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PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF STRESS AND COUNSELLING INTERVENTIONS ON LONG VACATION TRAINING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION IN NORTH EASTERN NIGERIA

By

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## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study was to determine LVT students' perceptions of stress and its effects on their academic performance, and how students develop coping strategies. It tried to find out how stress places demands on an individual and in response to the stress the body attempts to adapt to the stressful experiences to maintain a sense of normalcy. A survey design was adopted and self-designed instrument was used in collecting data. Three hypotheses were tested and analysed at 0.01 level of significance. Findings showed that there was a significant relationship between factors causing stress and academic performance; perceived effects of stress and duration of LVT programme and lastly effects of stress. Based on the findings, it was recommended that, the curriculum should include stress management. Secondly, students should learn effective study skills and lastly there should be reviews of the programme to go contemporary with the duration of time for the study.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Long Vacation Training (LVT) programme is a sandwich programme developed by the Faculty of Technology Education of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi. Its main aimed is to provide an opportunity for workers both at the private and public institutions to obtain their first degree while they still go to work. It also aims at graduating competent and professional teachers who will teach in both primary and secondary schools. The students experienced a lot of

stress during the LVT programme. The environment itself has some prevailing pressure that challenges the students which requires a system that encourages competition that will lead them in meriting the best result.

Stress is defined by Sutton (2000) as a response to situation which a person perceives as threatening. Therefore, high level of stress has the ability to prevent students from being successful in their respective educational goals. Denga and Ekpo (1994)

posited that, trying to acquire education might turn out to be stressful activity for the students. An individual negotiating the art of writing, reading, speaking and performing calculations faces some irksome hurdles. He/she therefore, needs an optimal stress to be able to achieve that.

A healthy amount of stress is a powerful motivating force, which can prosper on. However, if stress level becomes too high, all positive stimulation is replaced by extreme weariness, and we begin to find it difficult to contend on. In this regard Akinade (2007) sees, stress as any stimulus that either raises your excitement or anxiety level beyond what you regard as above your usual or personal capabilities. It may jolt you to move or better activity or retard your ability to cope with the event at hand. Obviously, stress is a common element in the lives of every individual regardless of race or cultural background. It should be noted that stress is too personal and unique that what may be relaxing to one person may be stressful to another person.

Stress is not a set down reaction to stimuli of the body to any demand made upon it. That is, if request or claims are made on an individual the body attempts to regulate to minor or major changes to adapt to the situation in order to settle the usual state of the body. Some of the changes that occur in response to the environment include rapid heartbeat, increase in

respiratory rate, increase in mental alertness, increase in muscles strength pushes up blood pressure and breakdown stored sugar and fat which are released into blood thereby providing emergency energy the muscles and vital organs have an ample supply of oxygen, energy and nutrients to handle the challenging situation (Garnett, 2007).

An individual who perceived a situation that is stressful, then it is indeed said to be stressful. Also, if an individual is susceptible or vulnerable to the negative effects produced by stressors, then the situation may pose a threat or may be harmful to the individual. An individual is at risk whenever his/her resources to manage the situation are limited or depleted.

Students' stress was defined by Uzoeshi (2012), as demands placed on students, which exceed their adaptive resources or which make them take extra steps in order to cope with such situations. Students in tertiary institutions suffer from various stressors such as financial difficulties, accommodation, moving far away from their families and homes, insufficient supply of electricity on campuses, conflict in time management and trying to succeed in their examinations among others.

Subsequently, there are three types of stress; under stress that is too little stress. An individual is said to be under stressed if he is under stimulated. This

situation could lead his/her energy to drain. A situation like this does not favour the individual. It rather makes him unserious in his academics. It may lead to poor performance in examination.

A stressful situation that involves two little stress can create depression in the student. This can graduate in the feelings of hopelessness that interfere with effective study habits and further weaken academic achievement. The second type of stress is the optimum stress. This type of stress mobilizes our energy to give an equal required demand of stimuli with the stress in us. It is the peak performance. The fact remains that we need optimum stress to be able to face the challenges before us. Mallum (2005) observed that stress adds flavor, challenge and opportunity to our lives. Our major challenge in a stressful situation is to make the stress in our lives work for our advantage instead of against us. A student who has optimum stress will be able to withstand the rigorous academic activities.

The third type of stress is called overstress. This is a situation where an individual experiences too much stress that is he is over stimulated. This situation can drain his energy. Students who are over-stressed, they easily become tired and do not feel well. They sleep in the class during lesson. Their performance and attendance in class suffers. They lack excessive time to

revise their notes. This could lead students to school dropout. Uzoeshi (2012) observed that such students developed fever, headache, depression and ulcer.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The following purposes were stated to guide this study:

1. To examine the factors that cause stress as it affect stress on academic performance among LVT students of ATBU, Bauchi.
2. To find out the relationship between perceived effects of stress and duration of the LVT programme.
3. To determine the effect of stress and consumption of drugs among LVT students of ATBU, Bauchi.

## HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were postulated to give a focus to this study:

- H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the factors causing stress and the effect of academic performance of male and female students of LVT at ATBU, Bauchi.
- H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference between perceived influence of stress and duration of the LVT programme.

**TABLE 1:** Students Population (N) and Sample Size (S) of the Faculty of Technology Education ATBU, Bauchi.

S/N	Department	N	S
1	Vocational and technical education	140	20
2	Science education	39	20
	Total	179	40

## INSTRUMENTATION

The instrument for data collection in this study was a research designed structured questionnaire titled Stress Effects on Academic Performance Inventory (SEAPI).

The instrument consisted of two parts namely the descriptive and analytic part. It was made up of twenty (20) statements to which the respondents were expected to indicate their arrangement or disagreement from a modified 4 point Likert scale of strongly agree (SA); agree (A); disagree (D); and strongly disagree (DS). Experts in Guidance and Counselling and Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundations of ATBU Bauchi validated the instrument. It yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.90 using test-re-test reliability method on LVT 3 students of ATBU, Bauchi.

## PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION

The validated instrument (SEAPI) was distributed to forty (40) students selected from the two departments (Vocational and Technical Education and Science Education). The total scores were derived from submission of the sub-total in the four columns to give a new score. The raw scores were calculated in order to determine stress and its causes among LVT students.

The result in Table 1 showed that the r-calculated value of .317 is greater than the r-critical value of .185 at 0.01 levels of significance. This indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis which state there is significant relationship between factors that cause stress and the effect of academic performance of LVT students is accepted.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between perceived effects of stress and duration of LVT programme at ATBU, Bauchi.

**TABLE 3:** PPMCC Analysis of Perceived influence of Stress and Duration of the LVT programmes scores.

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev	Df	r-cal	r-crit	P<0.01
Male Students' scores	20	56.30	3.99				
Female students' scores	20	54.95	4.38	19	.867	0.40	Significant

The result on Table 2 showed that the r-calculated value of .867 is greater than the r-critical value of 0.040 at 0.01 levels of significance. This indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant relationship between the effects of stress and consumption of drugs among LVT students at ATBU, Bauchi.

The LVT students express stress before they come to an end. Sometimes they are not paid their salary, if they choose to stay to the end of the contact. This therefore create a financial burden that will distract the students attention to their lecturers, it later graduates to stress.

## DISCUSSION

The result obtained showed that factors that cause stress, like the joint efforts to meet the demand of the employers and success in their examination at the end of the contact create excessive stress on male and female students. The result of the PPMC analysis was

used to test all the three hypotheses. In hypothesis one, the study discovered that, there is a significant positive relationship between factors that cause stress on students and their academic performance. This findings seems to confirm previous studies (Bedu-Addo, p.13; Akinade, 2013 and Aderemi and Akande 2010),

Again, this result was not surprising to the researchers for instance all the students asserted that if they were unable to pass any course for the contact, they are made to resist it. They also complain that demands made by their employers to return immediately after official resumption of primary and secondary schools, thus the contact have not come to an end. Sometimes they are not paid their salary, if they choose to stay to the end of the contact. This therefore, creates a financial burden that will distract the students' attention to their lectures, it later graduate to stress.

There is no significant relationship between effect of perceived stress and the duration of LVT programme. The result of the data analysis however shows that there is a significant relationship between effect of perceived stress and the conduct of the LVT

programme. The findings is in support of Terfa (2009) who discovered that ideative flexibility is not improved in such programme and therefore, recommended that creativity training programmes he conducted to neutralize stress among students to enhance greater performance. Also, Bedu-Addo and Akinade (2013) found out that the inability of one to finish a work given to him with little time on his side increases the level of stress in him.

The researchers discovered that the students asserted that they have little or no time to review what they have learnt during evaluation (exams), reasons was they were overloaded with tremendous amount of new information which they have little time to memorize the whole information learnt.

There is no significant relationship between the effects of stress and the consumption of drugs among LVT students. The result of data analysis however, shows that there is significant relationship between effects of perceived stress and drugs consumption by students. The result is in agreement with Adeoye and Aderanti (2012) who asserted that students sacrifice sleep for extensive studying and social activities by consuming alcohol and other substances so as to have more energy that will sustain them to read throughout the night.

## CONCLUSION

Stress is found to affect students; hence their academic performances become low. Especially, the negative stress, there is need for counselling the students in order to assist them to prevent or cope with the situation. Causes of stress are many and varied, hence the need for professional counseling. This will go a long way to reduce the effects on the LVT students and improve their academic performances.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are given:

1. Both male and female students require counselling to develop coping skills in order to reduce the effects of stress on them.
2. The general welfare of the students' needs to be improved to reduce stressors and ensure both physical and mental health of the students. Counselling Centre of the university need to live above board to reach LVT students.
3. The duration allotted for the programme should be revisited by the organizers, courses that need to be learnt must go contemporary with time to enable students learn effectively

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