



STRESS CONTROL AND JOB PERFORMANCE AMONG BUSINESS EDUCATION LECTURERS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH- SOUTH, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the relationship between stress control and job performance of Business Education lecturers in public universities in South-South, Nigeria. Two objectives were used to formulate two research questions and hypotheses. The literature review was carried out based on the sub-independent variables. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population for this study comprised 160 business education lecturers in public universities in South-South, Nigeria. The researcher developed a structured questionnaire entitled “Stress Control and Job Performance of Business Education Lecturers Questionnaire (SCJPBELQ)”, which was used for data collection. The instrument was given to three research experts, two from the Department of Business Education, Faculty of Vocational Education, Library and Information Science and one from the Department of Psychological Foundations of Education, University of Uyo, for face-validation. The findings revealed positive and significant relationships between stress control measures and job performance, indicating that lecturers who exercise regularly and balance workloads, perform better in teaching, research, and service. The study concluded that stress control is essential for productivity, job satisfaction, and institutional effectiveness. It was recommended among others that government and each university should adopt supportive policies such as equitable workload distribution, wellness programmes and awareness on healthy living to sustain lecturers’ wellbeing and enhance educational outcomes.

Introduction

University education occupies a unique place in the social, economic, and political development of any nation. It is widely acknowledged as the highest level of formal education where students acquire advanced knowledge, critical thinking skills, and professional expertise that prepare them to function effectively in the wider society. Beyond its role in teaching and certification, the university also serves as a center for research, innovation, and community service, thus helping societies address developmental challenges while nurturing human capital. In Nigeria, the university system was designed to produce skilled manpower that would contribute to the realization of national goals such as economic growth, technological advancement, and social cohesion. Lecturers within these institutions are responsible for delivering quality teaching and to sustain research output, participate in institutional governance, and engage in the broader social mandate of community development (Adebayo and Etuk, 2019). Their performance directly influences the extent to which universities achieve their objectives, and by extension, the degree to which society benefits from higher education.



Public universities form the backbone of the tertiary education system. These universities are funded and managed either by the federal government or the various state governments, and they admit the majority of students seeking higher education due to their affordability compared to private institutions. Within the South-South geopolitical zone, which includes Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers States, public universities play an especially important role. The region is known as Nigeria's oilproducing belt, yet despite its economic significance, it faces complex socio-economic issues such as environmental degradation, unemployment, youth restiveness, and underdevelopment. Public universities in this region are therefore not just centers of learning but also agents of regional transformation, preparing graduates who can address these challenges through knowledge, innovation, and entrepreneurship (Eze and Okon, 2020). However, the work environment in these institutions is fraught with peculiar stressors. Many public universities in the South-South are characterized by inadequate infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, irregular academic calendars due to industrial disputes, and limited resources for research and teaching. Lecturers often deal with administrative bottlenecks, unpredictable salary structures, and societal expectations that they should provide guidance beyond the classroom. Such conditions increase the level of occupational stress, and unless effectively managed, they can significantly undermine the performance of lecturers. This reality makes it essential to investigate how stress can be controlled in order to safeguard and even enhance job performance, especially of business education lecturers who play a vital role in preparing students for the world of business and entrepreneurship.

Business education as a discipline is specifically designed to equip learners with the skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary to function productively in business organizations, entrepreneurial ventures, and administrative environments (Charles, Ukoima and Etuk, 2025). It emphasizes both theoretical grounding and practical applications in areas such as accounting, office technology, marketing, management, entrepreneurship, and communication. Business Education lecturers in Nigerian universities are therefore tasked with the dual responsibility of preparing students to be employable in corporate organizations and to develop the entrepreneurial spirit needed for self-employment (Olatunji and Ige, 2018). Their performance is assessed through teaching effectiveness, student engagement, research publications, supervision of projects and theses, curriculum development, and contributions to institutional and professional development.

The job demands on Business Education lecturers are substantial. They are expected to teach multiple courses, supervise large numbers of undergraduate and postgraduate students, carry out research that contributes to knowledge advancement, publish in recognized journals, and participate in departmental and faculty administration. Added to this are the professional pressures to attend conferences, engage in community development projects, and mentor students on career readiness. When these expectations are considered alongside the infrastructural challenges of public universities in South-South Nigeria, it becomes evident that stress is almost an unavoidable element of their professional lives. If stress is left uncontrolled, it can manifest as burnout, chronic fatigue, reduced job satisfaction, absenteeism, and poor classroom delivery, which all have negative implications for the quality of Business Education graduates produced. This underlines the need to examine stress control measures that can enhance lecturers' capacity to function effectively.

Stress control refers to the conscious strategies, practices, and lifestyle adjustments individuals adopt to reduce, manage, or cope with the pressures and demands of daily life in order to maintain physical, mental, and emotional balance. It is not the absence of stress but the



ability to regulate its impact, ensuring that it does not interfere with health, productivity, and overall wellbeing. Effective stress control is especially critical in high-demand professions such as academia, where constant teaching, research, administrative duties, and personal expectations converge to create significant psychological strain. Through approaches such as physical activity, time management, workload regulation, adequate sleep, and proper nutrition, individuals can build resilience, enhance focus, and sustain performance even in challenging environments. By practicing stress control, lecturers safeguard their health, maintain job satisfaction, and ensure long-term effectiveness in their roles. One of the most recognized strategies for managing stress is physical activity. Research has shown that regular exercise has profound benefits for reducing stress, improving mood, and maintaining physical health (Chikezie and Adebayo, 2017). For lecturers, whose work often involves long hours of sedentary activity such as sitting in offices, lecturing, or grading papers, engaging in physical activity can counteract the negative effects of such routines. Exercise increases blood circulation, releases endorphins that elevate mood, and provides an outlet for relieving built-up tension. In practical terms, a lecturer who maintains a routine of walking, jogging, or other simple exercises is more likely to experience improved energy, sustained concentration during lectures, and greater classroom vitality. In contrast, a lack of physical activity contributes to fatigue, lethargy, and susceptibility to stress-related illnesses, all of which reduce job performance. Physical fitness is therefore not just a personal health issue but also a professional asset that enhances teaching quality and research productivity.

Another critical measure for controlling stress is load management. Workload is a common source of stress among lecturers in public universities where staff shortages are prevalent. Business education lecturers may be required to teach more courses than is ideal, supervise an overwhelming number of student projects, and still engage in research and community service. Without proper load management strategies, these demands can lead to chronic stress and burnout. Effective load management entails setting priorities, delegating tasks where possible, negotiating realistic course loads with administrators, and learning to say no to excessive responsibilities. When lecturers succeed in balancing their workload, they are able to prepare adequately for lectures, deliver higher quality teaching, and engage in research without being constantly overwhelmed. Studies have shown that workload balance is positively associated with job satisfaction and performance among academic staff (Okorie and Ume, 2020). Conversely, uncontrolled workload pressures negatively impact creativity, efficiency, and long-term career development.

Taken together, these stress control measures, physical activity and load management offer practical pathways for improving the well-being and productivity of lecturers in public universities. Their relevance is heightened in South-South Nigeria, where institutional and environmental challenges amplify stress levels. Lecturers who adopt these measures are better able to meet the multifaceted demands of teaching, research, and service without compromising their health or performance. On the other hand, neglecting these measures exposes lecturers to chronic stress, burnout, and reduced effectiveness, which ultimately undermine the mission of university education in the region. It is against this background that this study sought to investigate how stress control measures relate to job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in South-South Nigeria, with a view to providing recommendations that can improve both staff well-being and institutional outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing recognition of the vital role universities play in national development, the job performance of lecturers, particularly in the field of business education, continues to face significant challenges in public universities across South-South, Nigeria. These



lecturers undertake multiple responsibilities, ranging from teaching and research to student supervision, administrative duties, and community service. Unfortunately, their work environment is riddled with poor infrastructure, unstable academic calendars, large class sizes, and limited access to resources. Such conditions exert enormous pressure on lecturers, creating stress that threatens to undermine their job performance. As expectations from students, institutions, and society increase, business education lecturers are often left struggling to meet these demands effectively, leading to diminished productivity and reduced job performance. The persistence of stress of business education lecturers has created recurring issues that directly affect their ability to function at optimal capacity. Many lecturers experience burnout, fatigue, and a loss of motivation, which reflect in poor lecture delivery, delays in grading assignments, lower quality of research output, and reduced commitment to mentoring students. In addition, the inability to manage stress effectively often leads to absenteeism, strained relationships with colleagues, and a lack of innovation in teaching methods. These challenges not only weaken the performance of lecturers but also compromise the overall quality of graduates produced in the region, thereby affecting the universities' ability to meet their mandate of producing employable and entrepreneurial graduates.

Stress control measures such as physical activity, time management, load management, quality sleep, and proper nutrition have the potential to mitigate these challenges and improve the job performance of lecturers. For example, lecturers who engage in regular exercise are more energized to face the demands of teaching, while effective time and load management enable them to prioritize tasks and meet deadlines without feeling overwhelmed. Similarly, adequate sleep restores their mental clarity and focus, while balanced nutrition sustains their physical and emotional resilience. These measures can collectively reduce stress levels, enhance efficiency, and improve lecturers' capacity to balance their professional and personal responsibilities. However, in the absence of deliberate and consistent application of these stress control practices, lecturers may continue to struggle under the weight of occupational stress, with adverse consequences for their performance.

It is against this backdrop that the researcher sought to address the challenge of stress and its impact on the job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in South-South, Nigeria. If the issue is not adequately addressed, the gap between the expectations placed on lecturers and their ability to perform effectively will continue to widen. This would seriously implicate, not only for the lecturers' wellbeing but also for the quality of education delivered, the preparedness of graduates for the world of work, and the socio-economic development of the region. Therefore, this study was necessary to explore how stress control measures relate to job performance of business education lecturers, with a view to offering solutions that can enhance both their productivity and the effectiveness of public universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between stress control measures and job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in South-South, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to determine the:

- i. relationship between physical activity and job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south, Nigeria.
- ii. relationship between work load management and job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south, Nigeria.



Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. What is the relationship between physical activity and job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south, Nigeria?
- ii. What is the relationship between work load management and job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance.

- Ho₁ There is no significant relationship between physical activity and job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south Nigeria.
- Ho₂ There is no significant relationship between work load management and job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south Nigeria. Ho₃ There is no significant relationship between time management and job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south Nigeria.

Research Method

This study was adopted the correlational survey research design. This design was considered appropriate as the study sought to determine the relationship between selected stress control variables (physical activity, workload management, time management, sleep quality, nutrition, and financial stability) and job performance of Business Education lecturers. The correlational design allowed the researcher to examine the relationships between variables without manipulating any of them, hence, its suitability for the study that was conducted in natural setting which were the selected universities. The area of this study was the South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. This zone which is located in the Niger Delta region comprises six states, namely: Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Bayelsa, Rivers, Delta, and Edo. The South-South zone is homes to numerous public universities and colleges of education, many of which offer Business Education programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. These states have a rich endowment of natural resources, especially crude oil, which significantly contributes to Nigeria's economy. However, despite its economic relevance, the region continues to grapple with various developmental and institutional challenges, including issues in the educational sector. These institutions include the University of Uyo (Akwa Ibom), University of Calabar (Cross River), Niger Delta University (Bayelsa), University of Port Harcourt (Rivers), Delta State University (Delta), and Ambrose Alli University (Edo), among others. These institutions provided a suitable academic setting for investigating the relationship between stress control strategies and job performance of Business Education lecturers.

This area was purposively selected for study because the researcher has observed that the job performance of lecturers has been poor in recent times and was interested in determine the relationship between stress control measures and job performance of lecturers with a view to finding a solution to the problem. The population for this study comprised 160 Business Education lecturers in public universities across the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Based on available data from the respective universities as at the 2024/2025 academic session. A sample size of 160 Business Education lecturers was used for the study, hence the census sampling technique was adopted. This approach was considered appropriate for the study because the population was relatively small, manageable and feasible because the researcher could include every lecturer, without drawing a representative subset. It also enabled the researcher to eliminate sampling error and ensure maximum accuracy, gaining a comprehensive picture of what the study proposed to examine. It also guaranteed that variations in institutional



contexts and individual experiences would be fully captured, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the study's findings.

The instrument for data collection was a researcher-developed questionnaire entitled Stress Control and Job Performance of Business Education Lecturers Questionnaire (SCJPBELQ). The instrument is divided into three sections. Section A: Demographic data (age, gender, marital status, academic rank and so on). Section B: Items on stress control variables (25 items across physical activity, workload management, time management, sleep quality and nutrition. Section C: Items on job performance indicators (10 items reflecting teaching effectiveness, research productivity, student engagement.). All items were based on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1).

The questionnaire was subjected to face validation by three research experts, two from the Department of Business Education, Faculty of Vocational Education, Library and Information Science and one from the department of Measurement and Evaluation, University of Uyo. Their suggestions were incorporated and used for the modification of the final copy of the instrument.

To ensure the reliability of the instrument, a trial test was conducted using 20 Business Education lecturers from a public university who were not part of the sample group for the study. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's Alpha method. The application of Cronbach Alpha using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 yielded reliability coefficient values of 0.85, 0.80, 0.83, 0.91 and 0.91 for the six clusters with an overall reliability value of 0.86. This high coefficient value indicated that the instrument was reliable for the study as recommended by Uzoagulu (2011) that the coefficient value of 0.70 and above is considered reliable for survey studies. The computation is attached as Appendix on page 86.

The questionnaire was administered on the respondents by the researcher with the help of two research assistants who were briefed on the procedures to follow. Copies of the instrument were delivered to the respondents in their offices and a period of five working days was allowed before retrieval. The research team collected the contacts of the respondents for reminders before revisiting them to collect completed copies of the questionnaire. This procedure was to ensure that a high response rate is achieved. All the 160 copies of questionnaire were administered and retrieved giving a 100 percent return rate. Data collected were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to answer the five research questions and test the five null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Result

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between physical activity and job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south, Nigeria?

Table 1: Relationship between physical activity and job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in South-south, Nigeria (n=160)

Variables	df	r-cal	Remark
Physical Activity (X)	1	0.714	High Positive Relationship
Job Performance (Y) 158			

The result presented in Table 1 reveals that the correlation coefficient (r) is 0.714. This means that physical activity has a very high positive relationship with the job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south Nigeria. This shows that



engaging in physical activities enhances the job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south Nigeria.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between workload management and job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south, Nigeria?

Table 2: Relationship between work load management and job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south, Nigeria (n= 160)

Variables	df	r-cal	Remark
Work Load Management (X)	1	0.543	Positive Relationship
Job Performance (Y)	158		

The result presented in Table 2 shows that the correlation coefficient (r) is 0.543. This means that workload management has a positive relationship with the job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south Nigeria. This shows that effective work load management enhances the job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south Nigeria.

Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between physical activity and job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south Nigeria.

Table 3: Relationship between physical activity and job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south Nigeria. n=160

Variables	df	r-cal	p-value at 0.05	Decision
Physical Activity (X)	1	0.714	.000	Reject H ₀
Job Performance (Y)	158			

Sig = Significance at P = 0.05

The result presented in Table 6 reveals that the P-value of .000 is less than the significant level of 0.05 at 158 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis one which stated that there is no significant relationship between physical activity and job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south Nigeria, is rejected. This shows that there is a significant relationship between physical activity and job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south Nigeria.

Null Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between work load management and job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south Nigeria.

Table 4: Relationship between work load management and job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south Nigeria n= 160

Variables	df	r-cal	p-value at 0.05	Decision
Work Load Management (X)	1	0.543	000	Reject H ₀
Job Performance (Y)	158			

Sig = Significance at P = 0.05



The result presented in Table 7 shows that the P-value of .000 is less than the significant level of 0.05 at 158 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis two which stated that there is no significant relationship between work load management and job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south Nigeria is rejected. This shows that there is a significant relationship between work load management and job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south Nigeria.

Findings of the Study

The following findings emerged from the study:

- i. There is a significant relationship between physical activity and job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south Nigeria.
- ii. There is a significant relationship between work load management and job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study are discussed under the following subheadings:

Physical Activity and Job Performance of Business Education Lecturers

The result from research question and hypothesis one indicated a positive relationship between physical activity and job performance of business education lecturers and that there is a significant relationship between physical activity and job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south Nigeria. This finding is due to the fact that physical activity has long been recognized as an essential factor in improving overall human productivity and well-being. In the academic setting, where lecturers often juggle long teaching hours, research responsibilities, and administrative tasks, the importance of maintaining an active lifestyle cannot be overstated. This finding is in line with the findings of Ochor (2025), who conducted a study on the influence of sport participation on the job performance of university lecturers in the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The findings revealed that lecturers who regularly participated in physical activity reported higher teaching effectiveness, reduced stress levels, and improved administrative output. This study directly supports the present research by establishing a link between regular physical activity and improved job performance among university lecturers.

This finding corroborated that of Orji, Emmanuel and Nweke (2024) revealed that schools with physical activity-friendly environments, such as playgrounds and walking space, had teachers who reported greater energy, better concentration, and overall improved performance in their teaching tasks. This study underpins the needs to adds an environmental dimension by demonstrating that a workplace conducive to physical activities enhances teachers' energy and concentration, which in turn improves job performance. This makes the case for integrating environmental considerations in lecturer stress control approaches. The current study applied this insight by considering physical activity not only as an individual coping mechanism but also as a stress control strategy that can be adopted to institutional support (for example., provision of facilities for staff wellness).

Work Load Management and Job Performance of Business Education Lecturers

The result from research question and hypothesis two indicated that there is positive and significant relationship between work load management and job performance of business education lecturers in public universities in south-south Nigeria. This finding is due to the fact that workload management has emerged as one of the central concerns in higher education, particularly for lecturers who face increasing pressures of teaching, research, and service obligations. The situation in public universities in Nigeria is compounded by staff shortages, overcrowded classrooms, and limited resources. This finding is in line with the finding of Okon



and Etim (2021) that a significant negative relationship exist between excessive workload and teacher performance, with respondents reporting burnout and reduced instructional effectiveness due to administrative and nonteaching responsibilities. This study is closely aligned with the present research as it examines the negative impact of excessive workload on teacher performance. Although the setting is secondary education, the findings underscore the importance of workload management in maintaining instructional quality and preventing burnout, which are key concerns in university teaching as well. The current study extends this insight to Business Education lecturers in public universities, thereby validating workload as a critical stress control variable affecting academic staff performance.

The finding is equally in agreement with the finding of Oladipo (2022) who found that lecturers with manageable workloads were more effective in lesson delivery, research, and administrative functions, while those overwhelmed by heavy schedules showed lower productivity and job satisfaction. This study is highly relevant because it targets tertiary level academic staff, similar to the focus of the current study. Oladipo's findings that manageable workloads improve job effectiveness reinforce the conceptual foundation of this study, which posits that workload management is a stress control strategy that enhances job performance. The use of regression analysis also provides methodological support for examining the predictive strength of workload control on job outcomes.

Conclusion

The findings of this research provided strong evidence that stress control is a vital determinant of Business Education lecturers' job performance in public universities in South-south, Nigeria. The study confirmed that high stress levels interfere with effective teaching, reduce commitment to research, and negatively affect administrative participation. When lecturers fail to manage stress, the ripple effects extend to students' academic experiences, institutional output, and even the reputation of the entire educational system. It was concluded that although stress is unavoidable in the academic profession, its harmful effects can be minimized through deliberate management strategies. Lecturers who develop the discipline to organize their workload, practice self-care, and seek support from colleagues and professional networks were seen to sustain higher performance levels.

Stress management is, therefore, an indispensable skill for every academic staff member. The study also concluded that universities have a collective responsibility in creating an environment that reduces unnecessary stressors. Institutions that invest in modern teaching facilities, ensure fair workload allocation, and provide professional development programs promote not only the well-being of their lecturers but also the overall academic output of the institution. Stress control is thus a policy matter as much as it is an individual matter.

Another important conclusion is that lecturers' mental and emotional health cannot be separated from their professional performance. The research further concluded that stress has collective consequences. Beyond the personal discomfort and reduced productivity experienced by individual lecturers, stress affects student learning outcomes, institutional reputation, and even the nation's goal of producing highly skilled graduates. Stress control is, therefore, a national educational priority that deserves attention from policy makers, university administrators, and academic unions.

Recommendations

1. Universities should integrate stress management training into staff development programmes to enhance lecturers' teaching performance.
2. Workload should be distributed adequately with facilities in an equitable manner to minimize stress among lecturers in public universities.



3. Lecturers should be trained on time management strategies that could help them utilize their time effectively. This will help them to control stress.
4. Lecturers should ensure they have adequate and quality sleep every day in order to avoid chronic stress that could put a strain on their health.
5. Lecturers should ensure that they eat nutritious food regularly in order to cataract the effect of stress associated.
6. Government and educational administrators should improve remuneration and welfare packages of lecturers to reduce financial stress and enhance job satisfaction.

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