



INTERACTIVE ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AND OCCUPATIONAL STRESS ON UNIVERSITY LECTURERS' JOB PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

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This research studied the interaction influence of demographic characteristics (marital status, job rank, gender and age) and occupational stress level, on the work performance of faculty members in Calabar Metropolis. The descriptive survey design was utilized for this investigation. A sample of 150 respondents was identified using the systematic random sampling procedure from a population of 400 Faculty of Education lecturers from two public universities in Calabar Metropolis. A four-point scale validity and reliability certified questionnaire was used for data collection. Data generated was analyzed using the two-way analysis of variance. Hypotheses were all tested at the 0.05 alpha level. Findings revealed a significant interactive effect of demographic variables (age, gender, job rank and marital status) and stress levels on lecturers' jobs. Results also indicated that the stress level of lecturers affects the degree or quality of job performance, with those having average stress levels reporting better job performance in the universities studied. Recommendations were made that all lecturers, irrespective of age, gender, marital status or rank, should develop or adopt good stress management skills and disengage/reduce extra jobs and other unnecessary stress-inducing activities.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to the existing literature by pairing some demographic variables with stress levels to predict university staff job performance. Previous studies in the literature mainly focused on the relative prediction of different demographic variables or stress to academic staff job performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

The varying nature of stress, its inevitability, causes, and effects are issues that have raised a concern and curiosity among researchers and stakeholders globally. Due to stiffening service conditions, skyrocketing cost of living, basic and social amenities, among others, occupational stress has increasingly become a menace qualifiable as a public health concern. This is manifest in the sudden death occurrences and strange illnesses (such as high blood pressure, stroke, and other cardiac-related problems) that have become pervasive among academic staff in universities worldwide (Kusi, Codjoe, & Bampo, 2018; Onu et al., 2019; Ravalier & Walsh, 2018; Sabitu & Kehinde, 2020). Due to the high cost of living, some academic staff engage in extra income yielding activities to make ends meet (Abraham & Houseman, 2019; Jung, Horta, & Postiglione, 2021; Shoaib & Mujtaba, 2018). Coupled with increasing and challenging primary job demands, this presents a delicate and challenging work environment for an average academic staff. However, academic work is such that it requires discipline, time, a lot of mental energy and utmost care. It also requires much research, collaboration, conference attendance, research supervision, and administrative responsibilities, especially among staff on their tenure track.

Studies have shown a correlation between work performance and occupational stress (Binta, Muhammad, Ahmed, Bazza, & Magaji, 2019; Elovainio, Kivimäki, & Vahtera, 2002; Enyonam, Opoku, Addai, & Batola, 2017; Osaat & Ekechukwu, 2017; Osifila & Aladetan, 2020; Tijani, 2015; Usoro, 2018). However, Dar, Akmal, Naseem, and din Khan (2011) summarily averred that such relationship could be categorized into four types – (1) a positive linear relationship, depicted when performance increases as a result of an increment in stress; (2) a negative linear relationship which is observable when performance decreases due to the increase in stress; (3) a curvilinear relationship wherein, stress reduction may initially boost performance, but as the person's condition of distress increases, the performance begins to diminish; and (4) a non-quantifiable relationship between the two. Having established the possible relationship between job stress and performance, a question that tends to cross one's mind is - what could be responsible for the variant relationship between stress and performance? A handy answer could be proffered based on the variance in the stress level experienced. However, different people tend to respond differently to stress even though they are exposed to similar conditions. This study investigated the intersection of some demographic variables and stress levels on lecturers' job performance.

Various factors have been found to influence how individuals respond to stressful situations. Mahmood, Nudrat, Zamir, and Zahoor (2013) opined that the effect of stress tends to differ between and even within a group of individuals in a similar working condition or situation. Factors such as occupation, income, work environment, organizational structure, as well as demographic characteristics such as (personality, marital status, job rank, health status, age, gender and experience, among others) can influence the way employees respond to stress (Omori & Bassey, 2019; Sharma & Jain, 2020).

Studies on employees' demographic variables, stress level and job performance vary significantly. For instance, Hassan and Ogunkoya (2014) discovered that age, marital status, educational attainment, and gender (all considered demographic characteristics) significantly influenced work performance. In another study, Sharma and Jain (2020) found that demographic variables (such as age, gender, marital status and income) were the most common factors causing stress among employees. A study by Affum-Osei and Azunu (2015) submitted that female workers reported greater occupational stress levels than their male colleagues. Also, those in the married category were susceptible to more significant stress than unmarried colleagues. Aydin (2018) posited that personal characteristics affected employees' productivity in the tourism and hotel management industry.

Studies on age-related differences in employee stress tend to differ in terms of results. Some studies have found older lecturers experiencing less stress than their junior counterparts (Akinmayowa & Kadiri, 2014; Shkëmbi, Melonashi, & Fanaj, 2015). Moreover, it has been argued that the onset of illnesses that come with ageing makes it difficult for employees to perform on a higher level than when they started the job. This makes them less effective as they grow older due to the wearing out of body organs, systems and mental abilities (Omori & Bassey, 2019). Furthermore, other studies found that the age of lecturers had a significant negative relationship with occupational stress (Akbar & Akhter, 2011; Kabito, Wami, Chercos, & Mekonnen, 2020; Mahmood et al., 2013). In other words, the older individuals get, the less stressful their lives become. On the other hand, other studies revealed no significant variation in academic staff's degree of stress based on their age (Akinmayowa & Kadiri, 2014; Azizah, Rzainee, Nada, Izreen, & Norhafizah, 2016). These studies further indicated that younger lecturers might be more stressed than their older counterparts because they began the field with high expectations and may find it difficult to adjust to the limitations and restrictions of the profession at first. As a consequence, they may feel a great deal of anxiety. On the other hand, older lecturers may see these circumstances differently since they have amassed a wealth of knowledge and have become well-versed in the system.

Researchers' conclusions on the link between stress and work performance are divided by gender inequalities. As a result of their findings, Sofoluwe, Akinsolu, and Ogbudinkpa (2015) concluded that the association between gender, work stress, and performance might be predicted. A study by Akbar and Akhter (2011) discovered that male and female teachers were significantly more stressed. According to the research, female professors were more stressed than male counterparts. Other research has shown that male instructors were more stressed and less happy with their work than female counterparts (Faraji, Karimi, Azizi, Janatolmakan, & Khatony, 2019; Mondal, Shrestha, & Bhaila, 2011). According to the researchers, job satisfaction signifies favorable work attitudes, whereas occupational stress signified lousy work attitudes. The stress levels of instructors were not shown to be significantly different between males and females in previous investigations (Amos, Acquah, Antwi, & Adzifome, 2015; Shkëmbi et al., 2015).

Studies have indicated no substantial variation in the degree of stress experienced by academics based on their rank in the academic hierarchy (Akinmayowa & Kadiri, 2014). However, some scholars have presented evidence that job title or rank significantly correlates with occupational stress (Azizah et al., 2016) and job performance (Eyupoglu & Saner, 2009). Additionally, Ugwu and Ugwu (2017) discovered that occupational ranks and professional experience were essential determinants of task-based and contextual performance. Akinmayowa and Kadiri (2014) further expressed that highly ranked lecturers leverage their position by delegating responsibilities they perceive as tedious, favorably influencing their stress level. Moreover, Eyupoglu and Saner (2009) established that the higher the rank, the higher is the pay, and the higher are the level of stressful conditions experienced. Besides, the scholars added that professors were the most satisfied group of academic staff because they had reached the peak of their careers and had equally experienced all the associated benefits.

Various studies have associated the marital status of employees with their job performance (Amazue & Onyishi, 2016; Amuda, Bulus, & Joseph, 2016; Deeb, Alananzeh, Tarhini, & Masa'deh, 2020; Qtait & Sayej, 2016; Vijayan, 2017). For example, some researchers found that married instructors outperformed their single counterparts in work performance (Iwuagwu, Okogbo, & Okonta, 2016; Kış, 2014). However, other scholars proved that even though there was a difference in the job performance of workers based on their marital status, the gap was not statistically significant (Bajrami et al., 2021; Choong, Tan, Keh, Lim, & Tan, 2012; Jena, 2015; Kalia & Bhardwaj, 2019; Tarcan, Hikmet, Schooley, Top, & Tarcan, 2017). Other scholars have also argued that married employees were more motivated, committed, and demonstrated a higher job performance than their single (unmarried) counterparts. These scholars attributed the result to the house responsibilities married people have to meet regarding economic safety, and making them deliver their services expectantly to avoid job loss. Besides, married people reported less life satisfaction than single people (Grover & Helliwell, 2019). There seems to be no solid

evidence in literature indicating that single (unmarried) workers are more effective in performing their jobs than married ones. However, some studies have found that employees' marital status does not affect their performance (Deeb et al., 2020; Myint & Aung, 2016; Trahan, 2017). This indicates that employees are likely to maintain similar levels of job performance regardless of their marital status. Nevertheless, the bulk of the cited studies focused more generally on workers in firms and rarely considered the role of stress levels within marital classes in the context of job performance. This constitutes a critical gap the present study addressed.

An examination of the literature revealed that various studies had connected workers' marital status to work-related stress (Ghafoor, Chaudhry, & Khan, 2020; Howells et al., 2020; Olatunji & Mokuolu, 2014; Ta, Gesselman, Perry, Fisher, & Garcia, 2017). Some studies have found a significant difference in the stress level experienced by lecturers resulting from their marital status (Akinmayowa & Kadiri, 2014; Olatunji & Mokuolu, 2014; Omoniyi & Ogunsanmi, 2012). These studies indicated that single lecturers experienced more stress than their married colleagues. Contradictorily, other studies (e.g., (Akbar & Akhter, 2011; Aydin, 2018; Khurshid, Butt, & Malik, 2011; Sharma & Jain, 2020)) reported that married employees were generally more stressed compared to their unmarried colleagues. These studies argued that married employees with offspring were more vulnerable than non-parent employees due to additional childcare responsibilities and commitment to a spouse. Other research, however, revealed no significant variation in stress levels among instructors in Nigerian institutions depending on marital status (Azizah et al., 2016; Ofoegbu & Nwadiani, 2006). These researchers backed their results by claiming that family considerations did not play a substantial role in workplace stress. This indicates an ongoing dispute among researchers on the effect of marital status on the degree of stress experienced by academics. Due to the inconclusive arguments in the literature, marital status remains an attractive variable to investigate in occupational stress and work performance.

Evidently, despite the broad literature on demographic characteristics of employees, work-related stress, and job performance, seemingly little appears to have been done in studying the tripartite nexus between the three variables. Thus, this study intends to cover such a gap and extend the scope of previous research by considering occupational stress and job performance concerning lecturers' demographic characteristics such as age, gender, rank, and marital status.

1.1. Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the hierarchy of needs theory (Maslow, 1954) and the Transactional stress model (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Maslow's theory is a motivational theory that consists of a five-level hierarchical model illustrating the sequence of how human needs are ordered and met. In ascending order of sequence, these needs include psychological, safety, love and social, esteem and self-actualization needs. According to Maslow, humans desire to satisfy specific needs they perceive as necessary before advancing to satisfy higher-order ones. This theory has implications for this study because lecturers have needs, they seek to satisfy in their homes, careers, and lives. The desire to meet these needs may serve as a drive for their actions. Also, being unable to satisfy their identified needs adequately may challenge their well-being, influencing their job performance. Moreover, the different attributes possessed by lecturers may place them at different levels of needs, which may, in turn, affect their capacity for effective service delivery and the level of stress experienced.

The Transactional Stress Model was first propounded by Richard Lazarus in 1966 but has undergone several modifications. The theory posits an intersection between individual attributes and how they perceive stressful situations. This intersection enables individuals to appraise challenging or harmful situations about their well-being and how they feel capable of coping with such situations. The theory underscores that individual characteristics and situational factors simultaneously influence stress levels. Thus, it is helpful in this study because it recognizes employees' individual and situational uniqueness when exposed to stressful conditions.

1.2. Hypothesis

Based on the literature review, this study frames the following hypothesis:

H1: There is no significant interactive influence of lecturers' demographic characteristics (gender, age, job rank and marital status) by stress levels on their job performance in universities in Calabar Metropolis.

2. METHODS

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design, which was considered suitable. This design is within the purview of the quantitative research method. The population of this study comprised 400 academic staff (first university: N = 302; second university: N = 98) of the faculty of education in two public universities in Nigeria. A systematic random sampling technique was adopted in selecting a sample of 150 lecturers, representing 37.5% of the total population. To ensure a fair representation in the sample, the first university was represented by 112 lecturers (74.7%), while the second was represented by 38 lecturers (25.3%). The age analysis revealed that 26% of the respondents were between 25 and 34 years, 48.7% were 35 and 44 years, and 12.7% were between 45 to 54 years and 55 years upwards. The analysis of respondents' gender indicates that 60.7% were males and 39.3% were females. In terms of rank, 43.3% of the respondents were Assistant Lecturers, 30% were Lecturer IIs, 14% were Lecturer IIIs, 6% were Senior Lecturers, while 3.3% were Associate Professors and Professors respectively. For marital status, the analysis revealed that 10% of the respondents were single, while 90% were married. For the institution of work, 74.7% of the respondents were staff from the University of Calabar, whereas 25.3% were of the University of Cross River State.

The instrument for data collection was a four-point Likert scale structured questionnaire with three sections. The questionnaire was validated by experts of psychology and psychometrics at the University of Calabar, Nigeria. Section one included a brief letter introducing the researchers, stating the purpose of the study, the response required, and a statement assuring the respondents of the confidentiality of their responses. Section two collected demographic information from respondents, such as age, gender, rank and marital status. The third section was divided into two sub-sections. The first sub-section consisted of a twenty-one-item questionnaire on occupational stress. In contrast, the second sub-section comprised a ten-item Likert scale regarding job performances. The instrument was administered and retrieved from respondents through the direct delivery method. The null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 alpha level using the two-way analysis of variance.

3. RESULTS

The hypothesis of this study stated that there is no significant interactive influence of lecturers' demographic characteristics (gender, age, job rank and marital status) by stress levels on their job performance in universities in Calabar Metropolis. This hypothesis was tested using the two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) at the .05 alpha level. The result of the analysis showed, on a general note, that the job performance of lecturers is low irrespective of their level of stress. In ranking the interaction terms based on their effect sizes (η^2), it was discovered that the interaction of rank*stress had strongest effect ($F = 82.74$, $\eta^2 = 0.37$, $p < 0.05$), followed by the interaction of marital status*stress ($F = 22.44$, $\eta^2 = 0.13$, $p < 0.05$), before the interaction of age*stress ($F = 5.17$, $\eta^2 = 0.10$, $p < 0.05$) and then the interaction of gender*stress ($F = 3.17$, $\eta^2 = 0.04$, $p = 0.05$). The null hypothesis was rejected based on this result, while the alternate hypothesis was adopted. This implies a significant interactive influence of all the demographic variables (such as gender, age rank, and marital status) with stress on lecturers' job performance in Calabar Metropolis universities. The next section analyzes each of these variables by stress level association.

i. Age by Stress Level on Lecturers' Job Performance

The descriptive output of the Two-way ANOVA result in [Table 1](#) revealed in the 25-34 years age category that 29 respondents had a high level of stress, 5 had average and low levels of stress, respectively. In the 35-44 years'

age category, 27 respondents had a high level of stress, 25 had an average stress level, and 21 had a low level of stress. In the 45-54 years' age category, 10 respondents had a high level of stress, 9 had an average stress level, and 19 had a low level of stress. In the 55 years and above age category, 19 respondents had an average stress level, with none having a low nor high level of stress.

Table 1 reveals that, on average, lecturers' job performance is highest in the 55 years or above category. This is followed by those between 45 and 54 years; 35 and 44 years; 25 and 34 years. This result suggests that lecturers' job performance is an increasing function of their age (the older the lecturer, the better his/her job performance). The result also reveals that only lecturers aged 55 years or older performed their jobs above the grand mean value of 32.78; the average lecturers' performance in other age categories did not meet the expected reference mean point.

In terms of the category, the within-group analysis in **Table 1** reveals in the 25-34 years category that lectures with an average stress level performed better than those with high or low-stress levels. In the 35-44 years' age category, lecturers' job performance was highest in the high-stress level category than in the low or average stress levels categories. In the 45 to 54 years category, **Table 1** shows that only lecturers with two stress levels (high and average) were present, with job performance being higher in the high-stress category than in the average stress category. Only lecturers with average stress levels were present in the 55 years or above age category, with an average performance of 36.89.

Table 1. Two-way ANOVA result of the interactive effect of age by stress level on lecturers' job performance in universities.

Age	Stress level	N	Mean	SD
25-34 years	High	29	31.10	2.16
	Average	5	35.00	0.00
	Low	5	30.00	0.00
	Total	39	31.46	2.34
35-44 years	High	27	33.59	3.49
	Average	25	30.68	5.88
	Low	21	33.14	3.38
	Total	73	32.47	4.56
45-54 years	High	10	34.00	0.00
	Average	9	31.00	0.00
	Total	19	32.58	1.54
55 years+	Average	19	36.89	2.18
	Total	19	36.89	2.18
Total	High	66	32.56	2.93
	Average	58	33.14	4.94
	Low	26	32.54	3.28
	Total	150	32.78	3.87
Source	Type III SS	Df	MS	F
Corrected Model	640.73 ^a	8	80.09	7.10
Intercept	97898.61	1	97898.61	8676.07
Age	241.58	3	80.53	7.14
Stress level	25.79	2	12.89	1.14
Age * Stress level	174.98	3	58.33	5.17
Error	1591.01	141	11.28	
Total	163411.00	150		
Corrected Total	2231.74	149		

a R Squared = 0.287 (Adjusted R Squared = 0.247)

Note: * The interaction term.

The test of the between-subject effect revealed a significant main influence of age on lecturers' job performance in universities in Calabar Metropolis ($F_{[3, 141]} = 7.14$, $p < 0.05$), accounting mainly for 13% of the total variance in the dependent variable. In this model, the main influence of stress on lecturers' job performance was not significant, $F_{[2, 141]} = 1.14$, $p > 0.05$, accounting for only 2% of the variance in the dependent variable. The interaction of age

and stress level yielded a significant influence on lecturers' job performance in universities in Calabar Metropolis ($F_{[3, 141]} = 5.17, p < 0.05$) jointly responsible for 10% of the total variance in the dependent variable.

ii. Gender by Stress Level on Lecturers' Job Performance

The results in [Table 2](#) reveal that of the 91 male lecturers who participated in the study, 46 had a high-stress level, 35 had average stress levels, and 10 had a low-stress level. In the female category, out of 59 participants, 20 had a high level of stress, 23 had an average level of stress, and 16 had a low level of stress. The within-group job performance analysis revealed that male lecturers with an average stress level performed better than those with high or low-stress levels. It was also shown that female lecturers with a high or low-stress level performed at similar levels, higher than those with an average stress level. Using the reference mean of 32.78 as the benchmark, the result in [Table 2](#) revealed that only the job performance of male lecturers reached this threshold. The result depicted in [Table 2](#) revealed that only lecturers with average stress levels reached/surpassed the reference mean point within the male category. In the female category, the job performance of lecturers based on their stress levels did not reach the mean reference point.

The test of the between-subject effect showed no significant main effect of gender on the job performance of lecturers in universities in Calabar Metropolis ($F_{[1, 144]} = 0.02, p > 0.05$), explaining a zero per cent variance in the dependent variable. In the model, the main influence of stress on lecturers' job performance is not significant ($F_{[2, 144]} = 0.29, p > 0.05$), accounting for a zero per cent of the total variance in the dependent variable. The interaction of lecturers' gender by stress level significantly influenced their job performance in universities in Calabar Metropolis ($F_{[2, 144]} = 3.17, p = 0.05$), contributing 4% to the total variance in the dependent variable.

Table 2. Two-way ANOVA result of the interactive effect of gender by stress level on lecturers' job performance in universities.

Gender	Stress level	N	Mean	SD
Male	High	46	32.59	3.51
	Average	35	33.97	1.86
	Low	10	31.00	1.05
	Total	91	32.95	2.91
Female	High	20	32.50	0.51
	Average	23	31.87	7.43
	Low	16	33.50	3.83
	Total	59	32.53	5.03
Total	High	66	32.56	2.93
	Average	58	33.14	4.94
	Low	26	32.54	3.28
	Total	150	32.78	3.87
Source	Type III SS	Df	MS	F
Corrected Model	112.01 ^a	5	22.40	1.52
Intercept	124693.04	1	124693.04	8470.79
Gender	0.32	1	0.32	0.02
Stress level	8.63	2	4.31	0.29
Gender * Stress level	93.26	2	46.63	3.17
Error	2119.73	144	14.72	
Total	163411.00	150		
Corrected Total	2231.74	149		

a R Squared = 0.050 (Adjusted R Squared = 0.017)

Note: * Interaction term.

iii. Lecturers' Rank by Stress Level on Job Performance

The result in [Table 3](#) revealed that of the 65 assistant lecturers that participated in the study, 45 had a high level of stress, 15 had an average level of stress, and 5 had a low level of stress. Of the 45 lecturers who were Lecturer IIs, the result indicated that 21 had a high level of stress, 24 had an average level of stress, and none had a

low level of stress. **Table 3** revealed that the 21 lecturers who participated in the study had a low-stress level. It also showed that of the 9, 5 and 5 senior lecturers, associate professors and professors who participated in the study, all had an average stress level (none had a high or low level of stress).

Table 3 revealed that job performance is higher in the average stress class than in the high or low-stress categories in the assistant lecturers' category. Within the lecturer IIs category, academics with a high-stress level had a higher job performance than those with average stress levels. In the lecturer Is, senior lecturers, associate professors and professors' categories, only lecturers with an average level of stress are represented. Thus, there is no basis for comparison in this case.

Table 3. Two-way ANOVA result of the interactive effect of rank by stress level on lecturers' job performance in universities.

Rank	Stress level	N	Mean	SD		
Asst Lecturers	High	45	31.11	1.93		
	Average	15	35.00	0.00		
	Low	5	30.00	0.00		
	Total	65	31.92	2.35		
Lecturer IIs	High	21	35.67	2.20		
	Average	24	29.00	5.00		
	Total	45	32.11	5.16		
Lecturer Is	Low	21	33.14	3.38		
	Total	21	33.14	3.38		
Senior Lecturers	Average	9	39.00	0.00		
	Total	9	39.00	0.00		
Assoc. Professors	Average	5	36.00	0.00		
	Total	5	36.00	0.00		
Professors	Average	5	34.00	0.00		
	Total	5	34.00	0.00		
Total	High	66	32.56	2.93		
	Average	58	33.14	4.94		
	Low	26	32.54	3.28		
	Total	150	32.78	3.87		
Source	Type III SS	Df	MS	F	P	Partial η^2
Corrected Model	1166.06 ^a	8	145.76	19.29	0.00	0.52
Intercept	83772.87	1	83772.87	11083.95	0.00	0.99
Rank	454.00	5	90.80	12.01	0.00	0.30
Stress level	96.05	2	48.02	6.35	0.00	0.08
Rank * Stress level	625.34	1	625.34	82.74	0.00	0.37
Error	1065.68	141	7.56			
Total	163411.00	150				
Corrected Total	2231.74	149				

a R Squared = 0.522 (Adjusted R Squared = 0.495).

Note: * Interaction term.

The test of the between-subject effect in **Table 3** revealed that the main influence of lecturers' rank on their job performance is statistically significant ($F_{[5, 141]} = 12.01, p < 0.05$), contributing 50% to the total variance in the dependent variable. In the model, stress was a significant factor influencing the job performance of lecturers in universities ($F_{[2, 141]} = 6.35, p < 0.05$), explaining 8% of the total variance in the dependent variable. The interaction of rank by stress level yielded a significant influence on lecturers' job performance in universities in Calabar Metropolis ($F_{[1, 141]} = 82.74, p < 0.05$), contributing 37% to the total variance in the dependent variable.

iv. Lecturers' Marital Status by Stress Level on Job Performance

The analysis presented in **Table 4** revealed that of the 15 single lecturers, 6 had a high level of stress, 9 had an average level of stress, and none had a low level of stress. It was also revealed of the 135 married lecturers that 60, 49 and 26 had high, average and low levels of stress, respectively. The result, depicted in **Table 4**, also revealed,

within the single category, that lecturers with a high extent of stress demonstrate a mean performance that is better than those in the average stress group. Married lecturers with an average stress level had a better mean performance than those with low or high-stress levels. Using the reference mean point of 32.78 as the criterion, the result indicates that only the job performance of single lecturers surpassed the reference point; that of married lecturers was below the threshold. In specific terms, only the mean for single lecturers with a high-stress level is above the reference mean point.

The test of the between-subject effect revealed a significant main effect of marital status on lecturers' job performance in universities in Calabar Metropolis ($F_{[1, 145]} = 5.03, p < 0.05$), with marital status accounting for 3% of the total variance in the response variable. It was also revealed in the model that stress level has a significant influence on lecturers' job performance in universities in Calabar Metropolis ($F_{[2, 145]} = 4.99, p < 0.05$); stress contributed 6% to the total variance in lecturers' job performance. In terms of the interaction of marital status and stress level on lecturers' job performance, a significant influence was recorded ($F_{[1, 145]} = 22.44, p < 0.05$), accounting for 13% of the total variance in the dependent variable.

Table 4. Two-way ANOVA result of the interactive effect of marital status by stress level on lecturers' job performance in universities.

Marital Status	Stress level	N	Mean	SD
Single	High	6	39.00	0.00
	Average	9	31.00	0.00
	Total	15	34.20	4.06
Married	High	60	31.92	2.20
	Average	49	33.53	5.29
	Low	26	32.54	3.28
	Total	135	32.62	3.83
Total	High	66	32.56	2.93
	Average	58	33.14	4.94
	Low	26	32.54	3.28
	Total	150	32.78	3.87
Source	Type III SS	Df	MS	F
Corrected Model	334.49 ^a	4	83.62	6.39
Intercept	63821.85	1	63821.85	4877.68
Marital status	65.83	1	65.83	5.03
Stress level	130.57	2	65.29	4.99
Marital status * Stress level	293.56	1	293.56	22.44
Error	1897.25	145	13.08	
Total	163411.00	150		
Corrected Total	2231.74	149		

a R Squared = 0.150 (Adjusted R Squared = 0.126)

Note: * Interaction term.

4. DISCUSSION

The first variable of this study referred to the significant interactive influence of age and stress on lecturers' job performance in universities in Calabar Metropolis. This finding is justified because the interaction jointly contributed 10% to the job performance of lecturers in universities. Besides, the finding was also due to age differences in the job performance of academic staff with different stress level differences. The study found that lecturers' job performance is an increasing function of their age. That is, the older lecturers get, the better their job performance. On average, only lecturers aged 55 years or older performed their jobs above the level of expectation. This finding may be attributed to the abundance of life experiences, reduced stress and increased responsible attitudes that older lecturers are likely to possess or display than younger academics. Younger lecturers were associated with higher stress that could be the result of pursuing life aspirations such as meeting necessities of life

(such as further schooling, running errands for the older staff, taking care of children or attending to different forms of training).

On the other hand, older lecturers reach or about to reach self-actualization with many responsibilities perhaps met in the past. Older lecturers are more likely to have grown-up children that can take care of themselves, reducing the stress required to cater for their needs. All these may have contributed to the performance of older lecturers who should be more focused on career advancement opportunities. This is consistent with Maslow's Hierarchy of needs theory that proves that a person's desire for higher-ordered needs only sets in when lower ones are already met. This may explain why older lecturers are less stressed, increasing their propensity to channel their attention to matters of their occupation. This result is in harmony with other studies ([Akbar & Akhter, 2011](#); [Kabito et al., 2020](#); [Mahmood et al., 2013](#)) that the age of lecturers had a negative relationship with occupational stress. Furthermore, [Shkëmbi et al. \(2015\)](#) found a significant association between the effect of stress and the age of teachers. However, their study conversely concluded that older teachers suffered more from stressors such as physical working environment and inadequate salaries when compared with younger age groups. Contrary to this finding, some scholars did not establish any significant difference in stress among academic staff due to age ([Akinmayowa & Kadiri, 2014](#); [Azizah et al., 2016](#)).

The second variable revealed that even though gender alone did not contribute significantly to the job performance of lecturers, the interaction of lecturers' gender and stress did, contributing 4% to the total variance in their job performance in universities. The interaction was significant because female lecturers were found to possess a higher level of stress than males, with the extent of their (female lecturers) job performance being less than that of their male counterparts. Furthermore, among males, those with a moderate stress level performed better than those with high or low-stress levels, respectively. For female lecturers, it was discovered that those with a high or low level of stress performed at the same or similar levels, higher than those with an average level of stress. Only the job performance of male lecturers reached the expected benchmark. All these differences are reasons for the finding of this study.

This finding is anticipated because of the myriad roles female lecturers perform in an attempt to create a balance between work and life. Considering the context of Africa where this study was conducted, women are often expected to keep their homes (by taking care of their husbands, children, their clothes and engagement in household chores such as sweeping, washing of clothes, cooking, going to the market and so on). These activities impose much stress, leaving them little or no time to prepare course content for teaching, research and other job demands. Even though male lecturers also encountered stressful situations (in some cases tougher ones), it is not as high on average as females, and males seem to possess inherent stress management strategies than females. This natural ability does not allow them to be swallowed by stressful situations; but may enable them to respond to such pressures, making them effective on their job regardless of what they face. This corroborates the Transactional Theory of Stress that prescribes that an individual evaluates how challenging, threatening or harmful a situation affects their well-being and the extent to which the individual feels he/she can cope with such a situation.

This finding agrees with [Sofoluwe et al. \(2015\)](#) that gender, stress and job performance have a significant relationship. The result of the current study aligns with another study that discovered a considerable disparity in stress levels between male and female teachers, with female lecturers suffering higher stress than their male counterparts ([Akbar & Akhter, 2011](#)). The finding, however, contradicts the result of two studies ([Faraji et al., 2019](#); [Mondal et al., 2011](#)) that both documented male teachers' superiority in the stress level experienced than their female colleagues. Also, contradicting the current study results from other studies (such as ([Akinmayowa & Kadiri, 2014](#); [Amos et al., 2015](#); [Shkëmbi et al., 2015](#))) discovered no significant difference in the degree of stress felt by lecturers depending on gender.

The finding of the third variable of this study documented a significant interactive influence of rank and stress level, contributing the highest (37%) of all demographic factors examined to the total variance in the job

performance of lecturers in universities. This finding is attributed to the differences in the job performance of lecturers with different rank and stress levels. It was revealed that junior lecturers encountered stress ranging from high to low, while senior academics were associated only with an average level of stress in universities. This is not shocking because the rank of lecturer seems to be obeying the law of geography – "the higher you go, the cooler it becomes." This is quite revealing because, at the lower rank, most academics are still expected to complete their doctorate degrees, begin the journey of publication by practicing basic research skills and attending to many other assigned duties of seniors. The assignment of duties to lower-ranking colleagues reduces workload from senior academics, shifting the burden to colleagues in the lower pecking order. This reduces stress for the senior but increases stress among junior lecturers, which will affect their job performance to an extent.

This finding supports Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory that once individuals reach self-actualization, their desires are limited, and they derive a sense of fulfilment. In the context of this study, the average level of stress encountered by senior academics such as senior lecturers, associate professors, and professors may often result from community services such as mentorship, consultancy, external visits to other universities, etc. However, since these scholars have reached or are closer to the zenith of academic rank, the sense of self-fulfillment that Maslow discusses comes to play, helping them mitigate the effect of stress on their job performance. This result aligns with [Azizah et al. \(2016\)](#) finding that job title/rank significantly correlates with occupational stress. Likewise, other studies (e.g., [Eyupoglu & Saner, 2009](#); [Ugwu & Ugwu, 2017](#)) found a direct relationship between lecturers' rank and job performance. While [Akinmayowa and Kadiri \(2014\)](#) contrary to other studies, indicated no substantial variation in the degree of stress experienced by professors depending on their academic position.

The final variable of this study uncovered that the interaction of marital status and stress level on lecturers' job performance is statistically significant. The interaction of the two variables accounted for 13% of the total variance in the job performance of lecturers in universities. This finding implies a significant difference in the job performance of single and married lecturers with different stress levels. In the single category, lecturers with high stress demonstrate better performance than those in the average stress group. Married lecturers with an average stress level had a better mean performance than those with low or high-stress levels. However, the stress level was higher for married lecturers than single lecturers, while the job performance of single lecturers was better than that of married lecturers. This implies that single lecturers are better at job performance because they face lower stress than their married counterparts. This finding is self-justified because married lecturers' responsibilities are higher than those facing single lecturers. Meeting those responsibilities affects the chances of attending effectively to academic expectations, thus, affecting their job performance.

The finding is consistent with the evidence presented by [Iwuagwu et al. \(2016\)](#) that a difference exists in teachers' job performance based on their marital status. However, the difference was in favor of married teachers, which is opposed to the discovery of this study. Similar to this study, other studies ([Akbar & Akhter, 2011](#); [Khurshid et al., 2011](#)) equally found that married lecturers experienced higher stress than single colleagues. In contrast, several scholars (such as [Akinmayowa and Kadiri \(2014\)](#); [Omoniyi and Ogunsanmi \(2012\)](#)) found that single academics had greater levels of stress than married colleagues. Other research, however, revealed no significant difference in the amount of stress among academics at Nigerian institutions predicated on marital status ([Azizah et al., 2016](#); [Ofoegbu & Nwadiani, 2006](#)). They supported their findings because family factors do not contribute significantly to the problems of occupational stress. Finally, the lack of consensus across various literature related to this study may be attributed to the scope and the occupation considered in the studies. This study focused on lecturers in universities in the Calabar metropolis.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the finding of this study, it was concluded that there are significant differences in the job performance of lecturers possessing different demographic characteristics. Some differences exist among those with similar

attributes in their job performance. This makes lecturers' job performance an individual matter, not a collective one. Furthermore, the stress level of lecturers affects the degree to which they discharge their duties, with those having average stress levels reporting better job performance in universities. The intersection of demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status, and rank with stress level significantly influenced staff job performance. Based on the conclusion of this study, it was recommended that all lecturers, irrespective of age, gender, marital status or rank, develop good stress management skills and disengage themselves from unnecessary stress-inducing activities. This study has made a unique contribution to the existing literature by being the first to examine the tripartite nexus between demographic characteristics, stress levels and academic staff job performance in universities.

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