



Effect of Stress Management Strategies on Employee Performance National Open University, Nigeria

MAVIS B. MADU, NWAMAKA P. IBEME, MATHEW E. OGWUCHE,
MUSA ZAKARI, IBRAHIM M. GADDAFI
National Open University, Abuja Nigeria,

Abstract. The study examined stress management strategies and its effect on employee performance among academic staff of National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). Survey and documentary research designs were employed. Survey was used to generate primary data in order to establish the relationship between stress management strategies and employee performance among academic staff in NOUN while the documentary research designs was used to obtain data from the documentary evidences. The population of the study comprises academic staff of National Open University of Nigeria. Primary data were collected through the administration of questionnaire, while secondary data were obtained from the work of past researchers and pieces of reports on the subject matter. The simple sampling technique was used to select the participants. Quantitative statistical analysis was used to test the hypotheses at 5% level of significance. Multiple regressions with the aid of SPSS version 27.0 were used to analyse the data. Person-Environment Fit Theory was adopted to explain stress management and performance. Findings revealed positive impact of functional working equipment in managing stress level and performance among academic staff members at the National Open University of Nigeria. Finding also revealed positive impact staff welfare scheme on stress levels and work performance among academic staff members at NOUN. The study recommends among others, that the Management of National Open University of Nigeria should introduce and implement more Stress Management Programs. The Management of National Open University of Nigeria should strengthen its policies aimed at promoting work-life balance for academic staff at NOUN.

Keywords: Stress Management Strategies, Functional Working Equipment, Staff Welfare Scheme, Employee Performance and Academic Staff

1. Introduction

The origins of workplace stress can be traced back to a prevalent problem like (poor communication) in modern times, which has, had a profound impact on the well-being of employees and the productivity of organization. Selye (2006) stated that the stress response, an inherent part of our nervous systems, was once essential for survival. However, this acute stress was meant to be temporary, followed by a period of recovery. In today's world, chronic stress experienced by employees rarely involves actual encounters with predators. Instead, it arises from the mismatch between our evolved stress response and the demands of modern work, as highlighted by Cooper and Dewe (2012). Factors such as long working hours, tight deadlines, and relentless expectations trigger a physiological cascade in our bodies, similar to the stress response.

Workplace stress has emerged as a significant issue in public universities, including online institutions such as the National Open University of Nigeria. The Nigerian public university system has long been grappling with insufficient financial support from the government (Aina & Adeleke, 2011). This has resulted in various challenges, including limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, and unfavorable working conditions, all of which contribute to stress among academic staff (Akah, 2017). Furthermore, the departure of skilled academics seeking better opportunities abroad has further strained the system and increased workloads for those who remain (Okoro & Onwuegbuzie, 2012). According to Osibanjo et al., (2019), academic staff in Online Distance Learning universities often find themselves juggling multiple responsibilities, including teaching, research, administrative duties, and managing online platforms, which can lead to burnout.

Empirically, the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) has recognized the importance of

addressing stress management and enhancing welfare schemes among academic staff.

Research has shown that when occupational demands outweigh occupational resources, it can lead to work stress and an exhausted, disengaged workforce (Poalses & Bezuidenhout, 2018). According to Spilg, et al, (2022), in order to support the well-being of academic staff, interventions such as the Stress Management and Resilience Training (SMART) program have been implemented. The SMART program aims to build resilience and address physical wellness, particularly during challenging periods such as the implementation of new hospital-wide systems. Additionally, digital psychological interventions have shown promise in improving psychological well-being among university students, who often face academic and financial stress (Ferrari, et al, 2018)

This study therefore examines the effectiveness of stress management strategies on employee performance among academic staff in National Open University of Nigeria. Empirical studies have demonstrated that tailored stress management interventions can lead to improved job satisfaction, reduced burnout, and enhanced performance among employees (Karatepe & Karadas, 2015). However, without specific research on NOUN, it is challenging to identify which strategies would be most effective for its employees. This lack of empirical data hinders the development of targeted interventions that could improve employee performance and, by extension, the overall effectiveness of the institution. Therefore, there is an urgent need for empirical research to assess the impact of stress management strategies on employee performance at NOUN. Such research would fill the existing empirical gaps and provide valuable insights into the most effective ways to support employees in this unique educational setting. By understanding the specific stressors and effective management strategies, NOUN can implement policies that enhance employee well-being and performance. Despite the recognized importance of stress management strategies, their impact on employee performance at the National Open University of Nigeria has not been empirically examined. Addressing this gap is essential for developing effective interventions that can improve employee performance and organizational outcomes at NOUN.

The research problem therefore is to ascertain whether stress management strategies adopted by the management of National Open University of Nigeria has enhanced employees' performance among academic Staff.

The general objective of this study is to assess the effect of stress management strategies on employee performance at the National Open University of Nigeria while the specific objectives are to:

- assess the effect of functional working equipment on stress management and performance among Academic Staff in NOUN
- evaluate the effectiveness of staff welfare scheme on stress management and performance among Academic Staff in NOUN

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- Does the functional working equipment have effect on stress management and performance among Academic Staff in National Open University of Nigeria?
- How effective has the staff welfare scheme had effect on stress management and performance among Academic Staff in National Open University of Nigeria?

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

H₀₁: functional working equipment has no significant relationship with stress management and performance among Academic Staff in NOUN.

H₀₂: staff welfare scheme has no significant relationship with stress management and performance among Academic Staff in NOUN.

2. Concept of Stress

Stress is a physiological and psychological response to real or perceived threats, challenges, or obligations. It often elicits feelings of pressure, strain, and tension (Selye, 2014). Individuals experience stress variably, and it can provide both acute and chronic repercussions on their bodily and emotional well-being. The "fight or flight" response in the body is activated by stress, resulting in increased heart rate, blood pressure, respiratory rate, muscle tension, and other physiological alterations, as stated by the American Institute of Stress (2012). This reaction secretes hormones into the bloodstream, such as cortisol and adrenaline, to prepare the body for potential threats. Stress can be categorized into two types: acute stress, which results from imminent threats or challenges, and chronic stress, which is caused by persistent situations such as financial difficulties or occupational problems. Chronic stress is associated with various health problems, including anxiety, depression, gastrointestinal disorders, and cardiovascular disease (Taylor & Ostroff, 2018).

This study indicates that stress is a typical reaction to challenging situations; nevertheless, if it endures for a longer duration, it might adversely impact overall wellness. Consequently, it is imperative for individuals to recognize troubling signs promptly to obtain appropriate support before conditions deteriorate. The body's response to any perceived threat or challenge is termed stress. Selye (2006) describes it as a physiological and psychological response that prepares the body for action in the face of danger or injury. In other words, stress occurs when an individual perceives a problem as excessively large or intricate for them to manage.

Stress, as defined by Lazarus and Folkman (2014), arises from a disparity between internal resources available to address external demands and the demands themselves. This indicates that individuals may experience stress when they perceive an inability to manage challenges in their relationships, employment, familial situations, or health.

Various stressors can elicit this reaction, encompassing social factors such as marital problems and financial challenges, in addition to environmental factors like noise pollution (D'Mello & Nicolson 2012).

2.1 Concept of Stress Management

Stress management is the identification and regulation of stressors to enhance physical, mental, and emotional health. It entails formulating coping methods or procedures that assist individuals in managing stressors and mitigating their adverse effects on overall health. Lazarus and Folkman's transactional model of stress (2014) posits that stress management encompasses both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies. Problem-focused coping involves directly tackling the underlying cause of a stressful circumstance, whereas emotion-focused coping emphasizes managing emotions in reaction to a stressful occurrence (Lazarus & Folkman, 2014). Stress management encompasses approaches and strategies employed by individuals to mitigate and alleviate the adverse impacts of stress on their physical, mental, and emotional health. The process entails recognizing stresses, formulating coping strategies, and adopting healthy lifestyle modifications to enhance resilience against forthcoming stressors. Lazarus & Folkman (2014) assert that stress management encompasses both problem-focused coping, which targets the underlying source of stress, and emotion-focused coping, which involves regulating one's responses to stressful circumstances.

An essential component of stress management is time-management skills, which entail prioritizing

tasks according to their significance while continuously allocating sufficient pauses for rest and self-care activities throughout each day (McEwen, et al., 2013).

3. Literature Review and Gaps in Literature

A study by Igbino and Omoregie (2023) assessed the "Influence of Stress Management Strategies on Employee Productivity in Selected Manufacturing Firms in Lagos, Nigeria." The study employed a descriptive survey design, collecting data through structured questionnaires. Data analysis was done using simple descriptive statistics and chi-square, without considering more complex techniques like correlation and multiple regressions. The findings indicated that stress management strategies, such as work-life balance and relaxation techniques, significantly improved employee productivity. The authors recommended that organizations prioritize training on stress management to enhance overall performance. The gap in this study lies in the focus on manufacturing firms in Lagos and its methodological limitation in using only chi-square analysis, leaving out regression analysis.

Another study by Mohammed and Akinola (2021) examined "The Impact of Stress Management Techniques on Employee Performance in the Banking Sector in Abuja, Nigeria." This research also utilized a descriptive survey design and collected data using questionnaires. Simple analysis and chi-square were employed, similar to the first study, but correlation or multiple regression analysis was not incorporated. The study found that stress reduction techniques, such as time management and counseling services, had a positive impact on employee performance in the banking sector. Recommendations included the implementation of regular stress management workshops. The study's gap is its focus on the banking sector in Abuja and its limited analysis techniques, not extending to regression methods.

A study by Adeyemi and Ojo (2018) investigated "Stress Management and Its Effect on Employee Performance in the Public Sector: A Study of Ministries in Oyo State." Using a similar descriptive survey design, data was gathered through questionnaires and analyzed using chi-square, omitting correlation and regression techniques. The study concluded that government employees who had access to stress management resources, such as wellness programs, performed better. The authors recommended integrating these strategies into human resource policies to boost performance. The gap in this study is its focus on public sector ministries in Oyo State and the exclusion of advanced analytical techniques.

In comparison, this current study on "The Effect of Stress Management Strategies on Employee Performance at the National Open University of Nigeria" differs as it targets the academic environment, specifically a higher education institution. Additionally, the methodological gap exists in previous studies where only simple and chi-square analyses were used, excluding more robust techniques such as correlation and multiple regression analysis, which will be incorporated into the present study to offer more comprehensive insights.

4. Research Methodology

This study used a mixed-method research design combining survey and documentary research. The survey, administered through structured questionnaire, collected primary data from academic staff of the National Open University of Nigeria to examine the relationship between stress management strategies and employee performance. Various stress management techniques, including time management and organizational support, were assessed, and key performance indicators like teaching effectiveness and research output were measured. Documentary research provided secondary data from institutional records and reports, offering context on stress levels and performance history. The study utilized census sampling, involving all 492 academic staff members, eliminating sampling errors. Primary data were collected via a Likert scale questionnaire, and secondary data were sourced from textbooks, journals, and official documents. Descriptive and inferential statistics, including multiple linear regression analysis, were employed to analyze the data using SPSS software. The study aimed to provide comprehensive insights into how stress management strategies affect employee performance.

The descriptive statistics was used to present and interpret quantitative data. The Descriptive statistics are; frequency table, figure and chart.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data collected. Inferential statistics such as multiple linear regression analysis was used to analyze the data. The

multiple linear regression analysis is calculated at 5% level of significance. The Multiple Linear Regression model is stated as: $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + e$

Where Y is dependent variable (or response variable) (employee performance)

Where β_0 is constant or intercept

Where B_1, B_2, B_3 , is the co-efficient of X

i.e. β_1 is called coefficient of X_1 ; β_2 is called coefficient of X_2

Where X_1, X_2, X_3 is the independent variable

The analysis was done using independent variable as stress management strategies and employees' performance as the dependent variable.

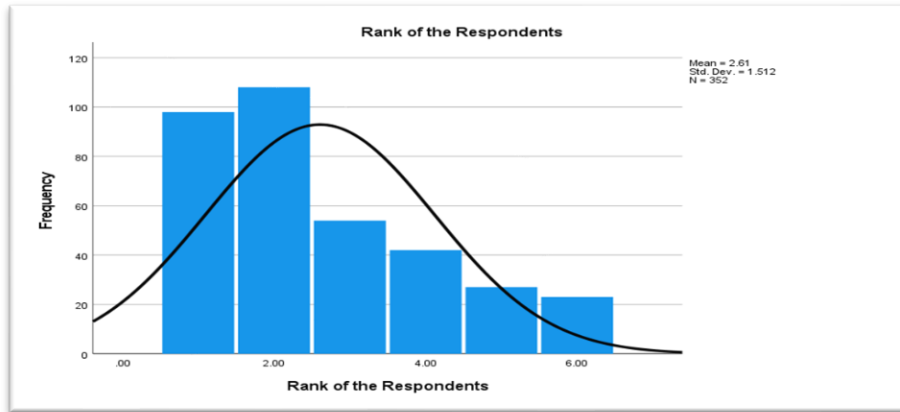
5. Research Results and Discussion

Table 1.1: Rank of the Respondents in NOUN Academic Staff		
	N	%
Lecturer II	98	27.8%
Lecturer I	108	30.7%
Senior Lecturer	54	15.3%
Reader	42	11.9%
Professor	27	7.7%
Assistant Lecturer	23	6.5%

Source: Questionnaire Data, 2024

The data in the table shows the distribution of respondents based on their ranks within the academic staff of NOUN. The respondents are categorized into various roles, each reflecting a distinct level of seniority and responsibility within the institution. Lecturer II occupies the largest proportion with 98 respondents, constituting 27.8% of the total. Following closely is Lecturer I with 108 respondents, making up 30.7%. The middle tier is represented by Senior Lecturers, totaling 54 individuals at 15.3%. Moving further up, we have Readers with 42 respondents, comprising 11.9%. Professors are a notable presence, consisting of 27 respondents at 7.7%, showcasing a higher echelon of expertise and leadership. Lastly, Assistant Lecturers round up the distribution with 23 individuals, accounting for 6.5% of the total. This breakdown reflects a diverse and structured hierarchy within the academic staff, highlighting the range of experience and qualifications present at NOUN.

Fig. 1

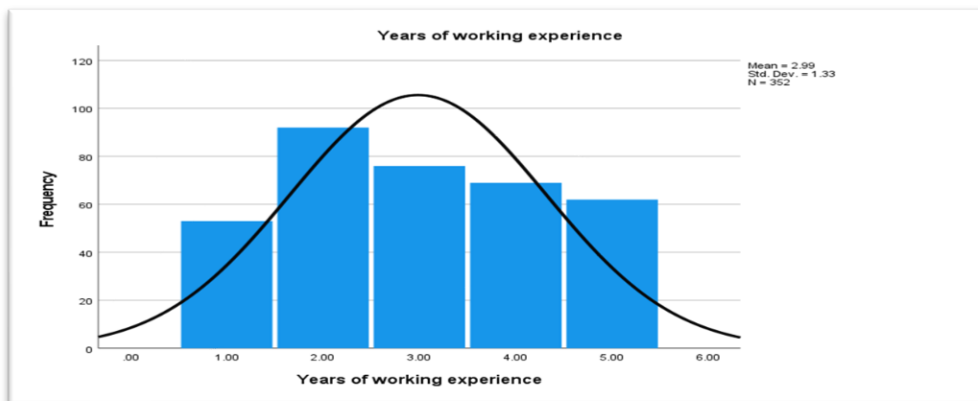


	N	%
0-5 years	53	15.1%
6-10 years	92	26.1%
11-15 years	76	21.6%
16-20 years	69	19.6%
21-Above	62	17.6%

Source: Questionnaire Data, 2024

The data in the table shows the Years of working experience of distribution of respondents in various fields. The distribution shows a range of experience levels among individuals, with the largest percentage falling within the 6-10 years category. This suggests a significant portion of the sample group holds a moderate level of expertise in their respective fields. Furthermore, the data reveals a fairly even spread among the 0-5, 11-15-, and 16-20-years categories, indicating a diverse mix of experience levels. Notably, there is a substantial representation in the 21 years and above category, signifying a significant number of individuals with extensive expertise and tenure in their professions. Overall, the data showcases a varied spectrum of experience levels, highlighting the diverse workforce contributing their skills and knowledge across different sectors.

Fig. 2



Responses on stress management strategies and employee performance among academic staff at the National Open University of Nigeria

	N	%
Strongly Agreed	38	10.8%
Agreed	124	35.2%
Disagreed	118	33.5%
Strongly Disagreed	65	18.5%
Undecided	7	2.0%

Source: Questionnaire Data, 2024

The data in the table represent responses on whether the availability of functional working equipment contributes to sustaining stress-free working conditions with 38 (10.8%) respondents strongly believe that having functional working equipment significantly contributes to maintaining stress-free working conditions, 124 (35.2%) respondents agree that there is a positive correlation between the availability of functional working equipment and stress-free working conditions, 118 (33.5) respondents disagree that functional working equipment plays a significant role in sustaining stress-free working conditions, 65 (18.5%) respondents strongly disagree with the notion that functional working equipment contributes to stress-free working conditions while 7 (2.0%) respondents are unsure about the relationship between the availability of functional working equipment and stress-free working conditions. Overall, while there is a division of opinions, a larger proportion of respondents lean towards agreeing that having functional working equipment is beneficial for maintaining stress-free working conditions.

Table 4.1: Responses regarding whether the availability of a staff welfare scheme positively impacts my stress levels at work

	N	%
Strongly Agreed	22	6.3%
Agreed	123	34.9%
Disagreed	126	35.8%
Strongly Disagreed	73	20.7%
Undecided	8	2.3%

Source: Questionnaire Data, 2024

The data in the table represent responses regarding the impact of the availability of a staff welfare scheme on stress levels at work with 22 respondents representing (6.3%) respondents strongly agreed that the availability of a staff welfare scheme positively impacts their stress levels at work. These individuals feel strongly that such a scheme helps reduce their stress, 123 respondents representing (34.9%) respondents agreed that the staff welfare scheme positively impacts their stress levels at work. While not as strong as the previous group, they still hold a positive view on the effect of the scheme on their stress. 126 respondents representing respondents representing (35.8%) disagreed that the staff welfare scheme positively impacts their stress levels at work. They perceive that the scheme does not have a positive effect on their stress levels. 73 respondents representing 20.7% strongly disagreed that the staff welfare scheme positively impacts their stress levels at work. They hold a firm belief that the scheme has no positive effect on their stress while 8 respondents representing (2.3%) are undecided about whether the staff welfare scheme positively impacts their stress levels at work. They neither agree nor disagree and might need more information or experience to form an opinion. It was established that the staff welfare scheme as beneficial for reducing stress. This suggests a divided perspective among respondents regarding the effectiveness of the scheme in alleviating work-related stress.

Table 5.1: Responses regarding whether the financial support or assistance offered through the staff welfare scheme alleviates stress related to personal finances, thereby enhancing my performance

	N	%
Strongly Agreed	83	23.6%
Agreed	163	46.3%
Disagreed	56	15.9%
Strongly Disagreed	43	12.2%
Undecided	7	2.0%

Source: Questionnaire Data, 2024

The data in the table represent responses regarding financial support or assistance offered through the staff welfare scheme alleviates stress related to personal finances and enhances performance with 23.6% of respondents hold a strong belief that financial support positively impacts their performance by relieving financial stress, 46.3%, also agree that financial assistance contributes to reducing stress and consequently improving their performance, 15.9% of respondents disagreed with the statement, indicating that they don't believe financial support provided through the welfare scheme has a significant impact on their performance, 12.2% of respondents strongly disagreed with the idea that financial support from the welfare scheme improves their performance while 2.0%, remained undecided about the impact of financial assistance on their performance. Overall, a majority of respondents (69.9% combined from strongly agreed and agreed categories) perceive a positive relationship between financial support and performance enhancement, while a smaller portion (27.1% combined from disagreed and strongly disagreed categories) do not share this view. The undecided group is relatively small, suggesting that most respondents have formed a clear opinion on the matter.

Table 7.1: Responses regarding whether the staff welfare scheme at NOUN effectively helps in managing stress and enhancing the performance of academic staff

	N	%
Strongly Agreed	51	14.5%
Agreed	203	57.7%
Disagreed	63	17.9%
Strongly Disagreed	27	7.7%
Undecided	8	2.3%

Source: Questionnaire Data, 2024

The data in the table represent responses regarding the staff welfare scheme at NOUN and its effectiveness in managing stress and enhancing performance, with 14.5% of the respondents strongly believe that the staff welfare scheme is effective in managing stress and enhancing performance. These individuals likely perceive tangible benefits from the scheme and may have experienced positive outcomes personally or observed them in their colleagues, 57.7% of respondents agree that the staff welfare scheme is effective. This suggests that a significant portion of the academic staff perceives the scheme positively, even if they might not feel as strongly as those who "strongly agreed." They likely acknowledge the benefits it provides in terms of stress management and performance enhancement. 17.9% of respondents disagreed with the effectiveness of the staff welfare scheme. This could indicate dissatisfaction or skepticism regarding the scheme's ability to effectively address stress and improve performance. These individuals may feel that the scheme is inadequate or ineffective in meeting their needs. 7.7% of respondents strongly disagree with the effectiveness of the scheme. These individuals likely have strong reservations or negative experiences with the scheme and may perceive it as actively contributing to stress or hindering performance rather than alleviating it. 2.3% of respondents are undecided about the effectiveness of the staff welfare scheme. Overall, staff welfare scheme at NOUN have effectively helped in managing stress and enhancing performance, there is still a significant minority who either disagree or are undecided. This suggests that there may be areas for improvement in the scheme or that further investigation into its effectiveness is warranted.

Analysis

Table 4.34: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.737 ^a	.543	.536	.71963	.335

a. Predictors: (Constant), functional working equipment, staff welfare scheme among the academic staff in National Open University of Nigeria

b. Dependent Variable: stress management strategies have enhanced performance for academic staff in NOUN

The regression analysis examined the relationship between predictors and stress management strategies enhancing academic staff performance at NOUN. With an R of .737^a and an R² of .543, 54.3% of the variance is explained by the predictors. However, Durbin-Watson (.335) suggests potential positive autocorrelation, requiring further analysis.

Table 4.35: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	212.497	5	42.499	82.067	.000 ^b
	Residual	179.182	346	.518		
	Total	391.679	351			

a. Dependent Variable: stress management strategies have enhanced performance for academic staff in NOUN

b. Predictors: (Constant), functional working equipment has significantly minimized stress and enhanced performance among Academic Staff in NOUN, staff welfare scheme significantly minimize stress and enhanced performance among Academic Staff in NOUN

The ANOVA table assessed the relationship between stress management strategies and performance among NOUN academic staff. The model explained significant variability in performance, with a total sum of squares of 212.497 and a highly significant F-value of 82.067. The residual sum was 179.182, with a significance level below 0.05.

Table 4.36: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.607	.146		4.156	.000
	functional working equipment has significantly minimize stress and enhanced performance among Academic Staff in NOUN	.182	.066	.174	2.766	.002
	staff welfare scheme did not significantly minimize stress and enhanced performance among Academic Staff in NOUN	.671	.089	.593	7.543	.000

a. Dependent Variable: stress management strategies have enhanced performance for academic staff in NOUN

The table presents the results of a regression analysis with variables related to job-related stress and performance enhancement among academic staff at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN).

The Constant) represents the intercept of the regression equation when all independent variables are zero. In this case, the constant is 0.607 with a standard error of 0.146 and a t-value of 4.156, which is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. It means that even when all other variables are zero, there is still a significant baseline level of the dependent variable.

The result of the regression analysis on Increasing work demands shows that the coefficient is 0.11 with a standard error of 0.402 and a t-value of 0.508, which is statistically significant ($p = 0.004$). This study therefore rejects the null hypothesis which stated that “increasing work demands did not significantly induced job-related stress among the academic staff in National Open University of Nigeria”. This suggests that increasing work demands significantly induce job-related stress among academic staff at NOUN.

Some of the Functional working equipment that helps Minimize Stress and Enhancing Performance as shown in the table below:

Functional working equipment stress management and performance among Academic Staff in NOUN	Description
Access to laptops for staff to work remotely and manage workload	This provides staff with more flexibility in their work schedule, allowing them to work from home or other locations when needed. This can help to reduce stress associated with commuting and long working hours.
Provision of internet connectivity to facilitate online research and communication	Reliable and fast internet access is essential for academic staff to conduct research, communicate with students, and collaborate with colleagues. This can help to improve efficiency and reduce frustration.
printer and copier facilities printing and photocopying	Faulty or slow printers and copiers can be a major source of stress for academic staff. Upgrading these facilities can help to improve efficiency and reduce wait times.
Installation of ergonomic furniture to promote physical comfort and well-being	Ergonomic furniture is designed to support the body in a healthy position, which can help to reduce pain and discomfort. This can improve staff concentration and productivity.
water dispensers and air conditioners	commitment to keeping academics in good working order, ensuring staff has reliable access to hydration and temperature control.
Budgetary allocations for the procurement and maintenance	The allocation of financial resources for these appliances signifies the institution's prioritization of staff well-being and creating a conducive work environment.

The result of the regression analysis on Staff welfare scheme shows the coefficient is 0.671 with a standard error of 0.089 and a t-value of 7.543, which is highly statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). This study therefore rejects the null hypothesis which stated that “staff welfare scheme has no significantly relationship with stress management and performance among Academic Staff in NOUN” This suggests that the staff welfare scheme significantly minimizes stress and enhances performance among academic staff at NOUN.

Some Staff Welfare Scheme that helps Minimize Stress and Enhancing Performance in NOUN as shown in the table below:

Evidence	Description	Impact on Stress & Performance
ODL and welfare Allowances: Reduced Financial Burden	NOUN management provides some financial allowance to enhance extra effort and provides financial security.	This financial support alleviates stress about personal finances, allowing staff to focus on their work. It improves morale and fosters a sense of appreciation, leading to increased motivation and productivity.
Research Grants: Enhanced Research Activities	Research grants provide funding for academic staff to pursue their research interests. This allows them to contribute to their field and potentially gain recognition.	Access to research funding reduces stress associated with limited resources for research. It fosters a sense of professional development and accomplishment, leading to increased job satisfaction and improved research output.
Training Sponsorship: Professional Development Opportunities	Sponsoring training programs equips academic staff with new skills and knowledge relevant to ODL pedagogy and technology.	Training opportunities reduce stress associated with feeling outdated or lacking necessary skills. It fosters a sense of growth and confidence, leading to improved teaching effectiveness and student engagement.
Improved Work-Life Balance (Flexible Work Arrangements)	Some staff welfare schemes include flexible work arrangements, allowing staff to manage their workload and personal lives effectively.	Flexible work arrangements reduce stress associated with time constraints and work-life conflicts. It fosters a sense of autonomy and control, leading to improved well-being and a more sustainable work pace.
Increased Job Satisfaction and Retention	staff welfare scheme demonstrates the institution's commitment to its employees' well-being and professional development.	Staff who feel valued and supported are more likely to experience job satisfaction and remain with the institution. This reduces stress associated with job insecurity and fosters a sense of loyalty, leading to a more stable and experienced workforce.

The result of the regression analysis on university policy on collaboration shows the coefficient is 0.564 with a standard error of 0.066 and a t-value of 0.054, which is not statistically significant ($p = 0.004$). This study therefore rejects the null hypothesis which stated that “University policy on collaboration has no significantly relationship with stress management and performance among Academic Staff in NOUN” This implies that the university policy on collaboration have significantly minimize stress and enhance performance among academic staff at NOUN.

Findings revealed positive impact of fully functional working equipment in managing stress level and productivity of academic staff members at the National Open University of Nigeria. It was discovered that maintaining efficient and reliable equipment not only plays a crucial role in reducing stress levels but also in improving overall performance and job satisfaction among the faculty.

The study revealed that the presence of functional equipment serves as a key factor in creating a conducive work environment, allowing educators to carry out their duties effectively and with minimal disruptions. By ensuring that staff members have access to reliable tools and resources, the university can foster a culture of efficiency and excellence within its academic community.

Moreover, the findings emphasized the importance of proactive maintenance and timely upgrades to existing equipment to sustain optimal performance

levels and prevent potential breakdowns. This proactive approach not only supports the well-being of the faculty but also contributes to the university's overall operational effectiveness and reputation as a leading institution of higher learning. This finding conformed to the studies on working environment and managing stress and improving productivity in academic staff. Hwang et al., (2017) analyzed Mindfulness-Based Interventions for University Teachers: A Meta-Analysis. This meta-analysis reviewed 12 studies published between 2000 and 2015 that investigated mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) for university teachers. The researchers used random-effects models to analyze the effect of MBIs on stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout in university teachers. Additionally, they explored the impact on teaching self-efficacy and perceived student engagement. The study found that MBIs had a moderate positive effect on reducing stress, anxiety, and burnout in university teachers. Additionally, MBIs showed a small positive effect on teaching self-efficacy and perceived student engagement. This suggests that mindfulness practices can be a valuable tool for academic staff to manage stress and potentially improve their teaching effectiveness.

Yost & Walsh, (2019) examined the Effectiveness of Time Management Interventions on Faculty Stress and Productivity in Higher Education. This study employed a pre-test, post-test design with a control group. 102 faculty members at a university in the southeastern United States participated. The intervention group received a 6-week time

management training program, while the control group received no intervention. The researchers used t-tests and ANOVAs to analyze changes in perceived stress, self-reported productivity, and time management behaviors between the intervention and control groups. The study found that the time management training program significantly reduced perceived stress and increased self-reported productivity in the intervention group compared to the control group. These findings indicate that time management skills can be a helpful tool for academic staff to manage stress and improve their productivity.

Burke & Siltanen (2021) examined the Impact of Work-Life Balance Initiatives on Faculty Job Satisfaction and Productivity (2021). This study used a survey design with a sample of 238 faculty members from a public university in the southwestern United States. The researchers used regression analysis to examine the relationship between work-life balance initiatives offered by the university (e.g., flexible work arrangements, childcare support) and faculty job satisfaction and self-reported productivity. The study found a positive association between the availability of work-life balance initiatives and faculty job satisfaction and productivity. This suggests that universities that prioritize work-life balance through supportive policies can potentially improve faculty well-being and performance. These studies highlight various approaches that can be effective in managing stress and improving productivity in academic staff. Mindfulness practices, time management skills, and supportive work-life balance initiatives all hold promise for fostering a healthier and more productive academic environment.

Finding revealed positive impact staff welfare scheme on stress levels and work performance among academic staff members at NOUN. This crucial initiative not only reduced stress among the staff, but also played a vital role in boosting the overall performance and productivity. The university management to some extent has create a supportive and conducive work environment that enabled the employees to thrive and excel in their roles through sponsorship of training and Development, Institutional Based Research, NOUN Senate research grants and ODL financial support. The data indicated a clear correlation between the staff welfare scheme and the improvements observed in both stress levels and performance metrics among academic staff members at NOUN. The provision of the welfare benefits and support mechanisms proved to be instrumental in creating a work culture that values employee well-being and satisfaction. As a result, academic staff members were able to focus more effectively on facilitation,

support services and researches, leading to increased job satisfaction and a higher quality of work output.

This finding conformed to studies on Staff Welfare Schemes, Stress, and Work Performance by Julius, Nderu & Mwige whose study examined the Influence of Staff Welfare on Employee Performance at Public Service Commission in Kenya. Method of Data Collection: Survey questionnaires were distributed to a sample of 141 staff members at the Public Service Commission in Kenya. Stratified proportionate random sampling was used to select participants. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics and correlation analysis to assess the relationship between staff welfare practices (including benefits and work-life balance initiatives) and employee performance. The study found a positive and significant correlation between staff welfare and employee performance. This suggests that comprehensive staff welfare schemes can contribute to improved work performance in academic settings.

Adedoyin & Adeyemo (2017) examined the occupational Stress and Academic Staff Job Performance in Two Nigerian Universities. A questionnaire with 31 items was administered to a sample of 150 lecturers from two public universities in Nigeria. Simple linear regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis that occupational stress negatively affects academic staff job performance. The study confirmed a negative association between occupational stress and academic staff job performance. It highlights the importance of addressing stress factors to ensure optimal work performance. While the study doesn't directly assess staff welfare schemes, it suggests that interventions that reduce stress (potentially through well-designed welfare programs) could improve performance.

Juanjuan & Yanhong (2015) examined the Work-Life Balance, Stress and Job Satisfaction of University Teachers in China. A survey questionnaire was distributed to 400 university teachers in China. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were used to examine the relationships between work-life balance, stress, and job satisfaction. The study found a significant negative correlation between work-life balance and stress levels, and a positive correlation between work-life balance and job satisfaction. This suggests that initiatives promoting work-life balance (which can be part of a comprehensive staff welfare scheme) can contribute to reduced stress and increased job satisfaction among academic staff.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the study underscores the critical role of functional working equipment in reducing stress

level the well-being and performance of academic staff at the National Open University of Nigeria, highlighting the significance of investing in the maintenance and upkeep of essential tools and resources to support a thriving academic environment.

Staff welfare schemes provide evidence that staff well-being is linked to stress levels and work performance in academic settings. Initiatives that address work-life balance, offer various benefits, and promote employee well-being are key components of staff welfare schemes that contribute to a positive and productive academic environment. The importance of investing in staff welfare initiatives as a means of promoting a positive work environment and enhancing organizational performance. The successful implementation of the staff welfare scheme at NOUN serves as a testament to the tangible benefits of prioritizing employee well-being and underscores the university's commitment to supporting its academic staff members in achieving their full potential it is has been proven that university policies promoting collaboration can positively impact student outcomes. Collaboration appears to be linked to reduced stress levels, improved academic performance, and increased student engagement in both traditional and online learning environments.

Based on the findings, the study therefore, recommends that:

- The Management of National Open University of Nigeria should allocate more resources to ensure that academic staff has access to functional working equipment to minimize stress and enhance performance. Regular maintenance and updates should be prioritized to sustain effectiveness.
- The Management of National Open University of Nigeria should enhance existing staff welfare schemes or introduce new initiatives to prioritize the well-being of academic staff at NOUN, thereby reducing stress levels and fostering a conducive work environment.

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