

## **STRESS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF ACADEMIC STAFF AND ITS EFFECT ON PERFORMANCE IN UNIVERSITY OF ABUJA.**

ODIDI, Anuoluwapo Mary & Prof. U.D Mohammed  
**Department of Business Administration**  
**Faculty of Management Sciences**  
**University of Abuja**

**Email:** [odidianuoluwapo@yahoo.com](mailto:odidianuoluwapo@yahoo.com)

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### ***Abstract***

*This study examined the stress management practices of academic staff and its effect on performance in University of Abuja. It identified practices such as social/fitness clubs, counseling services, and flexible working hours as key factors contributing to optimal performance among lecturers. The research utilized a descriptive survey design, with a population of 632 academic staff members from the University of Abuja. A sample size of 245 was determined using the Tao Yamane formula, and participants were selected from four faculties: Arts, Social Sciences, Sciences, and Management Sciences. A questionnaire was distributed to gather relevant data from the selected respondents. Descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage were used to analyze the demographic information, while simple regression analysis was applied to test the research hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. The findings indicated that participation in social/fitness clubs significantly influenced lecture attendance among academic staff at the University of Abuja. The study concluded that several factors notably affect the performance and engagement of academic staff at the institution. Based on these findings, the study recommends that the University of Abuja's management should continue to promote academic staff involvement in social and fitness clubs, as they positively impact both personal well-being and professional performance.*

**Keywords:** Management, Performance, Stress.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Stress is a universal experience that affects individuals across various races, cultural backgrounds, social, and occupational statuses (Amina & Bako, 2014). In today's world, stress has become a common phenomenon due to the constant demands of routine tasks (Hanif, 2004). It is widely acknowledged that we live in an era where the need to stay competitive is essential for both personal and organizational survival (Katyal, Jain & Dhanda, 2011). People often face various life demands that can either have a positive or negative impact on them (Madineh, Sadegh, Lotfollar & Mohammad, 2013). The work environment is a major source of stress, which significantly impacts employees' daily lives (Anazodo, Onyeizugbe & Uchenna, 2012). Stress is a significant issue

that organizations must address to ensure employees can deliver the desired performance (Warraich, Ahmed, Ahmad & Khoso, 2014). It is often described as a negative condition that affects both an individual's well-being and their performance (Ejaz, Muhammad & Muhammad, 2014) and can be especially detrimental during times of economic recession.

Organizational stress is a major factor contributing to high employee turnover rates. To address this issue, the management of the University of Abuja has implemented stress management policies such as social/fitness clubs, counseling services and flexible working hours as research has shown that some causes of stress include lack of physical activity, mental well-being, absent of conflict resolution and work-life balance. Antoniou, Davidson,

and Cooper (2013) argue that as stress levels rise in the workplace, job satisfaction decreases. Job satisfaction is crucial for enhancing employee performance. Negative emotions and dissatisfaction arise when there is a gap between an individual's desires and expectations and the reality of their job. Highlights that excessive stress is harmful to human well-being and performance. It can cause dysfunction in various aspects of life, extending to organizational performance, leading to reduced productivity and well-being.

The demand placed on lecturing job in Nigeria has increased the level of stress among lecturers in Nigerian universities, thereby becoming an inevitable part of the job. Inadequate management support leaves employees feeling alienated when they need guidance, while work-home conflict arises when lecturers juggle job responsibilities and home demands. Additionally, lecturers often perceive their workloads as overwhelming. Muraale (2017) notes that stress can drive employees to quit, reducing their commitment to the organization.

These stress factors, including inadequate management support, work-home conflict, and work overload likely have a direct influence on the performance of lecturers, affecting their interactions with students, organizational skills, and subject matter knowledge. According to Lucey (1994), stress can be managed within organizations by adjusting personal responsibility, implementing job rotation, offering flexible hours, and providing recreational amenities like social/fitness clubs. If these measures are properly implemented, they can significantly reduce stress levels. The University of Abuja has not provided adequate stress management practices for academic staff, such as a proper recreational center, counseling services, or flexible working hours. Given these challenges, this study seeks to examine the stress management practices of academic staff at the University of Abuja and their effect on performance. The main objective of the study is to examine stress management practices of academic staff and their effect on performance at the University of Abuja.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATION**

### **Concept of Stress Management**

Stress is a multifaceted issue that has captivated human attention for centuries (Suleiman & Akinsanya, 2011), and it has been defined in various ways (Alabi, Mulala & Lawal, 2012). Initially, stress was understood as external pressure, but it was later recognized as an internal strain (Michie, 2015). Selye, a pioneer in the study of stress and business management, introduced the concept in 1956 (Fevre, Mathny & Kolt, 2003). He defined stress as the body's generalized response to external situations, which can lead to changes in an individual's physical, emotional, behavioral, or mental state. Stress encompasses any factor that disrupts the body's natural equilibrium, including physical injuries, deprivation, diseases, and emotional disturbances (Arikewuyo, 2004). Oguntimetin (2006) agreed, describing stress as the result of an individual being pushed beyond their natural limits, and even after the cause is removed, they may not return to their original state.

Hasebur (2013) defined stress as an adaptive response to external situations, leading to physical, psychological, and/or behavioral changes for those in organizations. Kar (2002) viewed stress as an unpleasant emotional and physiological state that individuals experience when they perceive situations as dangerous or threatening to their well-being. Richlin & Hoe (2003) further defined stress as a physical and mental reaction to daily demands, especially those brought about by change. From these definitions, there is a consensus, particularly with Michie's (2015) view, that stress results from the interaction between external factors and an individual's response. While many definitions highlight the influence of external stimuli and the individual's reaction, some researchers have specifically linked stress to job performance. For example, Kazmi, Amjol & Khan (2008) defined stress as an external stimulus that induces strain within an individual, which may positively or negatively affect job performance. Ojiakor (2001) noted that stress is the physical change that occurs when external pressures on an individual

become overwhelming, leading to decreased job performance and potential health issues.

### **Stress Management Practices**

Stress can be managed in two primary ways: individually or organizationally. According to Robbins (2004), the individual approach involves techniques such as exercise and confiding in someone. Exercise, including activities like walking, jogging, playing tennis, dancing, or hitting squash balls, helps employees manage stress. Fitness experts often claim that engaging in physical activity makes it difficult to focus on work-related stress. Additionally, relaxation plays a crucial role in stress management. Deep relaxation helps employees detach from stressors, reducing heart rates, blood pressure, and other stress indicators. Another personal strategy for stress management is opening up to someone. Confiding in a trusted person about personal struggles can offer significant emotional relief and help employees maintain a more positive perspective.

On the other hand, the organizational approach to stress management involves the company adopting specific strategies to support employees. Robbins (2014) suggests that organizations can implement training programs, improve personnel policies, foster open communication, and offer technical support. Similarly, Lucey (2014) recommends managing stress within organizations by adjusting personal responsibilities, flexible work hours, and providing social or recreational facilities, such as social clubs or outings. Additionally, counseling services can help employees cope with stress. If these strategies are effectively implemented, they can significantly reduce or prevent stress, ultimately improving employee performance. Measures such as psychological support through counseling service, physical activities centers and job demand control through flexible working hours are crucial in creating a healthier work environment.

### **Concept of Employee Performance**

Job performance refers to an individual's ability to achieve work objectives, meet expectations, fulfill benchmarks, or attain organizational

goals (Ismail, Suh, Ajis & Dollah, 2009). In the context of lecturers, job performance can be seen as an indicator of teaching effectiveness, which reflects the relationship between teaching characteristics and their impact on educational outcomes in the classroom (Alabi et al., 2012). Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt (2007) identified key dimensions for evaluating lecturers' performance. According to Ajilabi (2000), job performance involves a dedicated commitment to achieving standards both within and outside the academic setting. It refers to the performance of tasks, adherence to directives, or fulfilling the requirements of a position. Casting (1996) defined staff job performance as the completion of teaching responsibilities and provision of expected services, such as attending lectures, conducting research, and administering tests or exams.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study is based on the Person-Environment Fit (P-E Fit) theory, developed by French and Caplan in 1972. The core principle of this theory is that stress arises when there is a mismatch between an individual and their environment. Stress occurs when the demands placed on an individual exceed their capacity to meet those demands. Such a mismatch triggers coping mechanisms and defense strategies, which influence both objective and subjective perceptions of the environment. Additionally, stress can emerge from the gap between the actual conditions of the work environment and an individual's subjective interpretation of it. French and his colleagues outlined two key distinctions: one between objective reality and subjective perceptions, and the other between environmental factors (E) and individual factors (P). In this framework, a lack of fit can negatively impact an employee's health. In the context of this study, it can be inferred that lecturers experience stress due to the imbalance between the demands of their academic and administrative responsibilities and their capacity to manage them.

### **Empirical Review**

Aderinto and Adebayo (2021) conducted a study on the relationship between stress management strategies and lecturers' job

effectiveness at a College of Education in Oyo State, Nigeria. The study employed a descriptive survey design with a correlation approach. The sample consisted of 120 lecturers selected from five schools within the institution using a proportional sampling method. Data was collected using a researcher-designed questionnaire titled "Stress Management Strategies and Lecturers' Job Effectiveness Questionnaire (SMSLJEQ)." Descriptive statistics were used to analyze personal data, while mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) were used to test the research hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. The findings revealed significant relationships between exercise activities, time schedules, lecturer interaction, and workload reduction with lecturers' job effectiveness. Recommendations included reducing the workload of lecturers and encouraging them to prioritize their tasks, such as lecturing, research, and student assessments.

Austin and Emmanuel (2021) explored work stress management among university staff, focusing on the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) in the Niger Delta States. The study aimed to address the growing prevalence of job stress among university staff, driven by recent economic, infrastructural, and organizational changes. A total of 120 subjects were selected from six NOUN study centers, and data was gathered through the "Staff Stress Management Questionnaire (SSMQ)." The questionnaire's validity was ensured, and a reliability coefficient of 0.86 was obtained. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (t-test) were used to analyze the data. The results highlighted prominent stressors, including workload, lack of recognition, and limited career development opportunities. The study concluded that occupational stress was present among both male and female staff, with significant differences in stress levels between genders. It was recommended that stress management interventions be increased, and annual leave policies be enforced.

Dim et al. (2021) investigated the impact of stress on employee performance in five federal universities in Southeast Nigeria. The study, which aimed to examine how role ambiguity

and workload pressure affect employee performance, utilized the Person-Environment (P-E) fit theory. A sample of 351 participants was selected using a statistical formula, and data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple regression. The results indicated that workload pressure and role ambiguity negatively impacted employee performance. The study recommended that universities implement effective stress management strategies to alleviate workload pressure and clarify task responsibilities to improve employee performance.

Anand and Srinath (2021) assessed preventive methods for managing workplace stress. They emphasized that successful employers and managers take leadership roles in addressing work stress. Stress, defined as a mental and physical response to external demands, occurs when the demands on individuals exceed their available resources. The study discussed various symptoms and repercussions of stress, emphasizing that managing stress effectively in the workplace is crucial for preventing negative outcomes. The article provides insights on how management can help mitigate stress through proactive strategies.

Brotobor (2021) examined the stressors and stress management strategies used by student nurses at Ambrose Alli University in Ekpoma, Nigeria. The study used a cross-sectional survey approach with structured questionnaires, and all 314 undergraduate nursing students in the department were included in the sample. The results showed that academic work was the primary source of stress for most students. The majority of respondents reported using religious practices (73.6%) and resting (70.4%) as stress coping mechanisms. Other strategies included seeking support from healthcare workers, family, and lecturers (45.5%) and engaging in recreational activities (51.6%). The study concluded that continuous counseling, diversional therapies, and a revision of academic workload are essential for creating a supportive and motivating learning environment for nursing students.

## **Study Gap**



Most of the previous studies, such as those by Austin and Emmanuel (2021) on work stress management among staff at the National Open University of Nigeria in the Niger Delta, Aderinto and Adebayo (2021) at a College of Education in Oyo State, Brotohor (2021) on stressors and stress management at Ambrose Alli University, and Dim et al. (2021), have primarily focused on universities in the southern part of Nigeria. As a result, this study addresses a gap in the existing literature by investigating the stress management practices of academic staff and their impact on performance at the University of Abuja in Northern Nigeria.

## METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design and utilized questionnaires as the primary data collection method. The target population consisted of 632 academic staff members at the University of Abuja as of 2018, including professors, associate professors, senior lecturers, assistant lecturers, and graduate assistants. A sample size of 245 was determined using Taro Yamane's formula. Questionnaires were distributed, and 183 responses were collected, representing 75% of the total sample, which was used for the analysis. Simple random sampling was employed. Ordinary linear regression was used to test the hypothesis. The questionnaire was assessed for content validity and reliability to ensure its appropriateness in addressing the research questions. Cronbach's alpha was applied to measure internal consistency. The model for estimating the study variables is as follows:

$$PF = \alpha + \beta_1 SFC + \beta_2 CUS + \beta_3 MFH + \epsilon$$

Where PF= Performance, **SFC** = Social fitness club, **CUS** = Counseling services, **MFH** = More flexible hours

The formula for calculating the sample size (n) using Taro Yamane's method is:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$1 + N(e)^2$$

Where:

N = Population of the study (632)

n = Sample size (?)

e = Margin of error (0.05)

Therefore: 632

$$1 + 632(0.05)^2$$

$$632$$

$$1 + 632(0.0025) = 245$$

$$n = 245$$

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

### Data Analysis

The chapter started by analyzing the research questions through simple percentage (%) and descriptive statistics, including frequencies. The Ordinary linear regression method was employed to test the hypotheses. The significance level for hypothesis testing was set at 0.05. The decision rule was to reject the null hypothesis if the computed value exceeded the critical value

**Table 4.1: Response Rate**

Respondent	Questionnaire Administered	Questionnaire not Returned	Questionnaire Returned	(%) Questionnaire Returned
Professors	50	15	35	13
Associate Professors	57	17	40	18
Senior Lecturers	45	10	35	15
Assistant Lecturers	55	15	40	14
Graduate Assistants	38	5	33	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>75</b>

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

Table 4.1 indicates that 13% of the respondents were professors, 18% were associate professors, 15% were senior lecturers, 14% were assistant lecturers, and 15% were graduate

assistants. Notably, a total of 183 respondents, representing 75% of the total sample, returned their completed questionnaires, which was sufficient for the study.

## Tests of Hypotheses

### Test of Hypothesis One

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Social/fitness clubs do not have a significant effect on lecture attendance of academic staff at the University of Abuja.

**Table 1: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.806 <sup>a</sup>	.650	.648		.29480

a. Predictors: (Constant), SFC

**Source:** SPSS Output Version 27.0

Table 1 presents the model summary, indicating an R value of 0.806, which reflects a strong positive correlation between the predictor

(SFC) and the dependent variable. The R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.650 suggests that 65% of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the

predictor. The adjusted  $R^2$ , at 0.648, accounts for the potential bias of including additional predictors and confirms the robustness of the model. With a standard error of the estimate of 0.29480, the model's predictions are fairly

precise. Based on the decision rule that an  $R^2$  value above 0.5 indicates a substantial explanatory power, the model is deemed satisfactory for predicting the dependent variable.

**Table 2 ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum Squares	of df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	29.204	1	29.204	336.035	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	15.730	181	.087		
	Total	44.934	182			

a. Dependent Variable: LA

b. Predictors: (Constant), SFC

**Source:** SPSS Output Version 27.0

Table 2 displays the ANOVA results, assessing the statistical significance of the model. The regression sum of squares is 29.204, with 1 degree of freedom, resulting in a mean square of 29.204. The residual sum of squares is 15.730, with 181 degrees of freedom, yielding a mean square of 0.087. The F-statistic is

336.035, and the associated significance value (p) is 0.000. Using the decision rule, which states that a model is statistically significant if  $p < 0.05$ , this result indicates that the predictor (SFC) significantly explains variations in the dependent variable (LA). Hence, the model is valid and reliable for predicting the dependent variable.

**Table 3 Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.924	.170		5.421	.000
	SFC	.787	.043	.806	18.331	.000

a. Dependent Variable: LA

**Source:** SPSS Output Version 27.0

Table 3 presents the coefficients of the regression model, indicating the impact of the predictor (SFC) on the dependent variable (LA). The unstandardized coefficient (BBB) for SFC is 0.787, with a standard error of 0.043, suggesting that a one-unit increase in SFC leads to a 0.787 increase in LA. The standardized coefficient ( $\beta$ ) is 0.806, highlighting a strong

positive effect of SFC on LA. The t-value for SFC is 18.331, with a significance level (p) of 0.000. According to the decision rule, which deems a predictor significant if  $p < 0.05$ , SFC significantly predicts LA. The constant ( $B=0.924$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) indicates the baseline value of LA when SFC is zero. Thus, the model

demonstrates a significant and strong relationship between SFC and LA.

## Tests of Hypotheses two

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Counseling services do not have significant effect on research of academic staff in University of Abuja.

**Table 4 Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.909 <sup>a</sup>	.826	.825	.23181

a. Predictors: (Constant), CS

**Source:** SPSS Output Version 27.0

Table 4 provides the model summary, showing an RRR value of 0.909, which indicates a very strong positive correlation between the predictor (CS) and the dependent variable. The R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.826 implies that 82.6% of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by CS, demonstrating the model's high explanatory power. The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> of 0.825,

which adjusts for the number of predictors, confirms the model's reliability. With a standard error of the estimate of 0.23181, the model's predictions are precise. According to the decision rule, which considers an R<sup>2</sup> value above 0.5 as strong, the model is deemed highly effective in explaining the dependent variable.

**Table 5 ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	46.258	1	46.258	860.823	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	9.726	181	.054		
	Total	55.985	182			

a. Dependent Variable: RE

b. Predictors: (Constant), CS

**Source:** SPSS Output Version 27.0

Table 5 presents the ANOVA results, evaluating the statistical significance of the regression model. The regression sum of squares is 46.258, with 1 degree of freedom, producing a mean square of 46.258. The residual sum of squares is 9.726, with 181 degrees of freedom, resulting in a mean square of 0.054. The F-statistic is 860.823, with a

corresponding significance value (p) of 0.000. Based on the decision rule, where a p-value less than 0.05 indicates statistical significance, the model is highly significant. This suggests that the predictor (CS) reliably explains the variation in the dependent variable (RE), making the model robust and valid for predictive purposes.



**Table 6 Coefficient**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.617	.114		5.387	.000
	CS	.849	.029	.909	29.340	.000

a. Dependent Variable: RE

**Source:** SPSS Output Version 27.0

Table 6 shows the coefficients of the regression model, highlighting the influence of the predictor (CS) on the dependent variable (RE). The unstandardized coefficient (B) for CS is 0.849, with a standard error of 0.029, indicating that a one-unit increase in CS results in a 0.849 increase in RE. The standardized coefficient ( $\beta$ ) is 0.909, reflecting a very strong positive relationship between CS and RE. The t-value

for CS is 29.340, with a significance level (p) of 0.000. According to the decision rule, where a ppp-value less than 0.05 confirms statistical significance, CS is a significant predictor of RE. The constant (B=0.617, p=0.000) represents the baseline level of RE when CS is zero. This analysis confirms that the model demonstrates a strong and significant relationship between CS and RE.

### Tests of Hypotheses three

**H<sub>03</sub>:** More flexible hours do not have significant effect on test/exams administration on student by academic staff in University of Abuja.

**Table 7 Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.952 <sup>a</sup>	.906	.906		.15553

a. Predictors: (Constant), MFH

**Source:** SPSS Output Version 27.0

Table 7 provides the model summary, showcasing an RRR value of 0.952, which indicates an exceptionally strong positive correlation between the predictor (MFH) and the dependent variable. The  $R^2$  value of 0.906 signifies that 90.6% of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by MFH, highlighting the model's substantial explanatory power. The adjusted  $R^2$ , also 0.906,

confirms the reliability of the model after accounting for any potential overestimation. The standard error of the estimate is 0.15553, indicating a high degree of precision in the model's predictions. According to the decision rule, where an  $R^2$  value greater than 0.5 is deemed strong, this model is highly effective for explaining the dependent variable.

**Table 8 ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	42.219	1	42.219	1745.281	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	4.378	181	.024		
	Total	46.597	182			

a. Dependent Variable: TEA

b. Predictors: (Constant), MFH

**Source:** SPSS Output Version 27.0

Table 8 presents the ANOVA results, evaluating the significance of the regression model. The regression sum of squares is 42.219, with 1 degree of freedom, resulting in a mean square of 42.219. The residual sum of squares is 4.378, distributed across 181 degrees of freedom, yielding a mean square of 0.024. The F-statistic is 1745.281, with a significance

value (p) of 0.000. Using the decision rule that a p-value less than 0.05 indicates statistical significance, this analysis confirms that the predictor (MFH) significantly explains the variation in the dependent variable (TEA). Therefore, the model is highly reliable and valid for predictive purposes.

**Table 9 Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.183	.092		1.983	.049
	MFH	.956	.023	.952	41.777	.000

a. Dependent Variable: TEA

**Source:** SPSS Output Version 27.0

Table 9 displays the regression coefficients, illustrating the relationship between the predictor (MFH) and the dependent variable (TEA). The unstandardized coefficient (BBB) for MFH is 0.956, with a standard error of 0.023, indicating that a one-unit increase in MFH leads to a 0.956 increase in TEA. The standardized coefficient ( $\beta$ ) is 0.952, reflecting a very strong positive effect of MFH on TEA.

The t-value for MFH is 41.777, with a significance level (p) of 0.000, confirming that MFH is a significant predictor of TEA. The constant (B=0.183, p=0.049) represents the baseline value of TEA when MFH is zero. According to the decision rule, where a p-value less than 0.05 signifies statistical significance, the model demonstrates a strong and significant relationship between MFH and TEA.

## Discussion of Findings

The study found that participation in social/fitness clubs has a significant impact on

the lecturers attendance of academic staff at the University of Abuja. This indicates that involvement in social and fitness activities can affect how academic staff manage their time and prioritize their professional duties, including attending lectures. It emphasizes the importance of balancing extracurricular activities with academic responsibilities to maintain optimal performance in both areas. This finding aligns with Aderinto and Adebayo (2021), whose study revealed a significant relationship between exercise activities and lecturers' job effectiveness in colleges of education in Oyo State.

Additionally, the study revealed that counseling services significantly influence the research activities of academic staff at the University of Abuja. Access to counseling services appears to positively impact academic staff by helping them manage stress, workload, and other personal challenges that may otherwise hinder their research productivity. The support offered by counseling services likely enhances mental well-being, focus, and overall work-life balance, all of which are crucial for successful research outcomes. This finding is consistent with Austin and Emmanuel (2021), who identified workload, lack of recognition, and inadequate career development opportunities as major stressors among respondents.

Furthermore, the study found that more flexible working hours significantly impact the test and exam administration by academic staff at the University of Abuja. Providing academic staff with greater flexibility in their working hours could improve their ability to manage and administer tests and exams effectively. Flexibility may lead to better planning, reduced stress, and more efficient handling of administrative tasks related to assessments, ultimately improving the quality of exam management and benefiting both staff and students. This finding is in line with Dim et al. (2021), whose analysis showed that workload pressure and role ambiguity had a significant negative effect on employee performance.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study concluded that various factors significantly influence the academic staff's

performance and engagement at the University of Abuja. Participation in social/fitness clubs was found to positively impact lecture attendance, suggesting that these activities improve staff members' commitment to their professional responsibilities by enhancing their mental and physical well-being. Additionally, counseling services were shown to have a significant positive effect on research activities, indicating that such services help academic staff address personal and professional challenges, thereby improving focus and productivity in research. Furthermore, the study revealed that more flexible working hours significantly impact the administration of tests and exams, as flexibility allows academic staff to better manage their responsibilities, reduce stress, and improve the quality of exam processes. Collectively, these findings underscore the importance of promoting work-life balance, mental well-being, and flexibility in fostering a productive academic environment.

The study, therefore, offers the following recommendations:

- i. **Encourage Participation in Social and Fitness Clubs:** Management of the University of Abuja should continue to encourage academic staff participation in social and fitness clubs, recognizing their positive impact on both personal well-being and professional responsibilities. Additionally, the university could consider integrating flexible scheduling or organizing wellness programs that align with academic duties to further enhance staff productivity and lecture attendance.
- ii. **Strengthen Counseling Services:** Management of the University of Abuja should strengthen its counseling services for academic staff, ensuring that these services are easily accessible and tailored to meet their specific needs.

The university should consider integrating counseling support as part of a broader strategy to enhance staff well-being, particularly in areas related to research and academic performance.

- iii. Management of University of Abuja should consider implementing more flexible working hours for academic staff, especially during exam periods, to enhance the efficiency and quality of test and exam administration. The university should also explore options for greater work-life balance for staff to help them manage their administrative duties alongside teaching responsibilities.

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