



Volume 3	Issue 3	March (2024)	DOI: 10.47540/ijqr.v3i3.1256	Page: 238 – 249
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## A Critical Analysis of the Impact of Work Overload on Lecturers' Well-Being: A Case of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

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### ARTICLE INFO

*Keywords:* Critical Analysis, Lecturers, Stress, Well-Being, Work Overload.

*Received* : 07 December 2023

*Revised* : 10 January 2024

*Accepted* : 30 March 2024

### ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of work overload on the well-being of lecturers at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. Work overload is a common issue faced by academic professionals, and it can lead to negative consequences for their physical and mental health. To understand the impact of work overload on the well-being of lecturers, the article provides an insight into stress and work overload. The paper also explores potential strategies to manage and mitigate work overload among lecturers. The study uses a qualitative approach and collects its data from secondary sources such as newspapers, academic journals, textbooks, theses, and dissertations, among others. The findings indicate that the lecturers face high levels of work overload, which has a significant negative impact on their physical and mental health. The study highlights the need for intervention strategies to address work overload and improve the well-being of lecturers at Obafemi Awolowo University. This study concludes that work overload has a detrimental effect on the well-being of lecturers at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the issue of work overload among lecturers has become a growing concern in academic institutions worldwide. The academic field is recognized for its rigorous demands, necessitating lecturers to perform a variety of tasks, including teaching, research, administrative work, and mentoring. Stress levels among lecturers in Nigerian universities have increased due to the demands placed on the profession, making it an unavoidable aspect of the work (Amina & Bako, 2014). According to Alibi, Marlala, and Lawal (2012), university lecturers must oversee students' ongoing assessments and examinations, participate in conferences, seminars, and workshops, conduct research, calculate students' grades, publish in respectable journals, and, to the greatest extent feasible, participate in social and religious activities. Nonetheless, lecturers' well-being may suffer as a result of overwork demands in the absence of adequate resources and assistance. In Nigeria, stress is common among civil servants. However, when

stress escalates to a "severe" level, it can have detrimental effects on employees' ability to perform their jobs, interfere with their ability to engage in work-life activities, and raise their risk of substance abuse and other potentially harmful behaviors (Richlin-Klonsky & Hoe, 2003).

One of the most pressing problems that organizations have to deal with is stress, which makes it difficult for workers to comfortably produce the quality that is required by the job (Warraich, Ahmed, Ahmad, & Khoso, 2014). The number of stress-related health problems and even fatalities among university lecturers has alarmingly increased. For example, according to recent reports, Obafemi Awolowo University has lost some of its dynamic faculty members as a result of work overload and the streets. According to a report by Akinremi (2019), three lecturers sadly passed away in the course of eight days. The deceased individuals include Dr. Victoria Adeniyi, the Vice Dean of the Department of Dramatic Arts; Prof. Jerome Elusiyan, a professor of pediatrics and child

health; and Dr. Nicholas Igbokwe from the Department of Physical and Health Education. When Bamigbola (2019) spoke with Mr. Abiodun Olanrewaju, the school PRO, about their deaths, he revealed that two of the deaths had already been connected to stress. Mr. Abiodun Olanrewaju responds by pointing out that stress is a relative concept. One's job description may be the source of stress. Stress can be classified as psychological, financial, or emotional. There could be material stress, even in certain cases. However, I would like to clarify that, as far as OAU is concerned, each lecturer has their work schedule, and none of them appear to be overworked.

Sadly again, two lecturers from Obafemi Awolowo University's Faculty of Education passed away in 2023. Olawale (2023) announces Prof. Yetunde Ajibade's passing. Bamigbola (2023) also announced the death of Dr. Ayo Ojediran explained that he had complained of stress and a headache the Monday before his death on Tuesday. There have been rumors that the demise of these lecturers was due to work overload. This alarming trend necessitates a thorough comprehension of the underlying causes and viable remedies to lessen the detrimental effects of work overload on the physical and mental well-being of lecturers. A healthy amount of stress can serve as a source of inspiration for achievement (Edward, 2011); on the other hand, too much stress can lead to negative effects on one's physical and mental well-being (Niemi & Valniomaki, 2013). According to Hayble (2002), stress is thought to be the main psychological issue facing people today. The phrase refers to a person's incapacity to manage their surroundings (Dobson & Smith, 2000). According to Chiffy (2005), stress is the body's reaction to attempting to keep itself in balance and meet life's demands.

According to Ejaz, Muhammad, and Muhammad (2014), stress is an unpleasant condition or workplace environment that has a negative impact on an individual's overall well-being and performance. It is also thought to be the deadliest and most deadly cause of employee death, particularly during economic downturns and the great depression (Hanif, 2004). Strong correlations have been found in the literature between long-term stress and the onset of illness and disease (Grimshaw, 1999). The majority of academic staff members, however, deal with many difficulties; this

may be due to a lack of instructors at universities to handle a variety of duties.

According to Ejaz et al. (2014), workplace stressors include things like noise, low lighting, high job demands, role overload, role ambiguity, lack of sleep, and time pressure. These things can all contribute to high job stress, which can have a negative impact on an employee's health and job satisfaction and increase unfavorable attitudes. For example, forty percent of lecturers in Australia said that their jobs were extremely stressful, which decreased their effectiveness and efficiency by making it harder to concentrate, making them sleep deprived, raising the risk of illness, and increasing the likelihood of back issues, accidents, and lost time. Indeed, a growing body of research indicates that stress at work poses an equal risk to health as smoking or not exercising (Richard, 2002).

It is increasingly impossible to ignore the stress that university lecturers in Nigeria's post-secondary institutions experience (Ogundipe & Ajayi, 2014), as it is becoming more challenging to distinguish between the minimum and maximum levels of stress that are necessary to maintain staff productivity. The number of stress-related health problems and even fatalities among university faculty members has alarmingly increased. However, several studies have been carried out in other regions relating to work overload among university lecturers. However, it appears little or no study has been carried out at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife; it is on this note that the study examines the impact of work overload on the well-being of lecturers at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

## **METHODS**

The study uses a qualitative approach to gather its data. A detailed understanding of an issue or fresh research ideas can be obtained through qualitative research. The social sciences and humanities often employ this strategy. The documentary method of data collection was employed in this study, and sources of data included books, scholarly journals, conference papers, internet resources, official documents, newspapers, and periodicals. The utilization of the documentary method for data collection yields a thorough comprehension of novel concepts and offers the chance to conduct a comprehensive investigation

into the impact of work overload on the health of lecturers. In particular, Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, Nigeria, is the focus of the study. The documentary analysis aids in identifying any knowledge gaps in the body of literature. As a result, academic publications from books, newspaper articles, journal articles, and internet sources were used in the study.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Conceptualizing Stress and Work Overload**

Stress is a natural part of life and has an impact on people's social, psychological, and physical well-being. The way people handle stress has a significant influence on how it affects their general well-being. There has been a lot of research on stress management in the teaching profession. Many studies have been done to determine the sources of stress for educators. For example, a study by Shaheen and Mahmood (2016) and Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2016) reveals a number of stressors, such as work-related stress, depression, success-related feelings, a lack of emotional support, workload, interpersonal relationships, and the workplace. According to Cooper and Dewe (2004) and Dlamini & Adams (2014), stress factors can have physiological as well as psychological effects, which can result in health problems, anxiety, anger, depression, and feelings of inadequacy. Stress among teachers has serious effects on both teachers and students. Reduced job commitment, job satisfaction, and teaching quality have all been associated with high levels of stress (Caprara et al., 2006; Klassen and Chiu, 2010). Teachers under stress may also exhibit less effective classroom management and teaching strategies, which can have a detrimental impact on students' learning outcomes. Teachers use a range of coping mechanisms to handle stress. These tactics fall into two general categories: direct action and palliative methods. Exercise, smoking, and alcohol consumption are examples of palliative techniques that are intended to lessen emotional distress (Howard & Johnson, 2004). Proactive approaches to managing stressors, such as talking to mental health specialists or colleagues, are referred to as direct action techniques. Teachers frequently rely on administrators and other staff members for social support, which is a critical component of stress management (Howard & Johnson, 2004). Teachers

with positive social networks have been found to have better mental and physical health (Betoret, 2006). Furthermore, teachers' well-being is significantly impacted by the support of their spouses and romantic partners (Birditt & Antonucci, 2007). The unique stressors that preschool teachers encounter stem from their role as careers for young students. Teachers are required by the Kurikulum Standard Pra Sekolah (Standard Preschool Curriculum) to get their students ready for national exams. This creates a number of issues, including crammed classrooms and a lack of support from parents and administrators.

Preschool teachers' job satisfaction and commitment are negatively impacted by stress, which may result in attrition and lower the standard of instruction for young students. Stress among teachers is a common and alarming problem that is fueled by a number of factors. Effective coping mechanisms and social support networks are essential, given the detrimental effects of stress on educators and learners. By comprehending the difficulties educators encounter and recognizing effective coping strategies, the teaching profession can strive to establish a nurturing and enduring work atmosphere. To create more resilient coping mechanisms and safeguard the welfare of both educators and learners, more research is necessary. This will ultimately help to create a supportive and productive learning environment.

On the other hand, work overload describes a situation in which a person is overburdened with tasks, responsibilities, or work that exceeds their ability to manage or finish. This may result in higher levels of stress, lower output, and detrimental effects on well-being and job satisfaction. According to Osaat and Ekechukwu (2017), workloads are the duties or all the tasks carried out by workers in the course of their activities in their workplace. Relating to the lecturers, workloads are professional and non-professional duties carried out by the lecturers in the course of their activities in the instruction of students. Lecturers are the greatest assets as well as major stakeholders in the university industry. Osaat and Ekechukwu (2017) also note that the main work of lecturers is to teach and bring up the young generation of students to acquire skills and knowledge for growth and development. Teaching is a difficult task and demands serious commitment

to be effective. Teaching entails conducting thorough research, preparing the material adequately, and showing up to class on time to put it into practice. Teaching includes assessing students through quizzes, assignments, and examinations. In particular, teaching includes marking examination scripts and producing results.

In addition to the responsibilities listed above, lecturers handle a wide range of other tasks, some of which are difficult and occasionally conflict with their main responsibilities as academic staff members and teachers. Lecturers may experience work overload due to a variety of reasons, including grading and assessment, student supervision, resource constraints, long teaching days, research and publication obligations, and administrative duties. These lecturers' primary responsibility is teaching, which exposes them to a variety of tasks almost simultaneously. The National Universities Commission (NUC) Benchmark Minimum Academic Standard (BMAS) recommendation of students to lecturers is not followed by many Nigerian universities, which adds to the burden of teaching a large number of students in each class (NUC, 2014). For various student categories (regular undergraduate, part-time undergraduate, sandwich, postgraduate, pre-degree, open and distance education, etc.), they instruct up to four to five courses or more. As a result, they work continuously throughout the year with little to no vacation.

According to the American Psychological Association (2002), one of the things that causes stress among workers is overwork (excess workload). However, the recommendations made by lecturers to students regarding the NUC (National Universities Commission) are tailored according to the unique characteristics of each faculty. For instance, NUC (2014) shows that for the faculties of Administration, Arts, Education, Law, and Social Sciences, the Lecturer-Student Ratio (LSR) is 1:30; for Science, the LSR is 1:20; for Technology, Environmental Design, and Management, and Agricultural Science, the LSR is 1:15. For Basic Medical Sciences, Clinical Sciences, Dentistry, and Pharmacy, the LSR is 1:10.

**Brief Historical Background of Obafemi Awolowo University**

Obafemi Awolowo University, located in Ile-Ife, Nigeria, is a renowned institution of higher

education. It was established in 1962 as the University of Ife by the regional government of Western Nigeria, under the leadership of Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola, the then Premier of the Western Region of Nigeria.

In 1987, the university was renamed Obafemi Awolowo University in honor of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, a prominent Nigerian nationalist, lawyer, and statesman who played a significant role in the country's fight for independence. Currently, Obafemi Awolowo University houses 13 faculties:

1. Faculty of Administration
2. Faculty of Agriculture
3. Faculty of Arts
4. Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences
5. Faculty of Clinical Sciences
6. Faculty of Dentistry
7. Faculty of Education
8. Faculty of Environmental Design and Management
9. Faculty of Law
10. Faculty of Pharmacy
11. Faculty of Science
12. Faculty of Social Sciences
13. Faculty of Technology

These faculties are then divided into various departments, offering a wide range of academic programs. Each department specializes in specific areas of study. In summary, Obafemi Awolowo University provides a comprehensive educational experience.

The university has remained a well-known center of excellence over the years, according to information retrieved from the university website and signed by Omosule, registrar and secretary to the council (2023). Known as "the most beautiful" campus south of Sub-Saharan Africa, the university has produced National Merit Award winners and a Nobel Laureate among its faculty. It has also led the way in the development of cutting-edge technologies that can help address some of the current problems facing society.

#### **Academic Strengths of Obafemi Awolowo University**

Based on the report of the Federal Ministry of Education (2020) to Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. The attached table shows the academic staff distribution among the 13 faculties in the University as of the 2018/2019 academic session.

Table 1. Academic Staff Distribution by Faculties 2018/2019 Academic Session

Faculty	Number of Academic Staff				Student Enrolment	Teacher/student ratio	Nuc Ratio
	No On Ground	Nuc Benchm Ark	Shortfall	Excess			
Administration	86	137	51	-	4105	1:48	1.30
Agriculture	91	157	66	-	2362	1:26	1.15
Arts	127	156	29	-	4675	1:37	1:30
Basic Medical Sciences	59	108	49	-	1083	1:18	1:10
Clinical Sciences	125	80	-	45	797	1:60	1:10
Dentistry	23	16	-	7	159	1:70	1:10
Education	96	85	-	11	2548	1:27	1:30
Environmental Design and Management	100	152	52	-	2277	1:23	1:15
Law	39	56	17	-	1686	1:43	1:30
Pharmacy	86	81	-	5	809	1:90	1:10
Science	215	232	17	-	4636	1:22	1:20
Social Sciences	122	114	-	8	3410	1:28	1:30
Technology	132	286	154	-	4283	1:33	1:15
Total	1301	1660	435	76	32830		

Source: DAP Office, OAU

The above table illustrates the extremely deplorable state of affairs in the university, with only five (5) of the thirteen faculties having reached the required lecturer-to-student ratio and, consequently, meeting NUC benchmarks in their respective fields. There are significant gaps in the remaining eight faculties, with the Faculty of Technology having the largest deficit at 154 academic staff members. Compared to the 370 shortages noted in the 2017/2018 session, there are now 435 total shortfalls for the 13 faculties.

However, the Registrar and Secretary to the Council, Omosule (2023), states in the job advertisement for the university registrar position that the university's initial enrollment of 244 students has increased to 34,036 as of the 2021/2022 academic year. Additionally, the university, which began operations with 94 employees, has expanded to employ 4,000 people, of whom 2,635 are non-teaching staff and 1,365 are academic staff. The data above is consistent with the finding of Osaat and Ekechukwu (2017), which reveals that academic staff members in most universities in Nigeria are observed to be overworked because, regrettably, the number of academic staff does not keep up with the growing

number of students enrolling in universities. In a nutshell, the abundance of data gathered overwhelmingly indicates that there is a significant shortage of staff members at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. This inadequacy of lecturers has the potential to impose excessive workloads on the existing lecturers, subsequently having a detrimental impact on their performance and job satisfaction.

**Work Overload: Impact on Lecturers' Stress Levels, Job Satisfaction, and Overall Well-Being**

Work overload can have a significant impact on lecturers' stress levels, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. When lecturers have an excessive workload, they often experience higher levels of stress. The pressure to complete numerous tasks within tight deadlines can lead to feelings of overwhelm and anxiety. Chronic stress can have detrimental effects on mental and physical health, leading to burnout, exhaustion, and decreased productivity (Dalbudak & Saricam, 2020).

Work overload can diminish job satisfaction among lecturers. When they constantly feel overwhelmed by their workload, they may find less enjoyment and fulfillment in their work. Lecturers may struggle to maintain enthusiasm for teaching,

conducting research, and engaging with students and colleagues, as the excessive demands on their time and energy can make their jobs feel burdensome (Olajide & Adewale, 2019; Oghuvbu, 2015).

Work overload can significantly impact the overall well-being of lecturers. The sustained pressure and demands can lead to a lack of work-life balance, causing strain on personal relationships, decreased leisure time, and neglect of self-care. Lecturers may experience physical symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, and sleep disorders. Moreover, work overload can negatively impact their psychological well-being, leading to feelings of overwhelm, frustration, and a compromised sense of purpose. Work overload brings about unnecessary stress, fatigue, and headaches, which has led to the demise of many lecturers (Bamigbola, 2023).

Paradoxically, excessive workload can impair lecturers' productivity and the quality of their work. When lecturers are overloaded, they may have to rush through tasks, leading to subpar performance. The lack of time for adequate preparation, grading, and feedback can compromise the quality of teaching and supervision, affecting the student's learning experience in the long run. If work overload persists over time, lecturers may find it challenging to engage in professional development activities, conduct research, or publish papers. A lack of time and energy may hinder their ability to pursue promotions, grants, and other career advancements, potentially affecting their career progression in academia (Nasir & Haron, 2018; Alam & Mohd-Nor, 2017).

It should be noted that mitigating work overload is crucial to supporting lecturers' well-being, job satisfaction, and overall effectiveness. Strategies such as workload distribution, realistic expectations, supportive work environments, adequate resources, and time management training can help alleviate the burden and create a healthier and more productive work environment for lecturers.

### **Empirical Studies**

Previous research has shown that the excessive bureaucratic tasks that European university professors must add to their teaching and research responsibilities frequently have an impact on their psychosocial well-being, which includes their

coping mechanisms, internal states (mood), and psychophysical well-being. According to Tight (2010), the perception among academics today that their workloads are getting heavier may be directly related to the amount of time they spend on administration; nonetheless, the rising quantity and percentage of academic time that is spent on administrative tasks can have an impact on university lecturers' well-being. Put differently, the teacher's commitment to completing all of his responsibilities to the best of his ability, almost to the point of alienation, makes the workload a risk factor for stress (Pace, D'Urso, Zappulla, & Pace, 2019). Their research concludes that university professors' negative perception of their work-related well-being is predisposed by their workload, which is associated with bureaucratic university procedures. Furthermore, according to several studies (Cladellas & Castello, 2011; Gmelch et al. 1986; Navarro et al. 2010; Passanisian & Pace, 2017; Seiler & Pearson, 1985), this may pose a risk to the university as a whole. Hobson and Beach's (2000) study highlighted the risk factors associated with psychological health, including excessive workloads and frustrating work-related excesses. On the other hand, workload can decrease if one works in a non-compulsive manner and does not take on excessive tasks (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2006; Meijman & Mulder, 1998).

Conversely, other research has indicated that university lecturers face occupational constriction due to inadequate funding and resources, work overload, or poor management practices relative to requirements, which may put them under stress (Ford & Jin, 2015; McCormick & Barnett, 2011). According to the Health and Safety Executive (2018) in Great Britain, stress, anxiety, and depression are linked to 39% of work-related complaints. It also stated that the age group of 45–54 has the highest rate of illness caused by occupational stress. According to the study, the third-most stressful, depressing, and anxious work environment is the "education" sector. Furthermore, it appears that mental health is a significant risk factor for occupational stress among lecturers in higher education, according to the study by Sun, Wu, and Wang (2011) on occupational stress and its related factors among Chinese university lecturers. Specifically, mental health, role overload, role insufficiency, social support, monthly income, role

limitations owing to physical problems, research funding, and self-rated disease were the factors significantly associated with a higher level of occupational stress (Lo Cascio, Guzzo, Pace, & Pace, 2013).

Additionally, the study by Bauer et al. (2007) on working conditions: adverse events and mental health problems in a sample of 949 German teachers highlighted that many participants reported significant mental health problems regarding stress, concentration skills, sleep issues, decision-making ability, and feelings of depression and sadness. In a recent contribution, it was discovered (Hogan, Hogan, & Hodgins, 2016) that workaholism is more common in academia in Ireland than in other professions and that it negatively affects both psychological well-being and work-related outcomes. According to research by Kinman and Wray (2013), there is a tendency for stress to increase with time, and 75% of lecturers believe their job is stressful. Hobson and Beach (2000) looked at the relationship between psychological health, work-related stress, and excessive workloads.

The study conducted by Arbabisarjou, Ajdari, Omeidi, and Jalalinejad (2013) examined the connection between hospital nurses' performance and job stress in Iran. The descriptive correlation research method was employed. Of all the nurses, 491 hospital nurses were randomly chosen to participate in the study. One hundred questionnaire copies were examined. Regression analysis and Pearson coefficient correlation were used to analyze the data. The study's conclusion demonstrates that there is a negative relationship between performance and job stress.

A study by Warraich, Ahmed, Ahmend, and Khoso (2004) examined the impact of stress on workers' job performance in Karachi, Pakistan's private universities. For the study, 133 staff members of private universities in Karachi that offer courses in business administration, engineering, medicine, textiles, and fashion were used. The theory was tested using the multiple linear regression technique. Workload, role conflict, and inadequate financial compensation are the main causes of employee stress, according to the data, and this stress lowers employee efficiency. According to the study, to improve employees' job performance and job satisfaction, employers should

reduce stress by reducing workload, reducing role conflict, paying a fair salary, and offering employees training and counseling.

A study on academics' emotional intelligence and job stress performance was conducted by Yusoff, Khan, and Azam (2013), 65 faculty members from two Pakistani universities, one public and one private, were included in the study's sample. A questionnaire was used to gather the data, and descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze it. It was discovered that there is a strong positive correlation between emotional intelligence and job performance, but a negative correlation between job stress and performance. It was suggested that Pakistan's higher education system attempt to manage students' emotional competence by fostering a positive work environment, in addition to concentrating on identifying job stress factors.

Anazodo, Onyeizugbe, and Uchenna (2012) note that there is a strong positive correlation between work-life balance and academic performance and that academic workload has an impact on the health of Nigerian university lecturers. According to the study's findings, stress management is essential for raising the caliber of instruction delivered by Nigerian university lecturers, and ignoring this practice will hinder the expansion of the higher education sector.

Pedro and Roberts (2012) looked at the connection between management communication and the perception of organizational support a factor that affects employee performance. A panel design with cross-lags was used in the study. A social service organization in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States distributed 575 copies of the questionnaire to supervisors and subordinates. The study's conclusion indicates that there was a positive correlation between management communication and a change in perceived organizational support over time. The study concludes that management communication has an impact on performance primarily because it conveys to workers that the company values their contributions to the organization's expansion and cares about their well-being.

In South Korea, Kyoung (2014) looked into how affective commitment and role performance were affected by work-life balance. Information was obtained from 293 Korean labourers.

Regression analysis and structural equations were used in the study to test the hypothesis. The outcome demonstrates that work-life balance has no direct impact on in-role performance. The study also shows that affective commitment is positively correlated with in-role performance and that employees' experiences of work-life balance enhance affective commitment.

Amina and Bako (2014) examined the effects of stress on the performance of university lecturers in Nigeria. The study looked at pertinent empirical research on the relationship between job stress and the performance of Nigerian university lecturers. The study focused on how stress negatively affects lecturers' performance in Nigerian universities, highlighting issues such as depression, poor sexual performance, fabricating excuses for poor work, chronic fatigue, difficulty making decisions, and social disengagement. According to the report, individuals should evaluate their values, identify their ideal lifestyles, and then work on improving their problem-solving abilities.

A study by Osaat and Ekechukwu (2017) examined the workload of lecturers and its impact on their job performance, as well as effective management techniques to handle workload, are important factors to consider. The study also looked at coping mechanisms for handling workloads, such as time management, setting priorities for different tasks, and consistently taking short breaks or vacations. Therefore, their study concludes that Nigerian lecturers would work and live to work again if these strategies were followed by administrations and instructors alike; hence, the workload would be managed to a great extent.

Stress management skills were studied by Nnabuike, Onyeizugbe, and Onwuka (2012) as a requirement for enhancing the performance of female lecturers in Nigerian universities. The research utilized a descriptive survey that involved administering questionnaires. A total of 135 participants were chosen from seven Nigerian universities. Z-test and statistical summation techniques were used to analyze the data at the 0.05 level of significance. According to the study, female lecturers in Nigerian universities experience health problems as a result of occupational stress. The study suggests that to guarantee that its goals are consistently met, efficient stress management

policies should be implemented, regularly funded, and reviewed.

In Kwara State College of Education in Nigeria, Alabi, Marlala, and Lawal (2012) investigated the nature of the relationship between lecturers' job performance and work stress. The correlation design method was used in the study. For the study, a random selection of 111 lecturers was made. The results show that lecturers had an excessive amount of work to do for academic purposes. Also, behavioral and psychological work stress had a negative impact on lecturers' ability to perform their jobs. It was suggested that lecturers take a regular stress management induction course.

Kyriacou (2001) emphasized that it is imperative to keep an eye on the degree to which academic systems are contributing to elevated levels of stress among educators and look into the reasons behind the success of certain lecturers in navigating periods of career reappraisal and maintaining a positive commitment to employment (particularly research and instructional activities). According to Sarmiento's (2002) study, routinely practicing biofeedback, which entails monitoring one's body functions to improve one's general health, is one way to manage stress brought on by workload. Mayo (2016) contends that, among other strategies, effective time management, learning to say no, taking a vacation, and listening to music are effective ways to deal with work-related stress.

In a similar vein, Orluwene (2014) notes that to manage their workload, employees should take advantage of quick breaks to go for a walk or take lunch and refreshments. They should also plan a balanced schedule of daily tasks to avoid burnout. According to research by Susic (2009), taking a break from work and unplugging for a while is crucial as it allows the body, soul, and spirit to rest.

### **Potential Strategies to Manage and Mitigate Work Overload among Lecturers**

Managing and mitigating work overload among lecturers requires a multi-faceted approach that focuses on various aspects of their workload and well-being. The following were considered as some interventions and strategies that can be implemented:

Ensuring a fair and equitable distribution of workload among lecturers can help prevent excessive workloads. This may involve reviewing teaching assignments, research responsibilities, and



administrative tasks to balance the workload across the faculty. Clearly communicating expectations and priorities can help lecturers better manage their time and prioritize tasks. Providing guidance on what tasks are most crucial and align with their goals can help them focus their efforts more effectively.

Providing lecturers with the necessary resources, such as teaching assistants, support staff, technology, and budget allocations, can help alleviate their workload. Having access to appropriate resources can enhance efficiency and productivity, allowing lecturers to focus on their core responsibilities. In addition, offering training programs on time management, organizational skills, and stress management can equip lecturers with tools and techniques to better manage their workload and enhance their resilience. Training in these areas can also help improve their efficiency and reduce stress levels.

Creating a supportive work environment where lecturers can openly communicate their challenges and seek assistance is crucial. Encouraging teamwork, collaboration, and mutual support among lecturers can also help alleviate work overload through shared responsibilities and collective problem-solving. Simplifying and streamlining administrative processes can help reduce the burden on lecturers. Automating routine administrative tasks, minimizing paperwork, and leveraging technology for streamlined processes can free up lecturers' time and energy to focus on their core responsibilities.

Promoting work-life balance initiatives, such as flexible work arrangements, wellness programs, and initiatives to promote healthy and positive work environments, can support lecturers' well-being. These initiatives can help alleviate work overload by providing opportunities for rest, relaxation, and personal time. There is a need for the establishment of regular feedback mechanisms and evaluation processes to ensure that workload distribution and performance expectations are reviewed periodically. This can help identify and address workload issues proactively and provide opportunities for adjustments based on feedback from lecturers.

Furthermore, encouraging collaboration and networking opportunities with other lecturers and researchers can support lecturers in sharing workloads, ideas, and resources. Collaborative

projects and partnerships can help distribute workloads and enhance productivity. The need for establishing effective communication channels and feedback loops between lecturers, department heads, and administration can open dialogues regarding workload concerns. This can help identify potential problems and work towards finding appropriate solutions.

In a nutshell, executing these interventions and strategies collectively can help manage and mitigate work overload among lecturers, creating a healthier and more productive work environment.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study's conclusions indicate that a heavy workload and related stressors may be linked to many unfavorable effects, such as diminished physical health, burnout, and job dissatisfaction. Existing lecturers reported feeling emotionally exhausted from their excessive workloads and finding it difficult to maintain a work-life balance as a result of the inadequate academic staff members. These results highlight how crucial it is to address work overload in higher education to protect lecturers' health and output. According to the study's findings, work overload negatively impacts the well-being of lecturers at Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. As a result, recruiting more lecturers to fill open positions will help the university comply with the NUC's recommendation concerning the lecturer-to-student ratio.

Based on the research findings, several recommendations can be made to help alleviate work overload and enhance the well-being of lecturers at Obafemi Awolowo University. By implementing these recommendations, Obafemi Awolowo University and other educational institutions can take significant strides towards promoting the well-being of its lecturers and creating a conducive work environment that supports productivity and job satisfaction.

It recommends that the university administration consider implementing workload management policies and practices that promote a balanced distribution of teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities. This could involve revising curriculum guidelines, providing adequate resources and support for lecturers, and fostering a culture of collaboration and teamwork.

It is essential to provide professional development opportunities and training programs for lecturers to enhance their time management and organizational skills. This can help them prioritize tasks effectively and optimize their productivity, ultimately reducing work overload. The paper suggests that the creation of a supportive work environment that encourages open communication, feedback, and recognition can contribute to lecturers' well-being. Regular meetings, a mentoring program, and wellness initiatives can foster a sense of belonging and reduce stress levels. The study also recommends that the university management should comply with the NUC recommendation on the lecturers/students ratio by recruiting more academic staff members. This will reduce the workload on the existing lecturers.

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