

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the study

We always hear the term stress been used around the world, but especially used by students. Some may not understand the reason why people use it. But in the cause of our discussion we shall know this.

Stress is a psychological problem with wild effects on human performance and a threat to survival. It affects every aspect of an individual. Stress comes in all forms and affects people of all ages. Stress is a common thing experienced both by students and teachers. Stress may also be seen as any physical or emotional factor that causes mental unrest and that ways and different forms. It could be mental, physical social or religious and could be observed or watched closely through some symptoms like; insomnia (inability to sleep), boredom and cohesion.

Stress among students have long been researched on and researchers have identified stressors as too many assignments, competition, with other students, failures, project or field work stress, lack of pocket money, poor relationships with other students, lecturers, family or problem from home, over-crowded lecture halls semester system and inadequate resources to perform academic work (Ongori, Awino and Angolla, 2007/2008). Stress occurs when a student is confronted by a necessary thing in human beings lives because stress adds flavour, challenge and opportunity to our world. Stress is an art of every student's daily life. Stress has become part of us and as something every student goes through or must go through. In the right dose, it can be healthy or even enjoyable. However, it provides many benefits it can be damaging for students' health, happiness, work performance, relationships and personal develop me The five main causes of stress are; the new university environment, the new relationships, the competitive circumstances and exams, a lack of proper time-management techniques and parental pressure. All these causes have adverse effects or consequences. The causes could affect or delimit the students' performance or eagerness to learn.

The student might not have the drive i.e. there might be no motivation to keep him/her going and this could lead to dropping out of school.

The term “stress” was first employed in a biological context by the endocrinologist, Hans Selye in 1930. He later broadened and popularized the concept to include inappropriate physiological response to any demand. In his usage, stress refers to a condition and stressor to the stimulus causing it. It covers a wide range of phenomenon, from mild irritation to drastic dysfunction that may cause severe health beat down. The stress the students go through could have effect on their academic performance.

Emotional causes of stress and tension are numerous and varied. What many people associate the term “stress” with psychological stress, scientists and physicians use this term to denote any force that impairs the stability and balance of bodily functions. A mild degree of stress and tension can sometimes be beneficial. For example, feeling mildly stressed when carrying out a project or assignment often compels one to do a good job, focus better and work energetically. It is only when stress is overwhelming or poorly managed that its negative effects appear. No matter how students fight or tend to fight against stress, it cannot be totally eliminated but instead we can learn to manage stress so that we have control over our stress and its effects on our physical and mental health. The internal and external stressors are the two categories of stress. The internal cause of stress may arise from fear, low esteem or lack of confidence in oneself, over ambitiousness while the external causes of stress may arise from school, family, government and even friends.

The causes of stress can be traced to the students’ environment as seen by the psychologists and an individual’s environment is made up of the physical, social, biological and spiritual hence the concept of nature in human growth and development.

Our aim here, is to find out the causes and consequences of stress, how it affects their performance and how these students strive to cope with the stress.

Statement of the Problem

It has been observed that students go through a lot of stress (especially the university students). The question then is, how we find out the causes, effect, consequences of stress and how it affects the academic performance. Students write exams and are still expected to perform well not minding the stress they go through.

Class tests and examinations have been conducted to measure and evaluate the individual student's knowledge. However, it has been noticed that students perform differently in such tests and examinations even when thought by the same lecturers, and even the lectures were all attended.

2. Purpose of Essay

The purpose of this essay is to find out the factors that causes student' stress and the consequences the stress has on students in Nigerian universities.

3. Significance of this Essay

This essay is being written not only to identify the causes and consequences of stress in students, but also to identify the factors that cause stress and how to manage the stress.

4. Scope of the Essay.

The essay is aimed at the causes and consequences of students stress in Nigerian universities.

5. Definition of Terms

Stress

Stress is defined by oxford advanced learners dictionary as a state of mental or emotional stress or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances. It can also be perceived as a response to situations that involve demands, constraints or even opportunities.

Students

This refers to the students found in the university.

Stressor

Is anything or situation that causes stress.

In the subsequent chapters, we would be discussing on the factors that cause stress among students in Nigerian universities, how it affects or its consequences on our students, and measures students can thrive to cope with stress in the university.

II. CAUSES OF STRESS AMONG STUDENTS IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

The factors which cause students stress are as varied as the students themselves. A condition which stresses one student may actually stimulate and excite another student. In this chapter, we would be looking at those factors that contribute to students stress.

A. Increased class workload

An increase in class workload stresses up students in the sense that when students have to do more than they can handle, they turn to get frustrated and are unable to focus and think straight. Students will overschedule their plans to meet up with the class workload in order to get good grades but eventually because these tasks are too much for them, they end up messing everything up. Especially in situations where there are a lot of assignments to do after having a very long day at work makes students more confused. Also Too much workload can also make student to be stressed in the sense that, when a student is undergoing so many courses in school and each of these courses are also demanding it make the student not have enough time to handle all these courses to his or her

perfection and ones that happen the student turns to think so much and as a result will be stressed up and this will have a great effect on the academic performance of the student.

B. Missing lectures

It is the desire of students to miss lectures or skip school. Although some students wake up and decide to miss lectures or school, others also have to do that due to circumstances beyond their control. When some students miss class or lectures they become disturbed and worried especially if the course is on they have difficulties in understanding. When this happens they start to wonder how they will make up for the lessons they lost so as they will be on the same pace with their fellow colleague in school. The thought of finding ways to make up with lessons which they have issues in becomes a burden and stress them up beyond imagination.

C. Frustration due to misunderstandings

A lot of students get frustrated when they don't understand what is being taught by the teachers in class. Some also misinterpret what the teacher said in a different way or meaning. This frustration leads to students being stressed up because they wonder how they will pass the course because they hardly get what the teachers say in class.

D. Bad living conditions

Living conditions of people place a major role in the feeling and thinking of students. When students live in a condition which is difficult to afford some basic amenities of life they really live unhappily and this affects almost all the aspect of their life. Therefore, when they start to ponder about this issues they get stressed up and lose focus.

E. Fear

Fear is one of the biggest problem student face each day in and out in their academic life. Fear in a student can be

about failure or talking in public. When a student has the fear of failure they are always scared to undertake any initiative even when they know it's the right thing to do due to this they always stress up when they are confronted with such situations. It's the same with fear of talking in public. They always try to escape public so as not to talk.

III. EFFECTS OF STRESS ON STUDENTS

Students today experience high levels of stress in many areas of life. This is an important domain for further research and an effective channel of intervention for university mental health professionals. Study schedules, especially in universities, are very challenging. The act of combining a busy life along with education causes stress and depression. Limited stress is beneficial and can lead to excellent performance. However, uncontrolled stress can lead to exhaustion, depression and several other sicknesses. In fact, college students are prone to episodic stress. This happens when exams are around the corner. Stress and depression also occur when getting ready for a presentation or an interview. Several students

contemplate or commit suicide. Student life is a changeover period. They do a course supposing it will empower them to do or have something that they need, for example, expanded openings for work or upgraded delight in life. Concentrating on is a piece of a procedure of progress and, here and there, change can bring about a considerable measure of nervousness. Students in school especially universities experience an intense stage taking care of anxiety and misery. Firstly, their hormones are in overdrive, which causes stress. Furthermore, the weight to do well adds to their anxiety levels. Homework, issues at home, connections at school and associate weight all add to stress and depression. The stress students experience may test their ability to cope and adapt to the environment they find themselves in. The impact of stress on students can be looked at from various 29 angles. According to (Centre 2010, 10-12) Stress affects students academically, socially, physically and emotionally.

IV. HOW STUDENTS CAN COPE WITH STRESS

One reason to discuss stress among Nigerian university students is that, it is important that, before they have an opportunity to experience it, it will be of importance to know some proactive measures to dealing with it. One problem that many Nigerian university students encounter is that stress takes them by surprise. Some students are less expectant of obvious areas that could easily provoke

the surfacing of stress. There are four steps that can actually help students actively deal with their stress.

1) Expect it.

Students who are prepared for the possibility that even a wonderful college

Experience can be stressful at times will not be shaken when it happens. If students will make up their minds to expect and embrace stress coming from known causative areas like poor transportation system on campus, it is believed that there will be less impact as a result of such inevitable stressors.

According to psychology, whatever the human mind is prepared for, there tends to be a less effect of such a thing on it (mind). For example, a body that jumps from a height will fill less shock to one that has mistakenly fallen from the same level of height.

2) Name it.

Student stress may be caused by many things or by one particular thing. It will be an aid to students been able to identify the exact cause of stress. If students are able to identify areas where stress where the experience stress as a result of, they will find it a lot easier to minimizing or avoiding stress. For example, if a student would know that procrastination of academic work would lead to a large accumulation of assignments, reading of lecture notes, making of comprehensive notes, he would make efforts to reducing the volume to which he would have accumulated work, thereby reducing the level of fatigue in the process of trying to clear out the poor state of the economy, they would be more cautious in spending the money so as not to be broke.

Accept it.

A certain amount of stress is inevitable and possibly good thing for some students. It will help if students see stress as part of the college experience. Stress being inevitable, making efforts towards preventing it completely will only

lead to frustration, much like being caught in a current while swimming, going with the flow may be the best way to tackle the problem. So it is in the best interest of every student to accept the fact that stress is inevitable, because, even hard work does not exonerate the tendency of one being stressed out, as if to say hard work is a stressor in itself, just that it helps a lot in reducing the possibility of accumulated work thereby reducing the intense stress that would likely occur at such a time when one tries to hurriedly clear his table.

- 1) Tackle it. Going with the flow does not mean that your student needs to accept stress as a continual way of existing. There are specific things that students can do to lower stress to a more manageable level.
 - a. Identify the cause. In tackling stress, students should first of all identify the exact causes of stress, some of which are lack of early preparation towards examination which results to so much materials to be read just before or during exams. The unavailability of material/lecture notes on time which also results to accumulated work, inordinate relationships; these are relationships between guys and ladies that is full of experiencing breakups from time to time, such break-ups tend to cause depression in the lives of students. Too many assignments. Extreme long hours of lecture. Poor provision of basic amenities such as poor accommodation, poor water supply. Lack of electricity etc.
 - b. Get organized. Students should make personal timetables in order to split up work in periods, allowing for leisure times in order to refresh the brain and continue with their academic work, organizing should be done so as to reduce the rate at which the brains crowded.
 - c. Work on your health. Students, in an attempt to tackle stress, should engage themselves in exercising the body by movies to reduce brain turmoil. Eating cooked foods rather than snacks etc.

- d. Get support. Talking to friends or counsellors can do a great deal of tackling stress. Through this means students could get advice or counsels on how to deal with their difficult situations. They could also consult their parents who once had such experiences, and learn how they were able to cope at such moments.
- e. Find some time to be quiet. Students should find time when they can be alone whether for a few moments or a stretch of time. They could also go for a walk and allow for a little wandering away of their minds as to seen and imagining interesting things around.
- f. Take an occasional break from routine. Students could get off campus and visit their homes, friends etc. to receive the eyes and minds of the boring school environment.
- g. Go to class. Endeavour to always keep up with current work, this will help in reducing the volume of materials to read during exams and thereby reduce stress, making preparation for exams easier.
- h. Do something for others. Take the focus off yourself. Help out someone else. You could as well tutor a friend.
- i. Differentiate between the things you can change and the things that cannot be changed. Don't waste time and energy trying to change things that can't be changed.
- j. Set some goals or make some resolutions. Be forward thinking and know where you're heading. Students must have set goals that they are looking forward to achieve.

