

Family Stress, Health and Job Performance of Married Working Women in Dekina Education Zone of Kogi State

Nchedo Eucharia Aye, Immaculata Nwakaego Akaneme, Rev. Fr. Isaac Okpanachi Achemu,
Chiedu Eseadi and Isaac Nnamdi Mbaji
Department of Educational Foundations, University of Nigeria Nsukka, PMB 410001,
Enugu State, Nigeria

Abstract: The study was designed to examine family stress, health and job performance of married working women in Dekina Education Zone of Kogi state. The study adopted descriptive survey. The population of the study comprised of 201 married working women. This consists of 201 female secondary school teachers in the 16 public secondary schools in Dekina Education Zone. A structured questionnaire titled “Family Stress, Health and Job Performance of Working Married Woman Questionnaire (FSHJPWMWQ)” was developed by the researchers. This gave an overall reliability of the instrument was 0.92 alpha. The research questions were analyzed using mean and Standard Deviation. The results showed that types of stress that married working women suffer include; financial stress such as shortage of or limited income, emotional stress, home pressure, workplace and health stress. Family stressors are caused by a number of factors such as; working long hours in the office, having a heavy workload at home, taking office work home and others. Equally, consequences of stress on the health of married working women include; emotional distress, socially withdrawn, burnout, depression and others. Consequences of stress on the job performance of married working women include; poor concentration in the office, difficulty in solving office problems, socially withdrawn in the workplace and others. Stress reduction strategies to help women cope with stressful situations includes; setting limits appropriately, working ahead of time to minimize threatening situation, saying no to requests that would create excessive stress and others. Based on the findings of the study, the researchers among others recommends that government should through ministry of education in synergy with public health workers and counselors, organize training for both the general public and stressors on types of stress; causes, consequences and stress reduction strategies to help stressors cope with stressful situations or conditions.

Key words: Family stress, health, job performance, married, working women

INTRODUCTION

Family system is as old as human life on the earth. Family according to Panasenko (2013) refers to a group of persons, united by ties of marriage, blood, adoption, consisting of single households, interacting and intercommunicating with each other in their respective social roles in creating a common culture. Family is composed of two adults of different sex (husband and wife or father and mother) and one or more children. Jacobs and Gerson (2004) saw family institution as a social group characterized by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship and one or more children, owned or adopted by the adults. In the context of this study, family comprises of a husband and wife or

wives tied together by marriage. They live together either as biological or social aspects for the purpose of raising children, caring or training them to fit into the society and replace them tomorrow.

Family has the biological aspect and the social aspect. Its biological aspect is due to the blood link and hereditary characteristics and the social aspect stems from the family having its own pattern of behaviour that regulates relationship existing between its members, such relations are the ones which the society concerned has approved as right (Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC). NERDC further stressed that family is made up of two types; nuclear and extended family.

The nuclear family consists of two adults and their offspring. Boss (2002) defined nuclear family as a family consisting of two parents and their children, but not

including aunts, uncles, grandparents and others. In this study, nuclear family comprises of parents with their children. It is a social unit that consists of a mother, a father and their children. On the other hand, extended family comprises of parents, children and relatives. It is a family as a unit embracing parents and children together with grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and sometimes more distant relatives (Panasenko, 2013).

One of the primary functions of the family involves providing a framework for the production and reproduction of persons biologically or socially. As a social institution, family is present in all cultures and therefore is universal. It is usually the bedrock of society and also the most important social institution. It is the legitimate institution through which every society replaces its dying members. By this singular function, it ensures that the society does not go into extinction. Family institution is charged with the main responsibility of reproducing and training the future generation of society members in order to give society continuity (Brown and Iyengar, 2008).

In the family, men and women perform different functions. According to DeFrain and Asay (2007), functions of a man in the family include; being a leader, provider, protector and a teacher. A man provides means of supporting the family financially. He also contributes to the emotional, spiritual, mental and physical wellbeing of his family as well as protects his family against any threat. For Hawley and DeHann (1996), men who are active and responsible as fathers, provide numerous functions to their wives and children. They create greater opportunities for their children to learn positive social life that are beneficial to their own psychological and emotional wellbeing as they grow. Hawley and DeHann (1996) stressed that women's role in the family development are characterized by a traditional gender division of labour which has by and large provided women with types of work that accorded them low economic value. Gender is a social construct that distinguished the role of male and female. Gender is not sex, but refers to the different roles men and women played in the society and the relative power they command (Ainley *et al.*, 2002). According to the authors, whereas sex refers to the biological aspects of women and men (chromosomes, hormones), "gender" refers to those that are shaped by social forces or to the meaning that a society gives to biological differences. As stated by Gyllensten and Palmar (2005) in many societies, women exclusively undertake the activities of infant care, shopping, farming and cooking whether single, married or working married.

Married working women are men partners in marriage in the paid labour force. O'Farrell sees married working women as married women who involve themselves in labour in order to earn wages. According to Obi, women constitute more than one-third percent of the world's labor force and majority of them are married women. For the purpose of this study, married working women, refers to men partners in marriage who engage in various occupations in order to earn wages to support their families.

As countries become industrialized, more women obtain jobs in different areas. According to O'Farrell, married working women are making steady progress in entering nontraditional fields such as engineering and construction work, professions such as medicine and law and elected and appointed political positions. Married working women hold paid jobs of greater diversity than before. According to United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF), married working women have entered the new high-technology industries. UNICEF further cited example that presently, 31% of all computer programmers and 28% of all computer systems analysts and scientists worldwide were women and majority of them are married women. Married working women engage in various workplaces in paid labour and they perform various functions such as typesetting of documents, file arrangement, sending memos across, photocopy and others together with their responsibilities in the house such as, activities of infant care, nursing, water and wood fetching among others. In the bid to create an equilibrium or a balance between the two responsibilities in the workplace and home in order to maintain their marriage so that it will not disintegrate, tension and conflict may arise which can induce stress in the life of the women.

Stress is unavoidable in human existence. According to Alonzo (2000) stress is referred to as a bodily state rather than an event in the environment otherwise known as stressor or stress trigger. Stress is what one feels when one has to handle more than a problem. Stress according to Oboegbulam (2007), refers to a feeling which occurs when an individual's working or living condition make demands beyond the individuals capacity to handle physically or emotionally. Stress is a mental, emotional or physical strain caused by anxiety or overwork. Blonna (2005) describes stress as a state of discomfort, tension or emotional pain which arises when an individual is faced with situation which presents a demand that is important for the individual to meet but for which his/her capacities and resources are inadequate and cognitively, stress interferes with thinking, concentration and memory. In

this context, stress refers to the state of mind in handling emotional pains in a giving home and office as they arise irrespective of gender.

There are different types of stress. Goldberger and Breznitz (2003) categorize stress into three different types: acute stress, episodic stress and chronic stress. According to Goldberger and Breznitz, acute stress comes from demands and pressures of the recent past and anticipated demands and pressures of the near future. It is the most common type of stress as it is typically caused by daily demands and pressures. It is the type of stress that comes quickly and often unexpectedly; but does not last too long. The researchers identify the common symptoms of acute stress as emotional distress, anger or irritability, anxiety and depression. Acute stress that is suffered too often is called episodic stress (Goldberger and Breznitz, 2003). This type of stress is usually seen in people who make self-inflicted, unrealistic or unreasonable demands which get all clamoured up and bring too much stress in their attempt to accomplish the goals. Equally, Goldberger and Breznitz defined chronic stress as the type of stress that tends to occur on a regular basis. According to the researchers, this type of stress may leave the victim feeling drained and can lead to burnout if it is not effectively managed. This is because, when the stress response is chronically triggered and the body is not brought back to a relaxed state before the next wave of stress hits, the body can stay triggered indefinitely (Willis, 2005). This can lead to the host of health issues that are generally associated with stress, including cardiovascular disease, gastrointestinal issues, anxiety and depression.

The circumstances that cause stress are called stressors. Stressors vary in severity and duration and are caused by various factors. For example, the responsibility of caring for a sick parent may be an ongoing source of major stress, whereas getting stuck in a traffic jam may cause mild, short-term stress. Some events, such as the death of a loved one, are stressful for everyone. But in other situations, individuals may respond differently to the same event. What is a stressor for one person may not be stressful for another. For example, a student who is unprepared for a sociology test and anticipates a bad grade may feel stress, whereas a classmate who studies in advance may feel confident of a good grade. For an event or situation to be a stressor for a particular individual, the person must appraise the situation as threatening and lack the coping resources to deal with it effectively. Stress is part of everyday life that one faces including working married men and women both at their offices and families.

Family stress had to do with day to day events in the family and how an individual reacts to them. Family stressors are regarded as problems requiring solution or situations in which the family must adapt in order to maintain the functioning of the family system. Stress in the family can come from within in which case it could be as a result of illness or individual members wanting to satisfy personal needs than that of other members. Teasdale (2006) posited that family stress often arises among Nigerian women as they try to balance the multiple competing demands of their spouses, children, elderly parents, among others. In this present study, family stress refers to a state of distress, pressure or emotional pain which arises when an individual is faced with family demands.

Family stressors are caused by a number of factors. Pearson and Moomaw (2005) outlines the family stressors as, death of a loved one in the family, divorce or separation from a partner, pregnancy, changes in health of a family member or close friend, trouble with in-laws, children leaving home, childcare, remarriage of a family member, caring for other dependents, such as elderly relatives, family reunion and relationship breakdown. These may have impact on health and job performances of working married women.

The impact of family stress can be positive or negative. Impact, according to Womble (2003) is a strong effect, the powerful or dramatic effect that something or somebody has. Impact is the action of one object hitting another or the force with which one object hits another. Thus, positively used, family stress can be a motivator for an improved quality of life. Family stress can be negative, when it becomes destructive as a result of how an individual negatively perceived it and reacted to it (Blonna, 2005). Similarly, Williams *et al.* (2005) were of the view that family stress takes its toll on women's physical and mental health. According to Felsten and Wilcox (1992), family stress pervades the life of married working women and may impact adversely their mental and physical health and their ability to perform office work effectively.

Family stress seems to have impact on health and job performance of married working women. According to Gelow, married working women who experience a high level of family stress for a long time and who cope poorly with this stress may become irritable, socially withdrawn and emotionally unstable. Dyson and Renk (2006) further stressed that they may also have difficulties in concentrating and solving problems both office and home problems. This stress situation may also lead to sickness such as, High Blood Pressure (HBP), stroke or psychological problems, like depression and anxiety. As stated by Dyson and Renk (2006), married working women

under intense and prolonged family stress may start to suffer from extreme anxiety, depression or other severe emotional problems. Family stress can cause severe health problems and in extreme case, can cause death. Members of the family who survive the catastrophes sometimes develop an anxiety disorder called post-traumatic stress disorder (Blonna, 2005). Anxiety disorders caused by family stress may include generalized anxiety disorder, phobias, panic disorder and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Conflicting demands of home can affect the work performance of married working women. As such, stressors at home can affect married working women ability to perform effectively at work and vice versa. For example, working long hours or away from home taking work home and having higher responsibility can all have a negative effect on a married working women work performance. In the same way, work performances of a married working woman can negatively be affected by a combination of factors such as childcare, financial or relationship problems, work place activities or unsatisfactory conditions in her work place which is in other words known as workplace stress.

Workplace stress results from the interaction of the worker and the conditions of work. According to Beehr and Newman (1978), workplace stress is the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope. It involves stress that results from various interactions of workers and the environment of the work they perform their duties. Combining housework, childcare, shopping and cooking with an outside job and trying to do everything on time are the causes or sources of working married women being stressed up at workplace (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001). In the family, most of home duties fall on shoulders of women and these women also engaged in paid employment. Consequently, the demands to balance work and family duties can progressively lead to poor health and decrease in their home and work performance. The situation calls for stress reduction strategies to enable women to cope with the two responsibilities saddled on their shoulder.

Stress reduction has to do with means of dealing with stress. It is a measure used to deal with challenging moments. According to Hussain *et al.* (2008) stress reduction refers to physical and psychological strategies designed to enable people to cope with stress and anxiety. Stress reduction involves controlling and reducing the tension that occurs in stressful situations by making emotional and physical changes. The degree of stress and the desire to make the change will determine

the level of improvement (Lazarus, 1966). Stress reduction strategies have been shown to have a positive effect on reducing stress (Ongori and Agolla, 2008). In this present study, stress management refers to physical and psychological strategies such as thoughts and actions designed to deal with married working women stressful situations in order to improve their health condition and enhance their job performance.

Stress reduction strategies are grouped into two broad types such as problem and emotion focused strategies. The goal of both strategies is to control one's stress level. In problem focused strategy, the stressor takes some actions such as time management and working ahead of time to modify, avoid or minimize the threatening situation whereas in emotion-focused coping, he/she employs some strategies such as rethinking the situation in a positive way, relaxation, wishful thinking, social support and aerobic exercise such as running, walking, biking and skiing to directly moderate or eliminate unpleasant situations. According to the researchers, emotion focused strategy is most useful as a short-term strategy. It can help to reduce one's arousal level before engaging in problem-solving and taking action.

Many people have a characteristic way of coping with stress based on their personality. People who cope well with stress tend to believe they can personally influence what happens to them (Eweniyi, 2009). Eweniyi further stressed that people who cope well with stress usually make more positive statements about themselves, resist frustration, remain optimistic and persevere even under extremely adverse circumstances. People can learn to manage stress and live happier and healthier lives. According to Kaplan *et al.* (2005), some tips to help keep stress at bay include; keeping a positive attitude, accepting that there are events that one cannot control, being assertive instead of aggressive, asserting your feelings, opinions or beliefs instead of becoming angry. According to Gutenman and Lee (2005), one's body can fight stress better when he/she is fit, eat healthy, learn to manage time more effectively, set limits appropriately, learn to say no to requests that would create excessive stress, make time for hobbies, interests and relaxation and by having enough rest and sleep.

From the foregoing, it is evident that family stress is common globally among married working women. It is equally present in Nigeria, Kogi state inclusive in Dekina Education zone in particular where there are many married working women both in urban and rural areas. The prevalence of family stress among these working married women in the state may be attributed to the general level of poverty in the country and their quest to support their families. These married women not only engaged in paid employment but are also engaged in farming and other agricultural activities for financial and nutritional

assistance. Effort to combine the family responsibilities and the workplace, induce stress in their life. This stressful condition presently, pervades and impact adversely on their mental and physical health and their ability to perform office and home work effectively. Thus, the need for stress reduction strategies arises in order to deal with married working women stressful situations. These direct the attention of the researchers to investigate family stress, health and job performance of married working women in Dekina Education Zone of Kogi state.

Research questions The following are the guiding research questions for this study:

- What types of stress do married working women suffer?
- What are the causes of stress/stressors of married working women?
- What are the consequences of stress on the health of married working women?
- What are the consequences of stress on the job performance of married working women?
- What are the stress reduction strategies to help women cope with stressful situations or conditions?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Design of the study: This study adopted descriptive survey.

Area of the study: The study was carried out in Dekina Education Zone of Kogi East. Kogi East consists of three zones which include; Ida, Ankpa and Dekina. Dekina Education Zone is made up of two local Government Education Authorities which include Dekina and Ochaja. The Dekina Education Zone has the largest Local Government in Nigeria where there are many working married women both in urban and rural areas. Equally, the roles of these women in family development as conceived in the area were viewed as helpers who assist in housework, childcare, shopping, farming and cooking. As such, these women being engaged in paid employment, they also combine their housework, childcare, shopping and cooking with an outside job and try to do everything on time as most of home duties fall on their shoulders.

Population of the study: The population of this study comprised of 201 married working women. This consists

of 201 female secondary school teachers in the 16 public secondary schools in Dekina Education Zone.

Sample and sampling technique: The entire population of 201 female secondary school teachers in the 16 public secondary schools in Dekina Education was used. This is because; the numbers are small and there is no need for sampling.

Instrument for data collection: The instrument for data collection was questionnaire titled Family Stress, Health and Job Performance of Working Married Woman Questionnaire (FSHJPMWQ). The questionnaire consists of two sections. Section A and B. Section A comprised information regarding the demographic data of the respondents while section B was divided into five clusters. Cluster A elicited information from the respondents on types of stressors working married women suffer from, cluster B comprised items on the causes of stress in the lives of stress married working women, Cluster C comprised items on the consequences of stress on the health of married working women, Cluster D comprised items on the consequences of stress on the job performance of married working women, while Cluster E focused on the stress reduction strategies to help married working women cope with stressful situations. The instruments (FSHJPMWQ) was based on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with weight scores of SA = 4 points, A= 3 points, D = 2 points and SD = 1 point. The instrument (FSHJPMWQ) was subjected to face validation.

Reliability of the instrument: To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire was trial-tested on 20 respondents in Ida Education Zone of Kogi state. To determine the internal consistency of the instrument, Cronbach's Alpha was used. The coefficient values of 0.94, 0.92, 0.95, 0.94 and 0.89 for clusters A- E respectively were obtained. The overall internal reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.92.

Method of data collection: Copies of the questionnaire were administered directly to the respondents using three research assistants. The three research assistants were instructed by the researchers on how to distribute the instrument so as to ensure safe handling and maximum retrieval of the filled instrument. The contents of the instrument were discussed to let the research assistants

be familiar with the modalities of administering the instrument in appropriate and effective ways. The reason for the instruction and using research assistants was ensure that the actual respondents, (working married women) indeed completed the questionnaire.

Method of data analysis: The data collected was answered using mean scores and standard deviation in answering the five research questions. A criterion of 2.50 was used as benchmark for decision making. Any item rated 2.50 and above was accepted, while any item rated below 2.50 was not accepted.

RESULTS

Research question 1: What types of stress do married working women suffer? Table 1 presents the mean scores and standard deviation of married working women on types of stress married working women suffer. In response to item 1, 3 and 4, the respondents agree that financial stress such as shortage of or limited income, home/home pressure and workplace stress are the types of stress that married working women suffer. In item 2 and 5, the respondents strongly agree that both emotional and health stress are equally the types of stress that married working women suffer. The overall mean score for the respondents show a cluster mean of 3.66 which has been rated above the agreed criterion mean of 2.5. This shows a decision level of strongly agree. This is an indication that the respondents strongly agree that all the items in the table are the types of stress that married working women suffer.

Research question 2: What are the causes of stress/stressors of married working women? Table 2 shows the mean scores and standard deviation of the respondents on the causes of stress/stressors of married working women. The result shows that the respondents accepted the fact that all the items listed are the causes of stress/stressors of married working women. This is because; each of the items has its mean score between 3.04 and 3.90 which is above the agreed criterion mean of 2.5. Equally, the overall mean score for the respondents show a cluster mean of 3.51. This shows a decision level of strongly agree. This is an indication that the respondents strongly agree that all the items in the table are the causes of stress/stressors of married working women.

Research question 3: What are the consequences of stress on the health of married working women? Table 3 presents the mean scores and standard deviation of the respondents on the consequences of stress on the health of married working women. The result shows that the

Table 1: Mean scores and standard deviation of married working women on types of stress married working women suffer (N= 201)

Items	Mean	SD	Decision
Financial stress such as shortage of or limited income	3.34	0.47	A
Emotional stress	3.80	0.40	SA
Home/home pressure	3.49	0.50	A
Workplace stress	3.45	0.49	A
Health stress	3.84	0.46	SA
Cluster mean	3.66	0.46	SA

SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree

respondents acknowledged that all the items in the table are the consequences of stress on the health of married working women. The items had mean scores ranging between 3.13-3.75 which is above the agreed criterion mean of 2.5. Likewise, the overall mean score for both respondents show a cluster mean of 3.50. This indicates a decision level of strongly agree. Consequently, the table shows that all the items in the table are the consequences of stress on the health of married working women.

Research question 4: What are the consequences of stress on the job performance of married working women? The results presented in Table 4 revealed that all the items had their mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.5. This revealed that all the eight items are the consequences of stress on the job performance of married working women. Item 53, always unhappy in the workplace had the lowest mean score of 3.40; followed by item 49 and 55, poor concentration in the office and inadequate feedback on job performance with mean scores of 3.44 and 3.44 respectively indicating agree. The remaining items had mean scores ranging between 3.54 -3.59. The overall mean score for both respondents show a cluster mean of 3.51. This indicates a decision level of strongly agree. Consequently, the table shows that the items are the consequences of stress on the job performance of married working women. The table also showed that the standard deviation of the items fall within the range of 0.43 - 0.50. This indicates that the respondents were not divergent from one another in their responses.

Research question 5: What are the stress reduction strategies to help women cope with stressful situations or conditions?

The results presented in Table 5 showed that all the items had their mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.5. This disclosed that all the fourteen items were stress reduction strategies to help women cope with stressful situations. Item 58 and 63 (a), working ahead of time to minimize threatening situation and embarking on guided aerobic exercise such as running had the lowest mean score of 3.34 and 3.34; followed by item 70 managing time properly with mean scores of 3.39. The remaining items

Table 2: Mean scores and standard deviation of married working women on the causes of stress/stressors of married working women (N= 201)

Items	Mean	SD	Decision
Working long hours in the office	3.29	0.64	A
Having a heavy workload at home	3.34	0.48	A
Taking office work home	3.65	0.47	SA
Having limited time to prepare your speech at work place meeting	3.55	0.46	SA
Facing discrimination or harassment at workplace	3.13	0.43	A
Office politics and conflict among staff	3.09	0.76	A
Chronic illness or injury	3.64	0.48	SA
Having much responsibility in the office	3.75	0.46	SA
The responsibility of caring for a sick parent	3.65	0.47	SA
Low self-esteem	3.34	0.51	A
Multiple competing demands from spouse, children and elderly parents	3.46	0.47	A
Death of a loved one or family member	3.74	0.43	SA
Separation from a partner	3.67	0.48	SA
Pregnancy	3.55	0.45	SA
Traumatic event such as theft at workplace and home	3.49	0.46	A
Trouble with in-laws	3.67	0.47	SA
Childcare	3.45	0.47	A
Remarriage of a family member	3.32	0.52	A
Caring for other dependents such as elderly relatives	3.90	0.70	SA
Trying to meet up with family meeting	3.85	0.43	SA
Financial problems	3.44	0.48	A
Uncomfortable workplace (lack of job satisfaction)	3.55	0.47	SA
Taking care of a sick family member	3.65	0.45	SA
Sexual molestation at workplace	3.52	0.48	SA
Traffic jams	3.04	0.49	A
Time pressures	3.64	0.43	SA
Car troubles	3.44	0.77	A
Cluster mean	3.51	0.51	SA

Table 3: Mean scores and standard deviation of married working women on the consequences of stress on the health of married working women (N= 201)

Items	Mean	SD	Decision
Emotional distress	3.29	0.64	A
Socially withdrawn	3.34	0.48	A
Burnout	3.65	0.47	SA
Depression	3.55	0.46	SA
Dizziness	3.13	0.43	A
Heart palpitations	3.09	0.76	A
AGeneralized anxiety disorder	3.64	0.48	SA
Panic disorder	3.75	0.46	SA
Drug abuse	3.65	0.47	SA
Alcoholism	3.34	0.51	A
Loss of appetite	3.46	0.47	A
Tiredness and insomnia	3.74	0.43	SA
Headache	3.67	0.48	SA
Back pain	3.55	0.45	SA
Violent or anti-social behaviour	3.49	0.46	A
Jaw pain	3.67	0.47	SA
Cluster mean	3.50	0.49	SA

Table 4: Mean scores and standard deviation of married working women on the consequences of stress on the job performance of married working women (N= 201)

Items	Mean	SD	Decision
Poor concentration in the office	3.44	0.49	A
Difficulty in solving office problems	3.54	0.48	SA
Socially withdrawn in the workplace	3.55	0.47	SA
Sudden irritability with colleagues	3.54	0.48	SA
Always unhappy in the workplace	3.40	0.49	A
Poor communication between teams	3.54	0.43	SA
Inadequate feedback on job performance	3.44	0.47	A
Poor memory retention	3.59	0.50	SA
Cluster mean	3.51	0.46	SA

Table 5: Mean scores and standard deviation of married working women on the stress reduction strategies to help women cope with stressful situations or conditions (N = 201)

Items	Mean	SD	Decision
Setting limits appropriately	3.55	0.70	SA
Working ahead of time to minimize threatening situation	3.34	0.47	A
Saying no to requests that would create excessive stress	3.65	0.48	SA
Being assertive instead of aggressive	3.45	0.45	A

Table 5: Continue

Items	Mean	SD	Decision
Rethinking the situation in a positive way	3.44	0.59	A
Embarking on guided aerobic exercise such as:			
Running	3.75	0.46	SA
Walking	3.34	0.48	A
Biking	3.65	0.45	SA
Skiing	3.44	0.46	A
Keeping a positive attitude	3.44	0.48	A
Relaxation	3.55	0.45	SA
Having enough rest and sleep	3.65	0.48	SA
Discussing problems with family members, a close friend, a minister or counselor for advice	3.53	0.48	SA
Taking a long bath to refresh the body	3.90	0.70	SA
Listening to music	3.44	0.49	A
Watching comedies	3.48	0.49	A
Managing time properly	3.39	0.50	A
Cluster mean	3.52	0.51	SA

SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree

had mean scores ranging between 3.44 -3.90. The overall mean score for both respondents show a cluster mean of 3.52. This designates a decision level of strongly agree. Consequently, the table shows that the items are reduction strategies to help women cope with stressful situations.

DISCUSSION

Types of stress married working women suffer: The findings of the study showed that types of stress that married working women suffer includes; financial stress such as shortage of or limited income, emotional stress, home pressure, workplace and health stress. Though, this finding is not unexpected considering the view of Teasdale (2006) who stated that family stress often arises among Nigerian women as they try to balance the multiple competing demands of their spouses, children, elderly parents, among others. Similarly, the findings of the present study supported the study conducted by UNICEF which stated that married working women engage in various workplaces in paid labour and they perform various functions such as typesetting of documents, file arrangement, sending memos across, photocopy and others together with their responsibilities in the house such as, activities of infant care, nursing, water and wood fetching among others. Consequently, UNICEF further stressed that in a bid to create equilibrium or a balance between the two responsibilities in the workplace and home in order to maintain their marriage so that it will not disintegrate, tension and conflict may arise. Obviously, these stressors exist due to conflicting demands of home and office duties.

Causes of stress/stressors of married working women: The results of this research study showed that married working women strongly agree that all the items in Table 2 are the causes of stress/stressors of married

working women. These items include; working long hours in the office, having a heavy workload at home, taking office work home, having limited time to prepare your speech at work place meeting, facing discrimination or harassment at workplace, office politics and conflict among staff, death of a loved one or family member and others. Based on the findings of the study, it is evident that family stressors are caused by a number of factors. The findings of the present study supported the study conducted by Pearson and Moomaw (2005) who outlines the causes of family stressors as, death of a loved one in the family, divorce or separation from a partner, pregnancy, changes in health of a family member or close friend, trouble with in-laws, children leaving home, childcare, remarriage of a family member, caring for other dependents, such as elderly relatives, family reunion and relationship breakdown.

Consequences of stress on the health of married working women: The findings of the study strongly acknowledged that the consequences of stress on the health of married working women include; emotional distress, socially withdrawn, burnout, depression, dizziness, panic disorder, drug abuse, loss of appetite, tiredness and insomnia, headache, back pain, violent or anti-social behaviour and jaw pain. Considering the findings of the study, it is obvious that family stress can be negative, when it becomes destructive as a result of how an individual negatively perceived it and reacted to it. The findings of the present study supported the study conducted by Felsten and Wilcox (1992) which stated that family stress pervades the life of married working women and may impact adversely their mental and physical health and their ability to perform office work effectively. Similarly, the findings of the present study supported the study conducted by Gelow which stated that married working women who experience a high level of family stress for a long time and who cope poorly with this stress may

become irritable, socially withdrawn and emotionally unstable. The researchers further disclosed that this stressful situation may lead to sickness such as High Blood Pressure (HBP), stroke or psychological problems, like depression and anxiety. From these findings, it is evident that married working women under intense and prolonged family stress may suffer severe health problems like extreme anxiety, depression or other severe emotional problems.

Consequences of stress on the job performance of married working women: The results of this research study showed that consequences of stress on the job performance of married working women include; poor concentration in the office, difficulty in solving office problems, socially withdrawn in the workplace, sudden irritability with colleagues, always unhappy in the workplace, poor communication between teams inadequate feedback on job performance and poor memory retention. The findings of the present study supported the study conducted by Demerouti *et al.* (2001) which stated that combining housework, childcare, shopping and cooking with an outside job and trying to do everything on time affects the work performance of married working women. The result revealed that married working women agree that poor concentration in the office, always unhappy in the workplace and inadequate feedback on job performance are the consequences of stress on the job performance of married working women. Equally, the respondents strongly agree that difficulty in solving office problems, socially with drawn in the workplace, sudden irritability with colleagues and poor communication between teams are the consequences of stress on the job performance of married working women. This is in line with the earlier assertion Dyson and Renk (2006) that stress is responsible why married working women have difficulties in concentrating and solving office problems.

Stress reduction strategies to help women cope with stressful situations or conditions: Findings of the study showed that married working women accepted the fact that stress reduction strategies to help women cope with stressful situations includes; setting limits appropriately, working ahead of time to minimize threatening situation, saying no to requests that would create excessive stress, embarking on guided aerobic exercise such as running, walking, biking and skiing, keeping a positive attitude, relaxation, having enough rest and sleep, listening to music and others. This results is in line with the findings of Kaplan *et al.* (2005) which stated that some tips to help keep stress at bay include keeping a positive attitude,

accepting that there are events that one cannot control, being assertive instead of aggressive, asserting your feelings, opinions or beliefs instead of becoming angry. From these findings, it is clear that people manage stress and live happier and healthier lives. Similarly, from the findings of Guterman and Lee (2005) research work, one's body can fight stress better when he/she is fit, eat healthy, learn to manage time more effectively, set limits appropriately, learn to say no to requests that would create excessive stress, make time for hobbies interests and relaxation and by having enough rest and sleep.

CONCLUSION

Counsellors should be involved and empowered with both physical and psychological strategies such as biofeedback including thoughts and actions to deal with married working women stressful situations to improve their health condition and enhance their job performance. Social network and biofeedback training should be designed and provided for stressors as a coping strategy to change aspects of their situation and reduce stress. Stressors should be encouraged by both friends and family members to embark on guided aerobic exercise such as running, walking, biking and skiing since, it was revealed that one's body can fight stress better when he/she is fit.

Instrument or machine that measures a particular physiological response, such as heart rate should be provided to assists stressors manage stress and live happier and healthier lives.

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