

A Comparison of Stress, Burnout, and Coping Mechanisms Among Female Employees at a Selected Federal Ministry in Abuja, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Workplace stress is a response people's body make when their work demands and pressures don't match their knowledge and ability to cope, the effect of chronic workplace stress not managed properly is burnout. The efforts made to manage stress or burnout is called Coping Mechanisms. Female employees working in government institutions are exposed to a range of stressors found within public service systems, and despite growing awareness of occupational stress globally, there is limited context-specific research addressing how marital status influences the experience of stress, burnout, and coping mechanisms among Nigerian women. Here, we used a comparative cross-sectional research design, where 420 female employees were selected through multistage sampling techniques. Data were using standardized questionnaires, including the Perceived Stress Scale for measuring stress, the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory for assessing burnout, and the Brief COPE Inventory for identifying coping strategies. Data were analyzed using SPSS and Chi-square to assess association of stress, burnout and coping mechanisms. The study revealed that majority of the respondents (54%) experienced moderate levels of stress and burnout, while a smaller proportion (26%) reported high levels of both. The most common coping strategies adopted were problem solving, religious engagement and social support. Maladaptive coping strategies such as disengagement, denial and self-blame were also reported by the same respondents. Married women experienced higher level of stress compared to the single women, and were more likely to adopt maladaptive coping strategies methods. Our findings indicate that stress and burnout are major occupational health challenges among women working in the Federal Ministry of Health, Abuja. The marital status of the female employee determines the intensity of stress and burnout, they face, which further affects their overall wellbeing and job performance. We recommend the ministry adopts employee wellness program such as flexible work schedules, provision of childcare support, stress management training and regular mental health awareness session, that promotes work-life balance. By addressing these factors, government institutions can enhance job satisfaction, improve productivity, and foster a healthier work environment for its female workforce.

