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## Job Stress on Quality of Work Life among Agriculture Faculties of Federal Universities in South-West, Nigeria

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### Abstract

The study was conducted to evaluate the effects of job stress on the quality of work life among the Agriculture Faculties of Federal Universities in South-West Nigeria. This study examined the effects that job stress has on the quality of work life of Federal University Faculty staff in South-West Nigeria. A four-stage sampling procedure was used to select 125 Federal University Faculties. Using a structured questionnaire, data were obtained on respondents' socio-economic characteristics, job stress, stress coping strategies, and quality of work life. Frequency counts, percentages, mean, standard deviation, Chi-square statistic, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation ( $r$ ) were used to analyse the data. The results revealed that the respondents' mean age was 43.5 years. Most of the respondents were male (57.8%), married (85.3%), Christians (82.6%), PhD degree holders (70.6%), with a mean year of experience of 14.78 years. University staff were faced with a high level of stress (57.8%) with engaging in strategic planning ( $\bar{x} = 4.22$ ) and meditation or prayer ( $\bar{x} = 4.21$ ) were the coping strategies mostly adopted. Results further revealed that facilities ( $\bar{x} = 4.24$ ), job satisfaction and security ( $\bar{x} = 4.18$ ) were the major factors that influenced the quality of work life. Furthermore, the respondents' work-life quality was high (90.2%). Also, there was a significant relationship ( $p < 0.05$ ) between job stress ( $r = 0.59$ ) and quality of work life. Also, there was a significant relationship ( $p < 0.05$ ) between stress coping strategies ( $r = 0.207$ ) and quality of work life. The study concluded that job stress and the coping strategies adopted by staff affect the quality of work life among agricultural staff of Federal Universities in South-west Nigeria. Hence, the study recommended that adequate measures that will focus on the reduction of stress should be established in these institutions to maintain the quality of work life among University Staff. Also, staff should adopt the most effective mechanism that suits them in coping with the stress they face daily.

**Keywords:** Job stress, Quality of work life, Agricultural faculties, South -west, Nigeria

### Introduction

Job stress is the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. When people feel stressed, their bodies respond by raising the concentration of stress hormones in the blood (Centre for the Promotion of Health in New England Workplace, 2021). Stress is not always bad. Stress can be in form of a challenge which

energizes psychologically and physically, and also motivates learning new skills useful at work. When a challenge is achieved, there is a feeling of relaxation and satisfaction. This is a form of good stress or eustress.

However, when a challenge is turned into job demands that cannot be achieved or that do not match capability and skills, this is negative stress or distress. This sets the stage for illness, injury, and job failure (CPH-NEW, 2021). Work-related stress occurs when the

demands of the job do not match or exceed the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. It may also occur when the knowledge and abilities of individual workers or a group of workers to cope are not matched with the expectations of the culture of the enterprise (ILO, 2016).

Alabi *et al.* (2018), submitted that stress is an interaction between the individual and the situation. He considered stress as the psychological and physical conditions that arise when the resources available to an individual are not enough to cope with the demands and pressures of the situation. This may result in mental and health breakdowns of the employees, which give rise to various health-related issues such as high blood pressure, nervous breakdown, and so on. Stress at work must be avoided to improve and maintain employees' performance and productivity.

Quality of work life (QWL) is a situation created by organizations to enable their employees to enjoy the time spent at work and on the job, they are doing (Jayoti, 2020). Quality of work life intends to make employees feel happy, comfortable, and to always enjoy their work. This is done by creating an enabling work environment for employees in such a way that even if the employees work lengthy hours, the workload is not viewed to be cumbersome, and the employees perform the work diligently, joyfully, and happily without any form of complaints. A good QWL gives rise to better performance and prompt realization of organizational goals. Diana *et al.* (2019) stated that the quality of work life is a multidimensional form of employee relations with the work environment, which is a measure of company quality.

Every organization always wants to deliver quality service to their customers or clients. Quality service can be achieved when employees are happy to do and perform their jobs. In the process of quality delivery, employees are saddled with various responsibilities that may or may not match their competencies. Due to this, employees are

overloaded with work, which may increase the stress level experienced on the job by employees. University staff are required to perform various tasks and responsibilities relating to the academic pursuits of students in terms of delivering lectures, computation of results, examination processing, students' lodging and accommodation, security on campus and lots more. All these jobs had various set of specific tasks involved. Some of these jobs depend on each other for achievement. The achievement of these jobs tends to build tension and pressure on staff, which often leads to stress on such staff. Hence, it will reduce the quality of work delivered by such staff. Furthermore, university staff who exhibit high levels of dedication and professional competence when exposed to chronic workplace stressors such as incivility, administrative neglect, or exclusion, may experience diminished confidence, thwarted career aspirations, and erosion of psychological well-being, despite their value and contributions to the institution. These experiences impede the quality of work life of such an individual. (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2023; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2022; Yasir *et al.*, 2020).

More so, various studies (Ogakwu *et al.*, 2024; Adekeye *et al.*, 2024; Ofili and Obiunu, 2023); Chukwuemeka *et al.*, (2023) have been conducted to determine the existing effects of job stress, stress coping strategies, and quality of work life. Despite the various studies, little effort has been made to look into how job stress and stress coping strategies affect the quality of work life of university staff, especially in Nigeria. This research, therefore, looked into these gaps and made recommendations where needed for decision making. To this effect, this study determined the effects that job stress and stress coping strategies have on the quality of work life of Agriculture staff of Federal universities. For this reason, this study seeks to provide answers to the following research questions:

- i. What are the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents in the study area?

- ii. What is the level of stress respondents are facing on their job in the study area?
- iii. What are the strategies adopted by respondents to cope with job stress in the study area?
- iv. What is the level of quality of work life of the respondents in the study area?

### Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of this study were to:

- i. describe the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents in the study area;
- ii. ascertain the stress level of respondents in the study area;
- iii. ascertain the strategies adopted by respondents to cope with job stress in the study area; and
- iv. ascertain the quality of work life of the respondents in the study area.

### Hypotheses

The hypotheses were stated in the null form.

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between the socioeconomic characteristics of University Staff and their quality of work life;

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between job stress level and quality of work life among University Agriculture Staff.

H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant relationship between stress coping strategies and quality of work life.

### Methodology

The study was carried out in Federal Universities across the South-west geographical zone of Nigeria. Simple random selection of two Federal universities (29%) out of 7 Federal Universities in the South-west, Nigeria. FUNAAB in Ogun State and O.A.U in Osun State were selected, respectively. Also, Purposive selection of the agriculture-based Colleges and Faculties in the study areas. Disproportionate simple random sampling was used to select 40% of departments from agriculture Colleges in FUNAAB and 60% of departments from the agriculture Faculty in OAU. Lastly, proportionate simple random

sampling (75%) was used to select equal percentages of staff from the selected departments in the agriculture-based Colleges and Faculty for this study. Data for this study was from primary sources. Primary data were obtained through a well-structured questionnaire to obtain information about the respondents' socioeconomic characteristics, stress faced on the job, stress coping mechanisms adopted and quality of work life. The dependent variable, quality of work life, was operationalised by adapting Almarshad, (2015). A 41-item statements was used and respondents will express their degree of agreement on a 5-point Likert scale rating of Strongly Agree (S.A) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Undecided (U) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (S.D) = 1. The level of quality of work life was determined as Low (41-123), High (124-205) based on the scores. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency count, mean, pie chart and bar chart while inferential statistics such as Chi-square analysis and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) were used in comparing variables of the study.

### Results and Discussion

#### Socioeconomic Characteristics of Respondents

The results in Table 1 below are indicative that 33.9% are between ages 36-45 years; 32.1% are between the ages 46-55 years, while the mean age was 43.5 years. This implies that most of the universities' staff are within the young adult productive age bracket. This simply shows that the respondents are within the active age and are economically productive (Adeogun et al., 2016). Also, the results showed that most (57.8%) of the respondents were male. This implies that Federal Universities in Nigeria have more male staff than female staff because men are less distracted by family issues than women and this makes men more physically, emotionally and mentally readily available than women. Also, according to Mariwah et al., (2023), men are convinced to see themselves as the most powerful in society, as superior to women and

for that matter, they need to protect others as the socio-cultural role of men as protectors must be exhibited in all spheres of life, such as their family, marital home, workplace and the society at large.

The result is similar to the findings of Abiona *et al.*, (2015) that more than half (56.9%) of the employees of research institutes were male, while 41.7% were female. In addition, the results from the study revealed that 85.3% of respondents were married. This is good for the organisation because marriage comes with a sense of household tasks, responsibilities and accountabilities which can

be showcased in the work environment (Adebayo *et al.*, 2020). Years of experience, as shown in Table 1, many (56.9%) of the respondents have been working in the university for about 11-20 years. This indicates that there are young staff who have the ability and capability to work with the university for a long time before reaching their retirement age. This also gives room for them to adapt to current changes in global educational trends as they advance in their working experience. According to Putri, (2020), work experience obtained by employees over time will help to improve their ability to carry out their work.

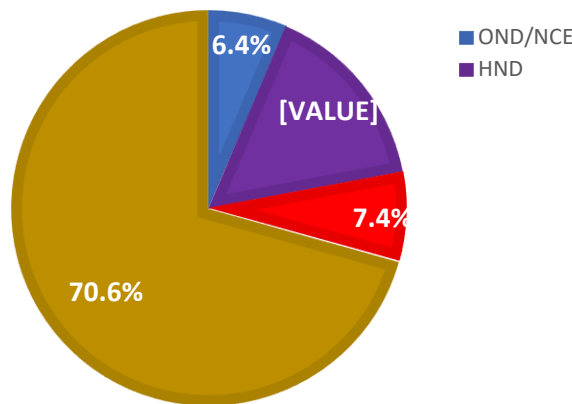
**Table 1: Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Respondents**

|                                    | Frequency | Percentages | Mean        |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Age</b>                         |           |             |             |
| ≤35.00                             | 25        | 22.9        | 43.5 years  |
| 36.00 - 45.00                      | 37        | 34.0        |             |
| 46.00 - 55.00                      | 35        | 32.1        |             |
| above 55                           | 12        | 11.0        |             |
| <b>Sex</b>                         |           |             |             |
| Male                               | 63        | 57.8        |             |
| Female                             | 46        | 42.2        |             |
| <b>Marital Status</b>              |           |             |             |
| Single                             | 12        | 11.0        |             |
| Married                            | 93        | 85.3        |             |
| Divorced                           | 4         | 3.7         |             |
| <b>Years of working experience</b> |           |             |             |
| ≤ 10.00                            | 31        | 28.4        | 14.78 years |
| 11.00 - 20.00                      | 62        | 56.9        |             |
| 21.00 - 30.00                      | 7         | 6.4         |             |
| > 30.00                            | 9         | 8.3         |             |

**Source:** Field survey, 2021

The results, as shown in Fig. 1, revealed that the majority (70.6%) of the respondents have PhD certificates. This implies that the university staff in this study are academically qualified for the work they do since they have gathered experiences, knowledge and skills which are required for

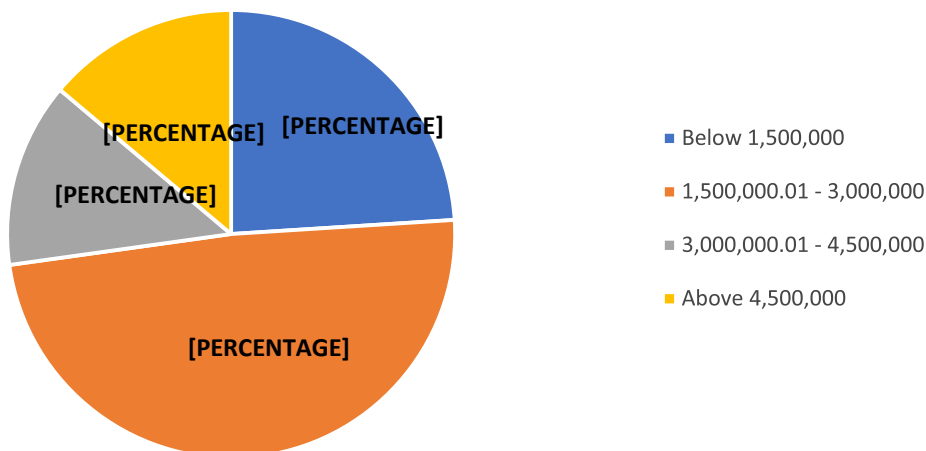
them to be able to perform the task given accordingly. Academic qualification requires a combination of original academic preparation (degree completion) augmented by subsequent activities that maintain or establish preparation for organizational responsibilities (Jaoko, 2016).



**Figure 1: Respondents' Highest Educational Level**  
Source: Field survey, 2021

However, Fig. 2 revealed that about half (48.6%) of the respondents earn between ₦1,500,000.01 - ₦3,000,000.00 annually. This implies that the annual income of university staff is grossly inadequate to ensure work-life

balance among university staff. Thus, a relatively high salary is required to motivate respondents, increase their job performance and improve their quality of life (Adeogun *et al.*, 2016; Oyeyinka *et al.*, 2017).



**Figure 2: Respondents' Annual Income**  
Source: Field survey, 2021

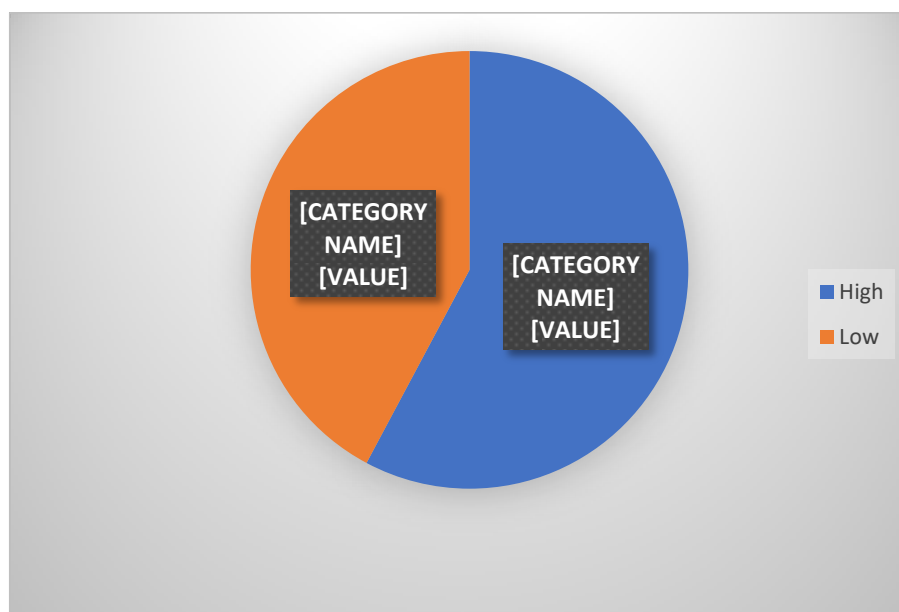
#### Job Stress Level of the Respondents

The data obtained from the study on stress respondents were exposed to at work (in terms of their work demands, work organisation and job content, interpersonal relationship and leadership, work-individual interface, workplace value, offensive

behaviour and employees health and wellbeing) was categorised two; low at 39-117 and high at 118-195 base on the scores obtained to determine the intensity of stress being faced by the university staff. The results obtained as indicted in Figure 3 below showed that the respondents in the study area were

facing a relatively high level of stress on their job (57.8%) with a score ranging between 124-205. This implies that the work or task done by university staff in ensuring the achievement of their students' academic pursuit are highly

stressful. The findings of this study agree with the findings of Akah et. al (2022) who reported that most university staff engage in various academic activities with limited time available to execute the activities.



**Figure 3: Categorization of respondents' job stress**

Source: Field survey, 2021

### Job Stress Coping Strategies

The result in Table 2 shows the strategies adopted by respondents to cope with their job stress, engaging in strategic planning to deal with the situation ( $\bar{x} = 4.22$ ) and meditation or prayer ( $\bar{x} = 4.21$ ) were the most adopted coping strategies adopted by university staff. Carver, Scheier and Wientraub in 1988 reported that employees focus on religion to facilitate emotional support against stress and for positive reinterpretation of situations (Alabi, 2018). Also, receiving psychological support from friends and families ( $\bar{x} = 3.83$ ), making use of social media (WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and so on) ( $\bar{x} = 3.76$ ), and seeking mentoring from my religious leader and superior score ( $\bar{x} = 3.72$ ) were moderately adopted coping strategies. This implies that religious practices, human interaction and relationships, either through direct and indirect contact, are ways through

which people majorly cope with stress. According to Acoba et al. (2024), Dong et al. (2024) affirm that social support from family and friends plays a crucial role in managing stress. Additionally, rest-based strategies such as sleep and relaxation continue to be effective in promoting resilience and psychological well-being. Watching TV shows or movies, and instant messaging were also frequently used strategies by people to cope with stress.

Other coping strategies adopted by the respondents are: engaging in sexual activities to relieve stress score ( $\bar{x} = 1.54$ ), drinking of alcohol to cope with the day's stress score ( $\bar{x} = 1.47$ ) and smoking of cigarettes to cope with the day's stress score ( $\bar{x} = 1.24$ ). These results support the findings of Bolarinwa et al. (2016) who reported that newspapers, magazines, or books, discussion of work situations with a spouse or close friends, praying, go to church and listen to music were the major coping

strategies adopted by extension agents in Oyo state to overcome stress in the organization and also, negative coping strategies such as becoming aggressive, getting drunk and

smoking of tobacco were not frequently used as strategies to cope with stress in the organization.

**Table 2: Job Stress Coping Strategies**

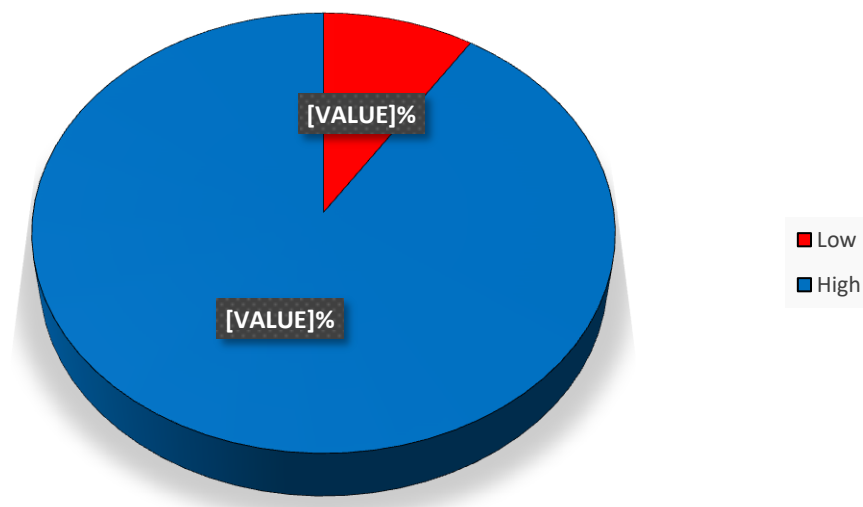
|                                                                     | Mean | SD   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|
| I engage in strategic planning to deal with the situation.          | 4.22 | 0.91 |
| I meditate or pray.                                                 | 4.21 | 1.09 |
| Friends and family provide psychological support.                   | 3.83 | 1.11 |
| The use of social media (WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram).            | 3.76 | 1.12 |
| I seek mentoring from my religious leader and superior.             | 3.72 | 1.13 |
| I seek advice from my health care professional.                     | 3.52 | 1.19 |
| I listen to music to relieve stress.                                | 3.39 | 1.31 |
| I watch television to relieve myself of stress.                     | 3.35 | 0.98 |
| I engage in various exercises or sporting activities.               | 3.18 | 1.23 |
| I make use of relaxation postures or breathing exercises.           | 3.07 | 1.23 |
| I divert my attention to other activities.                          | 3.02 | 1.13 |
| I make fun of the situation.                                        | 2.93 | 1.29 |
| I participate in club and society activities.                       | 2.89 | 1.23 |
| I watch movies anytime I'm stressed.                                | 2.81 | 1.36 |
| I take vacation trips.                                              | 2.69 | 1.19 |
| I relieve myself of stress through other means not mentioned above. | 2.32 | 1.28 |
| I do not make use of any means to cope with stress.                 | 2.00 | 1.33 |
| I use medication to relieve myself of stress.                       | 1.91 | 1.09 |
| I resort to pet therapy.                                            | 1.87 | 1.11 |
| I take out my stress on others.                                     | 1.68 | 1.15 |
| I make sure to eat junk food after a day's work.                    | 1.62 | 0.99 |
| I engage in sexual activities to relieve stress.                    | 1.54 | 0.79 |
| I drink alcohol to cope with the day's stress.                      | 1.47 | 0.99 |
| I smoke cigarettes to cope with the day's stress.                   | 1.24 | 0.77 |

Source: Field survey, 2021

### Level of Respondents' Quality of Work Life

The results obtained from the study were categorized into two: Low (41-123), High (124-205), based on the scores obtained. The result as indicated in Fig. 4, showed that the majority of the respondents (90.8%) had a high quality of work life with scores ranging between 124-205, while 9.2% had a low level of quality of work life. This implies that the high level of quality of work life may be due to the presence of some major determinants of quality of work life in the university, such as job satisfaction and job security, the conducive work environment, the organisational culture

and so on. Also, the respondents (university of agriculture staff) have access to these determinants and they are able to make use of them every time. Teryima et al. (2016) stated that quality work-life programs are created and made available to help develop working conditions that satisfy employee needs. Furthermore, Majumder & Biswas (2021) opined that when employees receive qualitative work life in their organisation, they feel joyful, enthusiastic, and they are always ready to give their all to the job, which in turn increases the productivity of such an organisation.



**Figure 4: Level of Quality of Work Life**

Source: Field survey, 2021

#### Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One: A Chi-square test was conducted on employees' socioeconomic characteristics and quality of work life at a 0.05 significance level to determine their relationship. The results obtained as shown in Table 3 revealed that educational level ( $\chi^2 = 10.563$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and marital status ( $\chi^2 = 28.319$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) were significantly related to quality of work life, which implies that

educational attainment of an individual goes a long way in determining the benefits each individual is entitled to and this will influence the quality of their work life. This agrees with Suresh et al. (2016) that educational qualification has a considerable influence on the quality of work life in an organization.

**Table 3: Relationship between Socioeconomic characteristics and Quality of Work Life of the Respondents**

| Variables         | Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) | Degree of freedom | p-value | Decision    |
|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|---------|-------------|
| Marital Status    | 28.319                  | 2                 | 0.000   | Significant |
| Educational Level | 10.563                  | 3                 | 0.005   | Significant |

Source: Field survey, 2021

However, Pearson Product Moment Correlation results in Table 4 showed that annual income ( $r = 0.370$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and years of working experience ( $r = 0.254$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) were significantly related to quality of work life. These findings imply that the income and years of work experience of staff have a great influence on determining the quality of the

work life of staff. These findings agreed with Nikeghbal, Kouhnavard, Shabani & Zamanian, (2021), who in their research discovered that annual income and years of experience are significantly related to QWL. Other socioeconomic characteristics (sex, age, and religion) showed no significant relationship with the quality of work life.

**Table 4: Relationship between Socioeconomic characteristics and Quality of Work Life of the Respondents**

| Variables                   | Correlation (r) value | p-value | Decision    |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------|-------------|
| Years of working experience | 0.254                 | 0.005   | Significant |
| Annual Income               | 0.370                 | 0.000   | Significant |

Source: Field survey, 2021

**(H0<sub>2</sub>): There is no Significant Relationship between Job Stress and Quality of Work Life**

Pearson correlation coefficient was used to determine whether a significant relationship existed between job stress and quality of work life at the 0.05 level of significance. The result obtained in Table 5 indicated that there was a significant relationship ( $r = -0.596$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) between job stress and quality of work life. This implies that the stress that the university staff are facing at this stage is not yet beyond their control, and what they can manage or cope with. This might be as a result of the ability of individual staff to adopt strategies that best soothe them to cope with the stresses they face

at work. This contradicts the findings of (Hans et al., 2015), who in their study of the relationship between job stress and QWL among management teachers found that there was no significant relationship between job stress and QWL.

The negative relationship that exists between job stress and QWL indicates that if there is a slight increase in stress faced by university staff in the future, this will cause a reduction in the QWL of the staff. Therefore, an increase in university staff job stress levels will cause a decrease in their quality of work-life. This corroborates the work of Vineetha & D'Souza (2024), who revealed that occupational burnout and job involvement are inversely related to QWL.

**Table 5: Test of Relationship between Respondents' Job Stress and QWL**

| Variables                               | Correlation value | (r) | p-value | Decision    |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------|-----|---------|-------------|
| Relationship between Job Stress and QWL | -0.596            |     | 0.000   | Significant |

Source: Field survey, 2021

**(H0<sub>3</sub>): There is no significant Relationship between Stress Coping Strategies and Quality of Work Life**

The results obtained from the study, as shown in Table 6, indicated that the stress coping strategies adopted by the university staff have a significant relationship with their quality of work life. Therefore, this study rejects the null hypothesis of the study. The results obtained contradict the findings of Pena (2015), who found no significant correlation between stress coping strategies and QWL. The result obtained, therefore, implied that the

various ways by which university staff adapted to cope with the stress they faced at work can influence or affect their work-life quality. This shows that when university staff engage in these coping activities, they might often feel refreshed and energized to continue with their work, thereby improving their productivity. According to Salimzadeh et al (2021), adaptive problem-focused coping strategies such as deep breathing, exercise, social support, and regular breaks tend to reduce stress, improve psychological well-being, and help faculty restore energy for continued work engagement.

**Table 6: Test of Relationship between Respondents' Stress Coping Strategies and QWL**

| Variables                                             | Correlation value | (r) p-value | Decision    |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Relationship between Stress Coping Strategies and QWL | 0.207             | 0.031       | Significant |

Source: Field survey, 2021

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that the University of Agriculture staff in the study area were facing a great deal of stress daily at their workplace. Also, it was noted that job stress affects the quality of work life of Federal University staff in Nigeria. This has to be given urgent attention as excess stress can cause serious health challenges for people. Furthermore, it was concluded that socio-economic characteristics play a significant role in determining the quality of work life of university staff. However, the coping strategies adopted do not significantly affect the quality of work life of the staff but might affect other areas of their life, such as family and social life. The study therefore recommended that University management should pay attention to the stress staff are facing and find ways to reduce all elements of stress by reducing excessive job demands. This should be done to reduce the stress level of the staff in order to improve the quality of their work life. In addition, awareness should be created on various healthy stress coping strategies that university staff can adopt to cope with the stress they are facing daily. This should be done so as to improve the mental and physical health of the staff.

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