basis of overcoming occupational stress through exercise activity which apparently has not been give much attention.

Lecturing Job and Stress

Stress

The response our bodies and minds have to the demands place on them – is a normal part of life and a normal part of any job (especially teaching job). What we think of 'Lecturing job and stress' is what happens when:

1. The challenge and demand of work become excessive.
2. The pressures of the institution surpass lecture's ability
3. Satisfaction becomes frustration and exhaustion.

Workplace stress is usually the result of high demand on the job, real or perceives lack of control concerning those demands, poor day-to-day organization and communication and an unsupportive work environment (Olaitan, et al., 2010).

Exercise and stress

Exercise is the use of the body or mind that involves effort or activity. The search has shown that physical exercise is the best tension reliever. It is a very important remedy for occupational stress. Nothing eases occupational stress more than exercise. Exercise, when properly done, gives the body time to operate in the efficiency mode (Ellen, et al., 2007).

Benefit of exercise in managing Lecturers' occupational stress

Physical exercise is immensely beneficial in managing occupational stress (Issac, 2006). This for several reasons:

Exercise helps reduce occupational stress not only by the biochemical's it produces, but by reducing others produced by stress. When a person experiences occupational stress the sympathetic nervous system produces cortisone and hormones that – if left unaltered in the blood stream- produce harmful effect on blood vessels.

Exercise releases helpful chemicals in our brain and body that are good for body use.

1. Exercise develops and maintains a health body which directly reduces occupation stress susceptibility.
2. Occupational stress often produces exercise tense muscles, particularly in the neck, shoulder and calf muscles. Exercise activities can help loose these up, both as part of a general warm-up period and during the main workout.

Physical exercise improves cardiovascular function by strengthening the heart muscle, causing greater elasticity of the blood vessels, increasing oxygen throughout your body and lowering your blood levels of fats such as cholesterol and triglycerides. All of these, of course, mean less chance of developing disease heart conditions, such as strokes, or high blood pressure.

Mental exercise activities proves outlet for negative emotions such as frustration anger and irritability, thereby promoting a more positive mood and outlook exercise also warm and relaxes cold, thing muscles and tissues which contribute to occupational stress feelings.

1. Regular exercise reduces amount of adrenal hormones the body releases in response to occupational stress.
2. Exercise improves mood by producing positive biochemical change in the body and brain.

Also, exercise activity releases greater amounts of endorphins, the powerful, pain-relieving, mood – elevating chemicals in the brain.

Exercise, therefore, will keep your body functioning properly and will keep body feel both relaxed, refreshed and promotes deep restful sleep (Adeyeye, 2007).

The psychological benefits from a regular exercise routine help to eliminate occupational stress.

Other psychological benefit follow from a regular workout. Improving overall health and fitness help produce self-confidence. Beyond that, it helps lecturers realize that are exerting to improve their mind and body. That stress to overcome the feelings of helplessness and resultant passivity that so often accompany stress (James, 2007).

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to assess coping strategies to overcome occupational stress among lecturers in Ilorin metropolis.

Hypotheses

1. Exercise activities will not significantly overcome lecturers' occupational stress.
2. Time schedule by the lecturers will not significantly and overcome lecturers' occupational stress.
3. Lecturers' interaction with students will not significantly overcome occupational stress.

Table 1. Personal Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Institution		
University of Ilorin, Ilorin	50	33.3
Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin	50	33.3
Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin	50	33.3
Gender		
Male	95	63.3
Female	55	36.7
Religion		
Christianity	71	47.3
Islam	79	52.7
Age (in years)		
26-35	52	34.6
36-45	40	26.7
46-55	40	26.7
56 Years and above	18	12
Ethnic group		
Yoruba	122	81.3
Igbo	19	12
Hausa	6	6

4. Lecturers' health status will not significantly overcome occupational stress

5. Office workload will not significantly depend on overcoming lecturers' occupational stress.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted to select 150 lecturers from Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria. A total of 50 lecturers each were chosen from, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State Collage of Education, Ilorin and Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin. Some of the characteristics of the lecturers are shown in table 1. The questionnaire was developed by the researchers, which comprised two major areas. Section A, the personal information of the lecturers (5 items) and section B, occupational stress among lecturers (5 sub-sections) with responses in Likert rating scale format, thus; Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD).

A test re-test method was used to ensure reliability. The reliability coefficient(r) 0.83 was obtained using thirty subjects from Ibadan metropolis, Oyo State, a separate population which is not part of the sampled population. To speed up the administration of the questionnaire 6 research assistants (2 to each institution) were employed and trained within two weeks, questionnaire were distributed and collected and the return rate was 100% that is 150.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 showed that 33.3% of the respondents were

chosen from each institution, 63.3% were male while 36.7% were female. Also 47.3% were Christians and 52.7% were Islam. The table revealed that 34.6% were within the age range of 26 to 35 year, 26.7% were within the range of 36 to 35years and 46 to 55 years apiece and 12% were within the age range of 56 years and above. Finally, 81.3% of the respondents were Yoruba, 12.7% were Igbo and 6% were Hausa.

In the hypotheses testing (table2), since the calculated X^2 which is 18.98 is greater than the table value X^2 6, $0.05=1.64$ the hypothesis was therefore rejected which means that overcoming occupational stress is dependent on use of exercise. The authors therefore concluded that exercise can be used to overcome occupational stress. This can be traced to the statement by Ellen, et al who concluded that, nothing eases stress more than exercise (Ellen, et al., 2007).

In hypothesis2, since the calculated X^2 of 32.09 is greater than the table value X^2 6, $0.05=1.64$ the hypothesis was therefore rejected, which means that overcoming lecturers' occupational stress is dependent on time schedule by the lecturers. The researchers therefore, concluded that time schedule by the lecturers can be use to overcome occupational stress. This is in line with Olaitan who asserted that, if every individual can programme their time well, they can incorporate relaxation in it to manage job stress (Olaitan, 2004).

In hypothesis 3, since the calculated X^2 of 68.21 is

Table 2. Hypothesis Testing

S/N	Variable	SA	A	D	SD	Calc. X^2	df	Table Value	Decision
	Ho.1: Exercise and occupational stress	SA	A	D	SD				
1	I prefer exercise to overcome work stress	8	101	39	2				
2	Exercise maintains a healthy body which directly reduce work stress	90	10	48	1	18.98	6	12.59	Rejected
3	Exercise eases work stress	4	80	61	4				
	Ho.2: Scheduling of time and occupation stress	SA	A	D	SD				
4	I cannot set a said time for exercise activities because of my lecturing job	100	7	40	3				
5	I manage work stress with various exercise after working day	20	82	10	38	32.09	6	12.59	Rejected
6	I reserved time for regular teaching	49	90	6	5				
	Ho.3: Interaction and occupational stress	SA	A	D	SD				
7	Always have discomfort lecturing a large class	51	2	44	53				
8	The interaction with students in the class gives me stress	11	91	9	39	68.21	6	12.59	Rejected
9	Interaction with students with lack of self coordination gives me stress	15	51	85	45				
	Ho.4: Lecturers' health status and occupational stress	SA	A	D	SA				
10	Always tiered	20	71	40	10				
11	Students attitude make me fall ill	22	71	26	32	20.79	6	12.59	Rejected
12	Frequent illness from lecturing job	45	85	18	2				
	Ho.5: Productivity, office workload and occupational stress	SA	A	D	SA				
13	The preparation of examination, and marking of script are stressful	91	16	41	2				
14	The workload in my office reduce my productivity	82	38	20	10	38.13	3	7.81	Rejected

greater than table value $X^2_{6, 0.05}=1.64$ the hypothesis was therefore rejected, which means that overcoming occupational stress is dependent on the lecturers' interaction with students. The authors therefore concluded that lecturers' interaction with students can be used to overcome occupational stress. The corroborates with Ellen, et al who said that, workplace stress is usually the result of high demands on the job and that there is need for individual worker to interact with other to relief them from occupational related stress (Ellen, et al, 2007).

In hypothesis 4, since the calculated X^2 of 20.79 is greater than table value $X^2_{6, 0.05}=1.64$ the hypothesis was therefore rejected, which means that that overcoming

occupational stress depends on lecturers' health status. It is therefore concluded that lecturers' health status has effect on overcoming occupational stress. This is in support of Adeniyi who pointed out that, workers' health can be protected through helping them to cope with stress, using various coping techniques (Adeniyi, 2000).

In hypothesis 5, since the calculated X^2 of 38.14 is greater than table value $X^2_{3, 0.05} = 1.37$, thereby rejected the hypothesis, which means that overcoming occupational stress is dependent on office workload. It is therefore concluded that stress is dependent on office workload. This is confirmed by Copper who maintained that, job stress can hinder effectiveness at work and can

lead to low performance (Copper, 2004).

CONCLUSION

All the variables studied were found to be important in that case, the general level of awareness and interest of lecturers in the use of exercise to overcome occupational stress must continue to increase tremendously throughout the institutions in Nigeria, more especially when the lecturers are conscious of its importance to life and their career. In fact, a certain amount of stress is necessary to be able to perform the daily task of our life. Too much occupational stress (especially constant, unrelieved stress) however, can result in physical and mental illness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Finally, exercises that will aid good rest and sleep have been found to be very important in the maintenance of good health on those who take part in exercise activities. In the view of the conclusion drawn from this study, the following recommendations were put forth.

Lecturers should attend seminars, workshops and conferences on occupational health services, so as to improve their knowledge on occupational stress and related issues.

Lecturers should be encouraged to participate in sport, exercise and fitness programmes in order to maintain a good health status.

Also, tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria should explore other models being adopted in the developed countries and seek alternative source creating time/day for exercise programme use for overcoming their occupational stress.

Orientation services should be provided for lecturers by professionals in the field of occupational health, exercise and fitness programme.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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