



Analyzing Occupational Stress in Academic Personnel through the Framework of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines occupational stress among academic personnel through the framework of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, highlighting how stress manifests across different career stages in academia. Utilizing historical perspectives and contemporary findings, the study explores how technological advancements have reshaped academic responsibilities but have not alleviated core stressors. Junior academic staff often encounter stress linked to foundational needs, including job security, career development, and community integration. In contrast, senior faculty face stressors associated with self-actualization, administrative responsibilities, and reputation maintenance. The study integrates Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome and Hobfoll's conservation of resources theory to contextualize the physiological and psychological impacts of prolonged occupational stress in academia. This paper argues that a targeted approach to mental health support, workload management, and institutional resources is essential to addressing academic stress across career levels, ultimately promoting faculty well-being, productivity, and sustainable career progression.

Keywords: *Occupational stress, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, academic personnel, career progression, mental health, stress management, General Adaptation Syndrome, academic burnout, institutional support, faculty well-being.*

Introduction

The academic profession has undergone significant transformations over the years, reflecting broader social, technological, and institutional changes. Despite these shifts, certain core aspects of academia have remained remarkably consistent. Historically, academic work has centered around research, teaching, and administrative responsibilities (Boyer, 1990). In the pre-digital era, particularly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, scholars engaged in research and documentation through labor-intensive methods, involving manual data gathering, writing, and the physical dissemination of knowledge. Remarkably, groundbreaking contributions emerged even under these constraints, as exemplified by the works of B.F. Skinner in behavioral psychology, Sigmund Freud in psychoanalysis, and the literature of Wole Soyinka (Skinner, 1971; Freud, 1930; Soyinka, 1967; Opoku-Mensah, Abilimi & Amoako, 2013).

With the advent of the digital age, academia has adapted to new technologies, which have streamlined traditional tasks. Researchers today benefit from online databases, digital libraries, and data analysis tools that enhance productivity (Beaudry & Pinsonneault, 2005). For example, Lashuel (2020) illustrates how contemporary academics face a continuous "busyness," with escalating responsibilities and expectations for research productivity, grant applications, and public engagement. This increased workload and constant connectivity, while providing greater opportunities, often contribute to stress and mental health challenges. Reflecting on this, institutional leaders are becoming more aware of the necessity to address mental health and well-being in academia, acknowledging the need for a balanced approach (Lashuel, 2020).

Despite the streamlining benefits of technology, academic stress has not disappeared. Studies suggest that while small amounts of stress can serve as motivation, excessive stress may have adverse consequences on both productivity and well-being (Mohajan, 2012; Yeboah & Abilimi, 2013). Thus, this study seeks to address the scope of stress within the academic environment, examining factors that contribute to stress and the perceptions of stress among university staff across career levels. Furthermore, the study explores how Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs can frame these stress experiences, particularly in the context of academic career progression.

Scope of Stress in the Academic Workplace

Academic work globally is characterized by cognitive and intellectual demands that extend beyond basic teaching responsibilities (Altbach et al., 2010). Effective teaching relies on sustained engagement with research and scholarly material, demanding the acquisition and synthesis of new knowledge. In developed countries, access to digital resources, reliable internet, and advanced technology has alleviated some of the traditional burdens associated with academic work. However, in many developing countries, the academic experience remains less technologically integrated, contributing to distinct stressors. For example, limited access to online databases and inadequate research funding in Nigeria impede the efficiency of academic tasks (Ajayi, 2009).

Assessment activities further add to the academic workload. Lecturers are responsible for various stages of student evaluation, including examination preparation, invigilation, grading, and results processing (Yeboah, Opoku-Mensah & Abilimi, 2013a). In institutions such as Obafemi Awolowo University, assessment practices are exhaustive, necessitating time, effort, and meticulous organization (Adeyemi, 2010; Gilbert, Oluwatosin & Gilbert, 2024). Such responsibilities compound the stress experienced by faculty, as these repetitive tasks demand precision and timeliness in addition to their regular teaching responsibilities.

Furthermore, career progression within academia introduces additional administrative duties and mentorship expectations. Senior academics, for instance, often assume leadership roles, such as department heads, deans, and faculty advisors, which require them to oversee institutional processes and mentor junior colleagues and students (Baldwin & Blackburn, 1981). This dual role of academic leadership and mentoring extends to supervising theses and dissertations, underscoring the multifaceted responsibilities that contribute to academic stress.

Ultimately, the ability to navigate and manage these stressors is essential for career advancement within academia. Academic success is often a function of the individual's ability to balance research, teaching, assessment, and administrative responsibilities. Therefore, the experience of stress in academia is distinctive, shaped by a combination of intellectual, organizational, and administrative demands. Managing these elements successfully is often a determining factor in an academic's progression from junior to senior ranks, demonstrating the unique nature of stress within this profession.

The Concept of Stress: A Scholarly Exploration

Stress is a multidimensional construct that has been defined and conceptualized through various perspectives over time. Notably, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) identified the significance of stress research emerging prominently during and after World War II and the Korean War, where its relevance to military combat became evident. Stress was subsequently acknowledged as an inherent aspect of human life, with differences in individual responses attributed to variations in coping mechanisms. Consequently, discussions on stress are inextricably linked to concepts of adaptation and coping strategies within the context of human growth and development.

Defining Stress: A Psychological and Physiological Perspective

Lehnert (2002) conceptualizes stress as a dynamic, complex interaction between an individual and their life experiences, emphasizing an internal response to external demands. This definition captures stress as an affective state, resulting from the body's response mechanisms to daily activities. Similarly, Larsen and Buss (2005) describe stress as a state of being overwhelmed by uncontrollable events. They introduce the term "stressors" to characterize events that produce feelings of overwhelm, possess opposing tendencies (e.g., wanting yet not wanting to engage in an activity), and are often beyond individual control. These stressors can be seen in everyday scenarios such as academic pressures—balancing the need for rest against the requirement to study or prepare for examinations despite health challenges.

Stress in Scientific and Mechanical Contexts

The term stress extends beyond the psychological domain to the physical sciences, where it refers to interactions between forces and resistances (Tan & Yip, 2018). In physics, stress is linked to the concept of elasticity, where a material returns to its original shape after deformation due to external forces. In engineering, Pilkey and Pilkey (2008) discuss the stress concentration factor, focusing on localized high-stress points within structures. Fett (2008) further elaborates on stress intensity factors in the context of fracture mechanics, examining how stress singularities develop at crack tips.

In materials science, residual stress is a critical concept, described as self-equilibrating internal stress in a body when no external forces are present (Kuala & Weiss, 1982). Such stresses may arise during processes like heat treatment, where differential cooling rates between the core and surface lead to compressive and tensile stresses. The mitigation of residual stress through processes like stress relief forging demonstrates parallels between scientific stress management and human strategies for coping with psychological stress.

Linguistic and Environmental Perspectives on Stress

In linguistic terms, stress is not associated with negativity but is rather a feature of prosody that affects pronunciation. Teschner and Whitley (2004) define stress as the greater prominence a syllable exhibits due to increased loudness, duration, or pitch, aiding in syllable division and pronunciation. In environmental science, stress encompasses abiotic and biotic factors, such as drought, salinity, and temperature extremes, which adversely affect plant adaptability and yield (Lateef & Ahmad, 2015). These scientific perspectives suggest that stress, whether in living organisms or physical materials, generally represents factors that challenge resilience, reduce productivity, or cause damage.

Stress in Psychological, Social, and Physiological Terms

From a psychological standpoint, stress represents mental fatigue, while socially, it manifests as diminished energy or strength in interpersonal relationships, potentially leading to withdrawal. Stress can also be analyzed within the framework of social functioning, examining how one role may impact another—such as the intersection of professional and familial responsibilities. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), stress is characterized by the interaction between individual characteristics and environmental factors, evolving from a pressure exerted by the environment to a strain experienced within the individual. Michie (2001) defines stress as a psychological and physical state resulting from the individual's inability to meet environmental demands.

Theories of Stress and Adaptation

Lazarus (1966) proposed treating stress as an organizing concept to understand various adaptation phenomena in humans and animals, suggesting that stress is not a static event but a process with multiple interpretations. Physiologically, stress is often associated with the body's responses. Hans Selye, a pioneering stress researcher, argued that the body requires a certain level of stress for optimal functioning. Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS), described in his seminal work "The Stress of Life" (1956), outlines three stages of the stress response: the alarm reaction, resistance, and exhaustion. These stages illustrate the physiological changes that occur in response to stress, including initial reactions, attempts at adaptation, and eventual depletion of resources.

In summary, stress is a multifaceted concept that spans psychological, physiological, scientific, linguistic, and environmental domains. Whether viewed as a psychological state, a response to physical demands, or a factor influencing social roles, stress remains an integral aspect of human experience. Its complexity necessitates a broad understanding that encompasses both individual perceptions and environmental influences, as well as strategies for adaptation and coping.

The stages of stress, as defined in the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) model, demonstrate a nuanced process of physiological and psychological response to prolonged stress. This model, pioneered by Hans Selye, emphasizes the body's sequential response to stress through the alarm, resistance, and exhaustion stages, each with distinct characteristics and implications (Selye, 1950).

The Alarm Reaction Stage marks the body's initial response to stress, signaling the hypothalamus to release glucocorticoids, a class of steroid hormones. These hormones, in turn, stimulate the adrenal glands to release cortisol and adrenaline, which increase energy levels to prepare the body for a fight-or-flight response (McEwen, 2007). In academia, this stage may manifest as headaches, elevated blood pressure, eye strain, or back pain due to prolonged screen exposure or extended periods of standing during lectures. These physiological changes are managed by the sympathetic branch of the Autonomic Nervous System (ANS), which activates a heightened state of readiness (Charmandari et al., 2005; Yeboah, Opoku-Mensah & Abilimi, 2013b).

Following the alarm stage, **The Resistance Stage** allows the body to attempt to stabilize itself and manage stress by gradually reducing cortisol levels and regulating blood pressure and heart rate (Higuera, 2017). The parasympathetic branch of the ANS works to restore homeostasis, although the body remains on alert. In a prolonged academic setting, stress adaptation can lead to physical adjustments, where educators and researchers endure long hours, often leading to pain management practices like taking painkillers. However, this practice does not address the root cause of the stress, as underlying stressors persist (Tan & Yip, 2018; Abilimi et al., 2013). Higuera (2017) notes that this stage represents an ongoing negotiation within the body to balance recovery and stress exposure.

The Exhaustion Stage represents the culmination of chronic stress, where the body's energy reserves are depleted, diminishing its capacity to respond to stressors effectively. Prolonged exposure to stress can suppress immune function and increase vulnerability to illness, potentially leading to severe health consequences or death if left unmanaged (Selye, 1976). For academics, this stage underscores the long-term impact of unrelenting stress, which can undermine productivity and well-being (Schmidt, 2003).

Job Stress and Its Implications further underscore the importance of understanding stress within occupational settings. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) defines job stress as the harmful physical and emotional responses that emerge when job requirements misalign with the worker's capabilities or resources (NIOSH, 2014). Modern workplaces, particularly in academia, present significant stressors, with studies showing that 75% of employees believe on-the-job stress has increased compared to previous generations (Shahsavariani, Abadi, & Kalkhoran, 2015). In the United Kingdom, stress-related workplace issues result in a considerable economic burden, affecting approximately 10% of the Gross National Product (GNP) annually due to absenteeism, turnover, and recruitment costs (Cooper & Cartwright, 1994).

Work-related stress not only affects individual health but also impairs organizational productivity. It has been shown to influence job performance and productivity, where excessive job demands exceed the worker's tolerance, leading to burnout (Chandola, 2010; Shahsavariani et al., 2015). The distinction between stress-generating conditions and stress responses is critical in workplace models, where stressors and individual responses are measured separately (Chandola, 2010). Elevated stress levels can trigger job burnout, a state of emotional and physical exhaustion that arises when workplace demands surpass individual coping abilities (Schmidt, 2003).

In inference, Selye's model offers a framework for understanding how stress affects academic professionals by delineating the body's response to stress through its stages. This model illustrates that without appropriate interventions, prolonged exposure to occupational stressors can impair productivity and health. Therefore, recognizing and addressing stress through both individual and organizational strategies remains crucial to enhancing workplace well-being and performance.

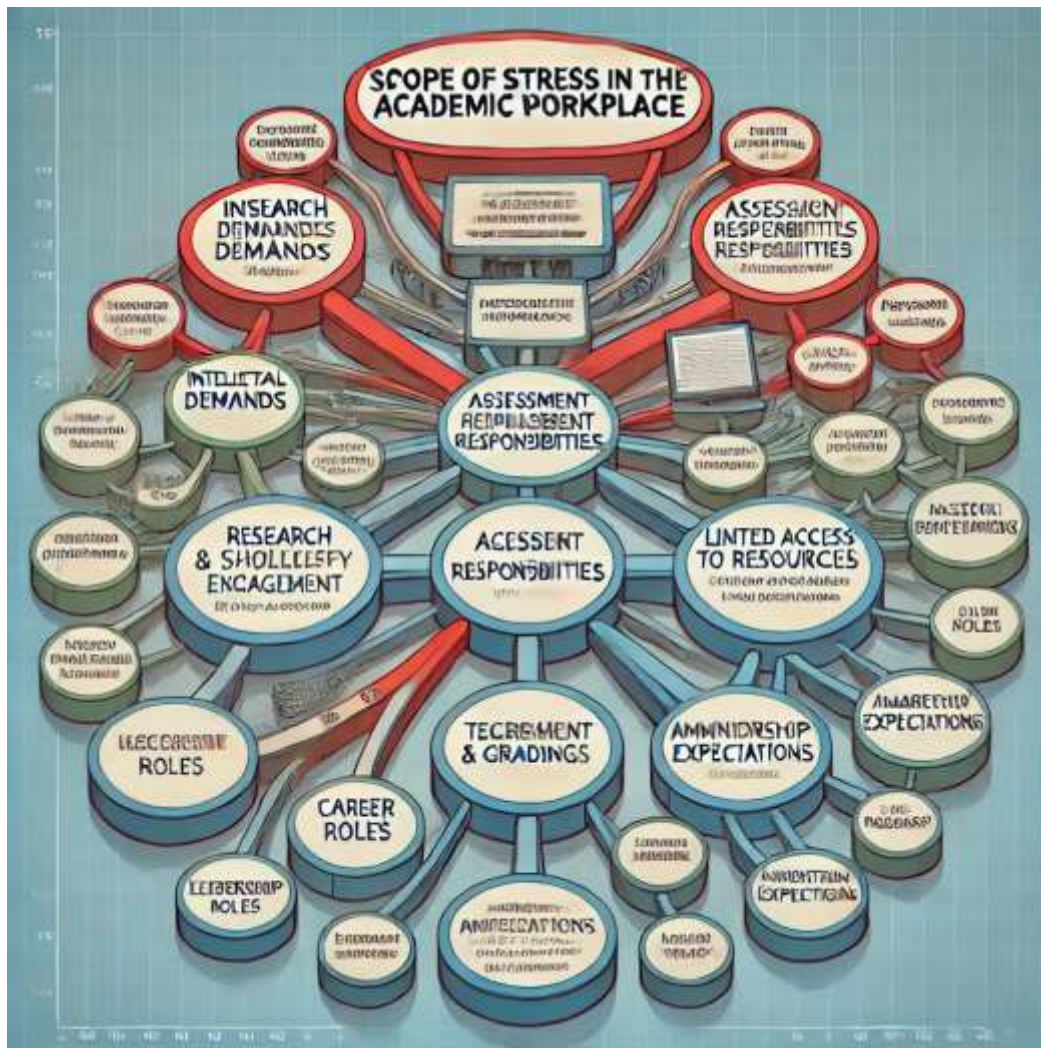


Figure 1: The relationships between different stress factors in the academic workplace.

The figure above illustrates the relationships among various stress factors in the academic workplace. It depicts how aspects such as intellectual demands, assessment responsibilities, career progression, technological challenges, and administrative duties collectively contribute to the stress experienced by academic professionals.

Predisposing Stress Factors of University Lecturers Based on Maslow's Need Theory

University lecturers, or academic staff, encounter unique stress factors inherent to their professional environment. These stressors stem not only from the general pressures of academic life but also vary according to career stage and rank within the institution. This article aims to elucidate these stressors through the lens of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, focusing on junior and senior academic staff categories. Maslow's theory, widely recognized for its analysis of human motivation, provides a structured model for understanding how individuals prioritize their needs from basic survival to self-actualization, a progression shaped by context and experience (Maslow, 1943). In the context of academia, these needs manifest in stress factors specific to each rank, as well as in shared stressors across all ranks.

Abraham Maslow (1943) proposed that individuals pursue a series of needs, structured as a hierarchy. Beginning with physiological needs, the hierarchy then progresses through security, love and belonging, self-esteem, and ultimately, self-actualization. Maslow's model suggests that individuals must satisfy lower-tier needs before progressing to higher stages, with each stage potentially influencing job-related stress based on the individual's career stage (Maslow, 1943; Gawel, 1997). By applying Maslow's model to the stress experienced by academic staff, one can better appreciate the differentiated nature of these stressors, specifically for junior and senior academic staff.

For junior academic staff, stress factors are particularly tied to the first three tiers of Maslow's hierarchy: physiological, safety, and love and belonging needs. At this early stage, junior lecturers often contend with the pressures of establishing a foundational knowledge base and acquiring specialized training required for their roles. This pursuit is exacerbated by the need to secure job stability and career progression (Leibowitz et al., 2012). New recruits may feel compelled to overextend themselves as they adapt to the academic environment, juggling teaching responsibilities with the rigorous demands of research and publication. Moreover, junior academics may experience stress from the need to integrate into their academic community, seek

mentorship, and build collegial support networks—elements crucial for their social and professional identity within the institution (Kinman & Jones, 2003). These pressures align with Maslow's stages, as junior staff strive to fulfill the basic need for security and belonging through professional validation and relationship-building within the academic hierarchy (Maslow, 1943).

Conversely, senior academic staff encounter stressors primarily related to the higher stages of Maslow's hierarchy—namely, self-esteem and self-actualization. Having established a secure footing within the academic framework, senior academics often face the challenges of maintaining and enhancing their professional reputation and navigating the intricate dynamics of academic administration (Kinman & Wray, 2013). At this career stage, responsibilities expand to include roles such as department head, dean, or provost, each bringing new demands and a heightened need for political acumen (Hogan et al., 2017). The expectations placed on senior academics to lead, mentor, and innovate contribute to stress, as these responsibilities align with Maslow's concept of self-actualization, where individuals seek to maximize their potential and make impactful contributions within their field (Maslow, 1943). Ambitions for promotion to prestigious positions further amplify stress, as success requires skillful management of both interpersonal relationships and institutional politics.

In supposition, the stress factors affecting university lecturers can be understood through Maslow's hierarchy, where junior academics primarily grapple with foundational needs of security and belonging, and senior academics face stressors tied to self-esteem and self-actualization. Understanding these differentiated stress factors offers valuable insights for developing targeted strategies to support academic staff throughout their careers. Institutions that recognize and address the evolving needs of their faculty can foster a more supportive academic environment, which may, in turn, enhance overall job satisfaction and productivity (Kinman & Jones, 2003; Hogan et al., 2017).



Figure 2: Hierarchy of Academic Staff Needs that Signify Stress Factors

Predisposing Stress Factors Among Junior and Senior Academic Staff: A Review

Academic staff, both junior and senior, encounter distinct stressors shaped by their career stage and associated responsibilities. These stressors range from role fusion and administrative overload to societal pressures and academic fatigue, each impacting mental health and job satisfaction in the academic field. This paper explores these unique stress factors among junior and senior academic staff and integrates insights from contemporary research to illuminate the specific stressors faced by each group.

Role Fusion in Junior Academic Staff

Junior academic staff frequently balance dual roles as both students and working professionals, given their ongoing training and developmental demands. This dual responsibility necessitates juggling multiple tasks that span both personal and professional growth, which can often lead to psychological and physical strain (Seyle, 1956). The stress stems from the high demand to meet deadlines, complete assignments, and satisfy faculty obligations—often surpassing individual capacity. While Seyle's concept of the alarm reaction stage emphasizes physiological responses to stress, many junior staff may delay seeking relief out of fear of repercussions from superiors or potential setbacks in their academic progress. Cognitive fusion, as discussed by Cookson, Luzon, Newland, and Kingston (2019), exacerbates stress by entangling cognitive thoughts with self-identity, and similarly, role fusion may parallel these effects, particularly among junior academic staff.

Administrative Overload

Junior staff are integral to university operations, contributing significantly to the administrative workload. They often handle responsibilities such as note-taking in staff meetings, assessing students, and assisting senior faculty. This multifaceted workload not only amplifies stress levels but also diminishes time available for personal research and academic development, which are crucial for career advancement (McCarthy et al., 2018). Administrative overload places additional pressure on junior staff to meet institutional expectations while advancing their own academic credentials, a balancing act that becomes increasingly challenging under resource constraints.

Financial Constraints for Professional Development

Career development for junior academic staff often hinges on participation in conferences, seminars, and workshops, which are vital for promotion and academic growth. Yet, limited financial resources hinder many junior staff from attending these events, as they may lack access to institutional funding or external grants. In a competitive environment, this financial barrier may lead to missed opportunities for knowledge enhancement, which further compounds stress. The financial stress also manifests in unmet needs, such as ergonomic office equipment, which can mitigate physical strain but are often unaffordable for junior staff on entry-level salaries (Jiang et al., 2021).

Family Responsibilities and Societal Expectations

Many junior academic staff face the additional burden of family responsibilities, often during a stage of life when they are also building families. Balancing family obligations, such as supporting a spouse or caring for young children, introduces substantial psycho-social stress that intersects with professional demands. Additionally, societal expectations place psychological pressure on young academics, especially in regions where higher-paying jobs in other sectors may appear more appealing (Gonzales et al., 2020). This societal peer pressure to pursue alternative careers further exacerbates stress for junior academic staff, who are compelled to remain focused on academia despite the allure of potentially more lucrative opportunities.

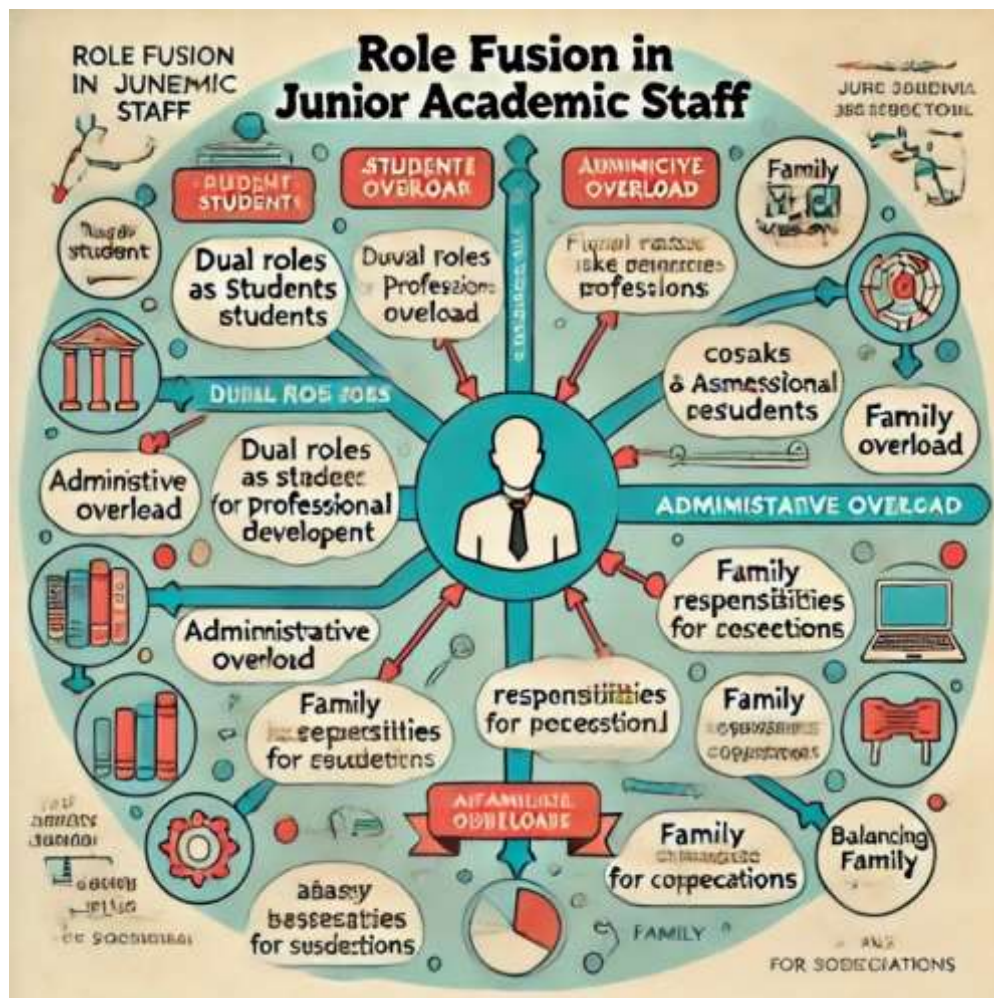


Figure 3: Role fusion of junior academic staff

The diagram (Figure 3) illustrates the concept of role fusion in junior academic staff, focusing on the stress factors associated with their dual roles as both students and professionals. The central node, 'Role Fusion in Junior Academic Staff,' branches into key areas of stress, including 'Dual Roles as Students and Professionals,' 'Administrative Overload,' 'Financial Constraints for Professional Development,' and 'Family Responsibilities and Societal

Expectations.' Each branch highlights specific challenges such as psychological and physical strain, high demands to meet deadlines, administrative tasks like note-taking and student assessment, limited funding for conferences, and balancing family obligations. The diagram uses arrows to indicate the relationships between these stressors and color-coded nodes to clarify the different types of stress experienced by junior staff.

Stress Factors Among Senior Academic Staff

Senior academic staff experience stressors unique to their career stage, often characterized by prolonged exposure to academic responsibilities and evolving personal expectations.

Academic Fatigue

Over time, senior academic staff may develop a sense of fatigue from repetitive tasks associated with teaching, research, and administration. The lack of variety in academic settings, where faculty remain in the same departments for extended periods, can lead to monotony and job dissatisfaction (Johansson, 1989; Moss, 2020). While the continuous engagement in these tasks may enhance expertise, prolonged repetition without change can diminish motivation and contribute to burnout, a condition that impacts both physical and mental well-being.

Political Tensions

As senior academic staff advance in their careers, the pursuit of administrative or leadership positions often involves political maneuvering within the institution. This process can be psychologically taxing, with the level of stress varying by the desired position. For example, aspiring for roles like Vice Chancellor can be significantly more stressful than vying for departmental roles, such as Dean (Smith & Williams, 2022). Navigating these political aspirations demands energy and resilience, placing considerable strain on senior faculty seeking both career fulfillment and personal validation.

Expectation Shortfalls and Promotion Delays

Another prevalent stressor for senior academic staff is the gap between expected and actual career progression. Extended stagnation at a specific rank, often beyond anticipated timelines, fosters frustration and anxiety, especially as junior colleagues advance. Societal and familial expectations add to this pressure, creating a sustained psychological burden until promotional achievements are realized. This stress is compounded by perceived social status and professional recognition, reinforcing the importance of promotion for psychological well-being (Lambert et al., 2019).



Figure 4: Stress factors among senior staff

The diagram (*Figure 4*) illustrates the stress factors faced by senior academic staff, highlighting different aspects of their professional lives that contribute to overall stress. The central theme is 'Stress Factors Among Senior Academic Staff,' with branches that include 'Academic Fatigue,' 'Political Tensions,' and 'Expectation Shortfalls and Promotion Delays.'

'Academic Fatigue' points to repetitive teaching, research tasks, and lack of variety in the work environment, which can lead to job dissatisfaction over time. 'Political Tensions' highlight the stress of navigating institutional politics, particularly for those seeking leadership roles, which often require significant energy and resilience. Lastly, 'Expectation Shortfalls and Promotion Delays' emphasize the frustration that arises from career stagnation, coupled with societal and familial pressures, which can be especially challenging for senior academic staff who have invested years in their careers.

The diagram uses arrows to show the relationships between these stressors, with color-coded nodes for easier understanding. Overall, it provides a clear visual representation of the different stressors that can impact senior academics' physical and mental well-being.

Conclusion

In examining the evolving dynamics of academic work, it becomes evident that while technological advancements have reshaped the profession, the core responsibilities of research, teaching, and administration persist. This continuity, however, exists alongside a growing recognition of stress as an intrinsic component of academic life, with distinct factors shaping the experiences of junior and senior faculty members. Through the lens of stress theories, including Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome (Selye, 1956) and Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943), this paper highlights the multifaceted nature of stress within academia, underscoring the interplay between individual career stages, personal expectations, and institutional demands.

Junior faculty often contend with the foundational stressors of job security and professional integration, balancing teaching and research responsibilities with the need for acceptance within their academic communities (Leibowitz et al., 2012). By contrast, senior academics face stressors tied to self-actualization, leadership expectations, and professional reputation, experiencing challenges that reflect a shift from basic career-building needs to complex administrative and political responsibilities (Kinman & Wray, 2013). Both groups must navigate an environment where academic expectations and resource constraints continually shift, requiring adaptive coping mechanisms to mitigate the effects of prolonged exposure to stressors (Chandola, 2010; Hogan et al., 2017).

Institutional support remains critical in fostering a balanced academic environment. Strategies that recognize the differentiated needs of faculty across career stages—such as mentorship programs, workload adjustments, and mental health support—are essential in promoting both productivity and well-being. As educational institutions become more cognizant of these stress factors, targeted interventions can enhance job satisfaction and support sustainable career progression, contributing to a healthier academic workforce (Abilimi et al., 2014; Kinman & Jones, 2003). Ultimately, addressing academic stress requires a holistic approach that values mental health alongside professional achievement, acknowledging the unique pressures inherent in the pursuit of knowledge and its dissemination.

Summary

National development is intricately linked to the wellbeing of its citizens, as societal advancement is both influenced by and a reflection of the population's health and productivity levels. In this context, stress emerges as a critical focus within mental health research, affecting not only individual health but also broader societal capacities for productivity and development. Indeed, stress has become one of the most intricate and vital areas of study in contemporary psychology and sociology (Shahsavarani, Abadi, & Kalkhoran, 2015).

Within academic institutions, a lack of recognition for the interconnected roles of students, faculty, staff, and leadership weakens efforts to address mental health challenges and undermines universities' overarching missions. Lashuel (2020) emphasizes that fostering collective responsibility and open discourse on mental health is essential in dismantling stigma and effectively addressing the academic mental-health crisis.

Faculty roles in academia, while inherently associated with stress, exhibit unique stressors that are influenced by the position and function of the academic staff. Drawing on Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, it can be posited that stress sources are closely tied to individuals' pursuit of essential life goals that vary across career and life stages. This perspective is further supported by Hobfoll's (1989) conservation of resources theory, which suggests that individuals strive to accumulate and safeguard resources, with stress arising primarily from perceived or actual threats to these valuable resources.

Thus, within academic settings, stress related to career progression is an enduring factor that requires global, institutional, and individual strategies for effective management to mitigate risks of frustration and burnout among academic professionals (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Starnski & Son Hing, 2015; Abilimi & Yeboah, 2013). Developing such strategies will not only enhance the mental resilience of faculty but also align with the broader mission of educational institutions to foster sustainable and supportive academic environments (Gilbert & Gilbert, 2024; Abilimi & Adu-Manu, 2013).

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