

Research article

LONGEVITY AND THE ROLE OF HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION IN “STRESS MANAGEMENT”

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Abstract

The study examined longevity and the role of Home Economics Education in stress management. Two objectives and two research questions were postulated. The study adopted a survey research. A total population of one hundred and fifty respondents consisting of seventy-five (75) lecturers each in Kwara colleges of Education, Ilorin and Oro. A self developed questionnaire of thirty items was used for the study. Result was analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentages. The result indicates that, there are events stressors such as. Finally, the paper recommends that the major goal of life is to cope with stressors effectively. **Copyright © acascipub.com, all rights reserved.**

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Introduction

Stress is a fact for individuals and families. Hans Selye (1974) in Boss (2000) was one of the founding fathers of stress research. His view in 1956 was that “stress is not necessarily something bad, it all depends on how you take it . the stress of exhilaration – creative successful work is beneficial , while that of failure, humiliation of infection is detrimental” Selye believed that the biochemical effects of stress would be experienced irrespective of whether the situation was positive or negative. Since then, a great deal of further

research has been conducted, and ideas have moved on. Stress is now viewed as a ‘bad thing’ with a range of harmful biochemical and long – term effects. These effects have rarely been observed in positive situations.

Hans Selye (1974) in Boss (2000) defined stress as “the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it.” The “demand’ can be a threat, a challenge or any kind of change which requires the body to adapt. The response is automatic and immediate. Stress can be good (called “eustress”) when it helps us perform better, or it can be bad (“distress”) when it causes upset or makes us sick. Stress is a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that “demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize.” In short, it’s what we feel when we think we’ve lost control of events. He went further to list the event that leads to stress (stressor) as:

Death of spouse

Divorce

Marital separation

Jail term

Death of close family members

Personal injury or loss

Marriage

Fixed in work / lost of job

Marital reconciliation

Retirement

Change in health of family member

Pregnancy

Sex difficulties

Gain of new family member

Moreover, Olson and McCubbin (1989) identified the following common life and family events that affected 10% of the families at all stages of life cycle stages.

Uncompleted tasks

Emotional difficulties in family life

Sexual difficulties between husband and wife

Unstable economic conditions

Major economics investments and purchased

Medical and dental expenses

Money for the basics of family living

Changing jobs or careers

Living, quitting or retiring from job

illness and death in the family

Hans Selye (1974) in Boss (2000) further classified the causes of stress “stressor” into two kinds: external and internal

External stressor includes:

Physical environment: noise, bright light, heat, confined

Social: (interaction with people): rudeness, bossiness or aggressiveness on the part of someone else.

Organizational: rules, regulations, “red tape” deadlines

Major life events: death of a relatives, lost of job, promotion, new baby

Daily hassles: commuting, misplacing keys, mechanical breakdowns

Internal stressors include:

Lifestyle choices: caffeine, not enough sleep, overloaded schedule

Negative self-talk: pessimistic thinking, self – criticism, over – analyzing

Mind traps: unrealistic expectations, taking things personally, all or nothing thinking, exaggeration and rigid thinking.

Stressful personality traits: perfectionist, workaholic, pleaser

It is important to note that most of the stress that most of us have is actually self-generated. This is a paradox because so many people think of external stressors when they are upset (it is the weather, the boss, the children, the spouse, the stock market). Recognizing that we create most of our own upsets, however, is an important first step to dealing with them.

Stress Pileup

An important concept is stress pileup: the occurrence and after effect of several stresses within a short period of time. For example, stress in a couple’s relationship is often taken by each person to their job, and stress at work is often brought home. Homeleaa families experience a pileupnof stressor. No income, no place to live, difficulty in obtaining health care, disruption of the children education and isolation from relatives and

friends. Stresses in various areas of life were interrelated. For example, family stress was highly related to personal stress, and couple stress and family were much related.

Symptoms of Stress

He went further to state that manifestations of stress are numerous and varied but they generally fall into four categories (this is only a partial list of most common symptoms).

Physical: fatigue, headache, insomnia, muscle ache/stiffness (especially neck, shoulders and low back), heart palpitations, chest pain, abdominal cramps, nausea, trembling, cold extremities, flushing or sweating and frequent colds.

Mental: decrease in concentration and memory, indecisiveness, mind racing or going blank, confusion, loss of sense of humor.

Emotional: anxiety, nervousness, depression, anger, frustration, worry, fear, irritation, impatient, short temper.

Behavioral: pacing, fidgeting, nervous habits (nail biting, foot tapping), increased eating, smoking, drinking, crying, yelling, swearing, blaming and even throwing things or hitting.

Ways to Master Stress.

The following are some categories that can be helpful in mastering stress.

Change lifestyle habits.

Decrease caffeine (coffee, tea, colas and chocolates).

Eat well balanced diet

Decrease consumption of junk food

Eat slowly

Regular exercise (at least 30minutes, three times per week),

Adequate sleep (figure out what you need and then get it).

Leisure time (do something for yourself everyday)

Relaxation exercises (e.g. meditation, self hypnosis)

Change stressful situations

Time and money management

Assertiveness

Problem – solving

Possibly leaving a job or a relationship

Change your thinking

Look at things more positively

See problems as opportunities

Refuse negative thought

Keep a sense of humor

Diversion and Distraction

Take a time – out (anything from a short walk to a vacation) to get away from the things that are bothering you. This will not resolve the problems, but it gives you a break and a chance for your stress levels to decrease. Then, you can return to deal with issues feeling more rested and in a better frame of mind.

Olson and McCubbin (1994) opined that balanced families cope better with stress than unbalanced families, and balanced families had better communication and a larger behavioral repertoire. Balanced families cope more effectively with stress because they have more personal and relationship resources, including better communication and problems as challenges to be confronted or dealt with head – on rather than avoided or denied.

The Role of Home Economics in managing stress

Home Economics education has help in various ways in minimizing or managing stress.

Home economics education educates an individual to plan ahead for future through budgeting and special savings, in the area of seeing to the welfare of each member of the family e.g. good education for the children, buying of family car, building of house for the family etc.

It also educates individual on various vocational training that can be practice prior to retirement, so as to have continuity of life, e.g. having a laundry / dry cleaning service outlet, day care / creche or nursery school, in-door and out-door catering services, fashion designing outlet etc.

Moreover, it educates in the area of making a house worthy of leaving through beautification of both inside and outside of the house with interior decorations and flowers. The knowledge of labor saving devices like blender, washing machine, dish washer, vacuum cleaner, rice cooker, pressure cooker etc are used to save energy, thereby reducing stress in the home.

Furthermore, it educates to plan for individual needs. such as family wardrobe, through selection and maintenance of clothing, health of an individual, children, aged, work of an individual, a as to prepare adequate meal.

It educates individual to maintain relationship in the family and outside the home through teaching of morals and family life living, and the role everyone in the family plays giving room for good communication and rapport in the home as well as minimizing marital turbulences like separation and divorce.

Statement of the problem

The pressure or tension which individual or families exerts on themselves as a result of activities performed is an issue of concern and challenge. A life spent without any form depression s worth living and last long. It is in the light of this, that this study is carried out to identify stressors and the sign and symptoms in promoting a long life for individual and families.

Objectives of the study

- 1 To examine the events that lead to stress
- 2 To identify the signs and symptoms of stress

Research Questions

- 1 What are the events that lead to stress
- 2 What are the signs and symptoms of stress

Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design. A population of one hundred and fifty respondents consisting of seventy-five lecturers each in Kwara colleges of education Ilorin and Oro, were randomly selected and used for the study. A self developed questionnaire of thirty test items was developed using a four point Likert scale. The instrument was face validated by two fellow Home Economics and modifications were made accordingly. Split half method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument ($r=80.0$). Results of the study were analyzed using simple percentages and inferences were drawn from the study.

Results

Table 1: Respondents' opinion on the events that lead to stress

s/no	Events that leads to stress	SA	A	D	SD
1	Divorce	121	15	10	03
2	Death of spouse	101	35	09	06
3	Marital separation	131	10	06	03
4	Death of close family member	105	40	03	02

5	Personal injury / loss	90	30	16	14
6	Marriage	42	45	30	33
7	Retirement	75	09	60	06
8	Pregnancy	90	15	30	15
9	Sex difficulty	60	40	36	14
10	Loss of job	90	35	20	05

Discussions

Table 1 above revealed the respondents opinion on the events that lead to stress with 80.6% strongly agreed, 10% agreed, 6.7% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed that divorce lead to stress. while 67.3% strongly agreed, 23.3% agreed, 6% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed that death of spouse lead to stress. Moreover, 87.3% strongly agreed, 6.7% agreed, 6% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed that marital separation lead to stress. However, 70% strongly agreed, 26.7% agreed, 2% disagreed and 1.3% strongly disagreed that death of close family member lead to stress.

Meanwhile, 60% strongly agreed, 20% agreed, 10.7% disagreed and 9.3% strongly disagreed that personal injury / loss lead to stress. Also, 28% strongly agreed, 30% agreed, 20% disagreed and 22% strongly disagreed that marriage lead to stress. Moreso, 50% strongly agreed, 6% agreed, 40% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed that retirement lead to stress. While, 60% strongly agreed, 10% agreed, 20% disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed that pregnancy lead to stress. Forty (40%) strongly agreed, 26.7% agreed, 24% disagreed and 9.3% strongly disagreed that sex difficulty lead to stress. Finally, 68% strongly agreed, 23.3% agreed, 13.3% disagreed and 3.4% strongly disagreed that loss of joblead to stress. The finding is in line with David and John (2000) who identified these events that they lead to stress.

Table 2^a : Respondents opinion on physical Signs and Symptoms of Stress

S/No	Signs and Symptoms of stress	SA	A	D	SD
	Physical signs and Symptoms				
1	Fatigue	80	20	30	20
2	Headache	115	25	06	04

3	Insomnia	107	30	10	03
4	Chest pain	70	22	30	28
5	Abdominal cramps	74	29	26	30

Table 2^a above revealed the respondents opinion on physical signs and symptoms of stress with 53.3% strongly agreed, 13.3% agreed, 20% disagreed and 13.3% strongly disagreed that fatigue is a physical signs and symptoms of stress. While 76.7% strongly agreed, 16.7% agreed, 4% disagreed and 2.6% strongly disagreed that headache is a physical signs and symptoms of stress. However, 71.3% strongly agreed, 20% agreed, 6.7% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed that insomnia is a physical signs and symptoms of stress. Also, 46.7% strongly agreed, 14.7% agreed, 21.3% disagreed and 18.7% strongly disagreed that chest pain is a physical signs and symptoms of stress. While 49.4% strongly agreed, 19.3% agreed, 17.3% disagreed and 20% strongly disagreed that abdominal pain. is a physical signs and symptoms of stress.

Table 2^b : Respondents opinion on Mental Signs and Symptoms of Stress

S/No	Signs and Symptoms of stress	SA	A	D	SD
	Mental signs and Symptoms				
1	Decrease in memory	92	41	11	06
2	Indecisiveness	111	24	14	01
3	Mind racing	114	19	12	05
4	Confusion	120	22	02	06
5	Loss of sense of humor	99	18	13	20

Table 2^b above showed the respondents opinion on mental signs and symptoms of stress with 61.3% strongly agreed, 27.4% agreed, 7.3% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed that decrease in memory is a mental signs and symptoms of stress. While 74% strongly agreed, 16% agreed, 9.3% disagreed and 0.7% strongly disagreed that indecisiveness is a mental signs and symptoms of stress. Moreover, 76% strongly agreed, 12.7% agreed, 8% disagreed and 3.3% strongly disagreed that mind racing is a mental signs and symptoms of stress. However, 80% strongly agreed, 14.6% agreed, 1.3% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed that confusion is a physical signs and symptoms of stress. Also, 66% strongly agreed, 12% agreed, 8.7% disagreed and 13.4% strongly disagreed that loss of sense of humor is a mental signs and symptoms of stress.

Table 2^c : Respondents opinion on Emotional Signs and Symptoms of Stress

S/No	Signs and Symptoms of stress	SA	A	D	SD
	Emotional signs and Symptoms				

1	Anxiety	89	21	30	10
2	Fear	96	26	21	07
3	Irritability	78	34	18	20
4	Worry	102	11	25	12
5	Anger	84	14	31	21

Table 2^c above showed the respondents opinion on emotional signs and symptoms of stress with 59.3% strongly agreed, 14% agreed, 20% disagreed and 6.7% strongly disagreed that anxiety is an emotional signs and symptoms of stress. While 64% strongly agreed, 17.3% agreed, 14% disagreed and 4.6% strongly disagreed that fear is an emotional signs and symptoms of stress. Moreover, 52% strongly agreed, 22.7% agreed, 12% disagreed and 13.3% strongly disagreed that irritability is an emotional signs and symptoms of stress. However, 68% strongly agreed, 7.3% agreed, 16.7% disagreed and 8% strongly disagreed that worry is an emotional signs and symptoms of stress. Also, 56% strongly agreed, 9.3% agreed, 20.7% disagreed and 14% strongly disagreed that anger is an emotional signs and symptoms of stress.

Table 2^d: Respondents opinion on Behavioral Signs and Symptoms of Stress

S/No	Signs and Symptoms of stress	SA	A	D	SD
	Behavioral signs and Symptoms				
1	Fidgetting	91	31	08	20
2	Smoking	120	20	07	03
3	Crying	131	14	02	03
4	Yelling	112	16	20	02
5	Pacing	96	23	24	07

Table 2^d above revealed the respondents opinion on behavioral signs and symptoms of stress with 60.7% strongly agreed, 20.7% agreed, 5.3% disagreed and 12.5% strongly disagreed that fidgetting is a behavioral signs and symptoms of stress. While 80% strongly agreed, 13.3% agreed, 4.7% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed that smoking is a behavioral signs and symptoms of stress. Moreover, 87.3% strongly agreed, 9.3% agreed, 1.3% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed that crying is a behavioral signs and symptoms of stress. However, 74.7% strongly agreed, 10.7% agreed, 13.3% disagreed and 1.3% strongly disagreed that yelling is a behavioral signs and symptoms of stress. Also, 64% strongly agreed, 15.3% agreed, 16% disagreed and 4.7% strongly disagreed that pacing is a behavioral signs and symptoms of stress.

The findings in items 2^a, 2^b, 2^c and 2^d were in line with Olson and McCubbin (1989) who classified the signs and symptoms of stress into four, which were physical, mental, emotional and behavioral .

Recommendation

Having established that there is stress; a major goal of live is to cope with stressor effectively. Happiness is not so much the absence of stress as it is ability to manage stress effectively. Support from one's social network is often very important in the face of stress. This social support network includes kin, friends, neighbor, social service institutions and special self help group. Family member should be helpful to individual that open up to being help; by taking an individual's physical and emotional problems as are also the family's problems.

The government should make social amenities such as education; utilities etc. to be bearable for individual if not free and improve the welfare of its citizen.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the individual and families experience stress even though the types of issues that cause the stress vary. All stressor regardless of their origin eventually affect the individual or families.

All stressors appear at every stage of live, others are common across. Financial issues concern every individual at all stages and all income level. An important aspect of individual of family system is the ability to change in response to major stressor. Balance families are more capable of adapting to a crisis and dealing with stress effectually than unbalanced families.

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