COPING MECHANISMS FOR STRESS AMONG MARRIED FEMALE POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, IBADAN, OYO STATE

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CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to the Almighty God for His abundant grace and blessings.

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ABSTRACT

In a bid to empower women, education is vital. Women are rising to meet up with high standard in the society and are being motivated to partake in societal activities and at the same time not neglecting their traditional assignment in their homes. Combining motherhood roles and academics activities are stressful period for married female students. Few studies have documented the coping mechanism for stress among married females in higher institution of learning. This study, therefore explored the coping mechanism for stress among married female postgraduate students of university of Ibadan.

A descriptive cross-sectional design was conducted among 244 consenting female married students of the postgraduate school of the University of Ibadan. A validated self-administered semi-structured questionnaire used for data collection included questions relating to physical sources of stress in school, social factors that constitute stress during course work, mental effect of stress in academic performance, emotional source of stress and stress coping mechanism utilised by the female married students. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics.

Respondents' age was 33.9±7.9 years, majority (80.3%) were Christians, 85.7% were Yoruba and 78.3% were married before they started the programme. About 40% of the respondents claimed they do often find movement within school environment stressful. About 45% often felt tired or worn out while 38.1% always felt tired or worn out at the end of each day's lecture. Majority (66.4%) claimed that long lecture duration made them physically stressed in the school environment while 20.1% said it was registration/assignment. Slightly more than half of them (50.8%) claimed they rarely found it easy to read after house chores while 24.6% never found it easy. A large proportion 79.1% always got moral support from their husbands concerning their academic situations while 4.1% rarely get moral support from their husbands. Some (32.4%) often had headaches after attending to their different responsibilities and 9.4% always had headaches. Few (10.2%) always got worried about assignments and examinations. The relationship of 75.8% with their spouse or in-laws did not get them depressed while the relationships of 17.6% with their spouse/in-laws rarely got them depressed. Disagreement with spouses often made 23.4% lose concentration in school while it always made 9.8% to lose concentration in school. Majority (73.4%) claimed they didn't belong to any association/club and 41.8% reported that combining school activities with

household responsibilities rarely gave them time to attend social functions. Some (49.2%) always doubled their efforts and tried harder to make things work and 44.3% often doubled their efforts. Some (41%) often made plans for everything and followed it while 45.9% always made and followed their plans in everything. More than half (53.3%) claimed that they do relax when they experience multiple stresses.

Married female postgraduate students go through serious physical, social, mental and emotional stress while combining academic works with their responsibilities at home. It would be very necessary therefore to promote a supportive environment for them to learn in school and perform their responsibilities at home effectively.

Keywords: Stress, Coping mechanism, Married female, Postgraduate student
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INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the study

In this modern society, women are rising to meet up standard in the society and are being empowered to partake in the activities outside the home and at the same time not neglecting their traditional assignment in their homes. In the bid to empower women, education is vital. Education can generally be perceived as a very important tool for development. Thus the importance of education in enhancing social, economic and human development has a general intrinsic value. While education of both genders has a substantial impact on economic growth the education of girls was a stronger predictor of growth than that of boys in poorer countries of sub-Saharan Africa (Forster and Offei-Ansah, 2012). Female education makes it possible to tap the potentials of women to support nation building which seems to be low in sub-Saharan Africa. Education provides women with greater earning capacity and it promotes smaller, healthier and better educated families who can deal effectively with the challenges of the 21st century.

Stress is a term that can be linked to so many life situations that people are confronted with due to rapidly changing values, life styles, career patterns and family role expectations. These life situations have the potential to increase the level of stress people experience. Urbanization and job demands in industry, public service as well as vocational activities in the private sector are part of the changing environmental circumstances affecting family roles and expectations in Africa. The transition from senior high school to university level is a significant contributor to changing values and lifestyles among the young people especially among those just gaining admission. Stress is a common element in the lives of every individual, regardless of race or cultural background Garrett, (2001). Stress contributes to health problems worldwide. Its presence is felt in home, office, industry, and academic environments. It is a common element in life regardless of race or cultural background. The effects of stress vary with the ways it is appraised, and the coping strategies used differ between individuals and are influenced by ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic characteristics. Stress is inherent in our life activities and knows no barrier, regardless of the rich and the poor, women and men, the old and young, the employed and unemployed, paid and unpaid and every job has moments of stress. It has effects on people's behaviors, communications

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and efficiency. Stress is a physiological non-specific reaction to external or internal demands. Therefore, it is not the stressor that causes stress but the individual's perception and emotional reaction to it. University students are exposing to very stressful situations. The problems encountered by students may differ from those faced by their nonstudent peers. The pressure to get good grades and to get a degree is very high. Getting high grades is not the only source of stress for students. Also there are other important sources of stress, which included homework, assignments and uncomfortable classrooms. In addition to academic requirements, relationships with faculty members and time pressure may also be sources of stress. Relationships with family and friends, eating and sleeping habits and loneliness may affect some students on an average.

The causes of stress include life changes, chronic pressures and hassles which, according to Lazarus and Folkman (1984) are daily interactions with the environment that were essentially negative. How we perceive stress is crucial to our well-being since much of the stress we experience has to do with how we perceive the stimulus that surrounds us and the degree to which we perceive it can be significantly threatening. Once we live in an environment with diverse activities, it is important to indicate how our life is tied to them. The relationship between the person and the environment can be appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being. This treatise suggests that the stressor, the person's perception of it and ability to adapt to the stressor are significant in the perception of stress.

Between 1998 and 2008, there was a 50% increase in the number of master's degrees earned by women Institute of Education Sciences National Center for Education Statistics, (2009), however, primarily due to financial constraints, lack of affordable and flexible childcare, and lack of health insurance, female graduate students with children are the single most at-risk population for attrition from their on-campus, full-time graduate programs (Anderson, 1998; Lynch, 2008). According to the Institute of Education Sciences National Center for master's degrees and, for the first time, females and males earned an equal number of doctoral degrees. Based on these data, it appears that students of both genders were completing degrees at an equitable rate; however, women have been faced with different challenges than men in their pursuit of higher education (Devos, Viera, Diaz, and Dunn, 2007; Grenier and Burke, 2008; Heenan, 2002; Johnson and Robson, 1999; Lynch, 2008; Mallinckrodt and Leong, 1992; Scott et al., 1998; Sullivan, 2001; Younes and Asay, 1998). With the rapid development of distance learning opportunities, women who are balancing multiple

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responsibilities such as careers, families, and community obligations that might have previously impeded their pursuit of higher education, are being provided the option to complete classes online in the comfort of their own home, on their own schedule (Muller, 2008).

Coping strategies are person's constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the person resources. Previous research showed that students with an active coping style have lower levels of psychological distress. In view of the potential long term benefits of managing stress in a more effective way, it may be important for students to develop such skills early in their medical career. Stress is not only happens at workplace but students are subjected to different kinds of stressors, such as the presence of the academics with an obligation to succeed, an uncertain future and difficulties of integrating into the system. The students faced social, emotional, physical and family problems which might affect their learning ability and academic performance. As a result, it is important that individuals develop different strategies in order to manage stressful situations. In terms of stress management, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defined eight separate coping strategies that they believed individuals employed in stressful situations. These are confrontation, seeking social support, planned problem-solving, self-control, accepting responsibility, distancing, positive reappraisal, and escape/avoidance.

Psychosocial stress is high among freshmen, women, and international students because of the adjustment they must make in their social, academic, and cultural lives in a new environment, having left all previous support persons such as parents, siblings, and high school friends. They are faced with loneliness, anxiety, depression, and disorientation. Also, previous studies have shown that poor coping strategies and variations in personality types may contribute to additional stress in certain individuals, leading to a negative pattern of behavior, development of psychosomatic symptoms, and decreased academic performance.

An increasing body of evidence suggests that university students experience high levels of stress due to intensive academic workloads, the knowledge base required, and the perception of having inadequate time to develop it. Students report the greatest sources of academic stress to be taking and studying for examinations with respect to grade competition and mastery of a large amount of information in a small amount of time. This stress can disrupt

the internal and external environment of the student's body and cause physiological changes that tend to disturb homeostasis.

Often, academic demands and self-imposed stressors collide, tipping the balance and resulting in disequilibrium and excessive stress. Such heightened stress could lead to associated symptoms such as sleep disturbance, which results in physical stress placed on the body. Psychosocial, individual, and physical stressors are also encountered often in an academic environment. Individual variables that can influence one's response to stress include age, sex, physical-ability status, lifestyle (smoking and alcohol-drinking habits), ethnicity, adiposity, and genetic predisposition. Physical stress imposed on the body includes poor study posture and sitting on chairs improperly in overcrowded classes, which could produce muscle strain and joint imbalance, and soft-tissue stresses. This could become habitual, leading to more chronic, recurring pain and episodes of pain. Additionally, prolonged static posture/loading or sustained exertion is common and occurs more often among students preparing for examinations. In this posture, the muscles must hold the body in a single position for a long time, leading to prolonged immobility with subsequent reduction in blood flow that result in muscle tension and susceptibility to musculoskeletal injury. Adverse academic environmental factors such as poor lighting, extreme temperature, and noise can also increase the risk of injury and subsequent development of musculoskeletal disorders. Thus, it has been hypothesized that heightened academic stress, especially during examinations, is associated with an increased incidence of musculoskeletal disorders among students.

Recent decades have seen a marked increase in the number of female students in colleges. A generation after women regularly began combining motherhood with careers, female academics find that balancing the demands of the tenure system and the timing of motherhood is difficult. Some are delaying childbearing, some are asking for delay of tenure decisions, and others are job-sharing to accommodate family and career Wilson and Robin (1995). Women experience stress more than men on a daily basis, women with children experience more strain than those without, regardless of whether they are single parents or shared responsibilities with a partner. Women are more likely than men to be filling multiple caregivers' roles. Women tend to shoulder a greater proportion of domestic work than do men, and they typically balance multiple conflicting roles--professional, mother, house worker, etc. When domestic work is coupled with a busy professional life, the workload can become burdensome, and it increases significantly with each child. Many (especially

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younger, untenured) women in the academy chronically face a difficult choice: to do the research they must do to keep their jobs and earn tenure or complete essential domestic obligations (Nelson and Burke 2002).

1.2   Statement of the problem

Stress is a problem that cannot be overlooked; stress has negative effect on individual and on productivity (Adeoye, 2009). Consequently, stress affects the individual, his or her family, the community and the nation at large. Available research evidence clearly shows that dual career women encounter stress in their attempt to fulfill home and out-of-home demands, Adeoye and Durosaro, (2003) Women are very important in national development, and the role of women at home also cannot be overemphasized. In fact, women make the home attractive and pleasant, in spite of being in the academics, this dual role of women calls attention to the need to study the sources of stress for women especially those particular to women in academics that have to combine home roles with academic responsibilities. Although, the stress experienced is not peculiarly limited to married females in academics, the latter seems to be more affected because of their dual roles as wives and mothers on one hand, and students on another. The home-student interface stress therefore seems to particularly affect women.

In investigating how women have negotiated their various roles, including taking on the additional responsibility of being a student, researchers have found that women experience a great deal of conflict and stress in balancing their status as a student with being primarily committed to their family and children (Giancola, Grawitch, and Borchert, 2009; Grenier and Burke, 2008; Johnson, Schwartz and Bower, 2000, Mallinckrodt and Leong, 1992; Younes and Asay, 1998). One study found that women who took on additional roles without delegating other responsibilities were more likely to experience strain on relationships, health and overall functioning (Giancola et al. 2009) and further discussed how the accumulation of family, school and work demands could create stress and role strain for female students while women from low income households experienced the greatest levels of stress (McGrath and Burkhart, 1983). Distance education has opened doors for many who were previously unable to access on-campus programs, such as working mothers, single mothers or caregivers to multiple generations (Heenan, 2002; Sullivan, 2001). However, some women motivated to return to school have found it difficult to persist through to graduation due to issues such as

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lack of family or employer support, rather than due to inherent personality characteristics (Scott, Burns, and Cooney, 1998).

The empowerment of women has implications for demographical development. Education is seen as a key to transforming women's attitudes and values from traditional to more modern, and in their behavior from constrained to emancipated Jejeebhoy, (1995). Female education affects the way household decisions are made and have effects on issues like fertility, children's health, and children's (especially girls) school attendance. There is also a direct relationship between a mother's education and family health (Sutton, 1998). The education of a mother is consistently one of the most powerful determinants of child health. Educated mothers are far more likely to make use of preventive health-care services and to demand timely treatment. An enhanced nutritional standard also reduces child mortality by five to ten percent for each additional year of schooling (Sutton, 1998). The multiple benefits of female education are cumulative, in that they become mutually reinforcing over time, with the advantages transmitted across generations.

However, the role of academic stress as a possible chronic stressor for students; most especially the married women, is not well understood. Academic stress involves multiple stressors particular to students such as academic, financial, time, health related and self-imposed types of stressors. Academic jobs are oversized and growing larger. The economic realities of academia mean that universities require faculty to teach more courses than ever before, while maintaining active research programs, obtaining significant grants and other sources of funding, and mentoring and advising students.

In Nigeria, ample educational opportunities do exist for women and these have been enhanced with the rapid socio-economic development and technological changes, in Nigeria, the educational policy provides equal opportunities for all irrespective of their age, gender, qualification or class. It is not that women are deprived of their studying opportunities, but for a woman to succeed, she needs to have the diligence, determination and perseverance to jump over all the hurdles in front of her, for example, these married female students are faced with the challenges of interfacing the demands of academic work with their traditional responsibilities and obligations as wives and even mothers. Married female students have long been a subject of debate. Despite the importance of the adjustment mechanism of married female students in Nigerian universities for their academic success, little research had been carried out in Nigeria. In this regards, none of the previous investigations in Nigeria

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have looked specifically at the adjustment mechanism of married female students in Nigerian tertiary institutions. According to National Institute of Mental Health 2002, recent research suggests that psycho-social adjustment mechanism is influenced by various cross-cultural variables, such as amount of contact with the university, length of residence, finance, and accommodation, it also suggested that the adjustment mechanism of married female students varies and a range of economic and psycho-social factors that affects adjustment mechanism of married female students have also been identified National Institute of Mental Health, (2002).

Many academic women feel that their career opportunities are limited after having children. Colleagues may assume that they have sold out and are no longer committed to their careers-- which may influence tenure, promotion, and other opportunities for advancement (like appointment to chairs, deanships, and high-profile committees). Even women who attempt to circumvent the maternal wall by having children during graduate school often are penalized (Nelson and Burke (2002)

1.3   Justification

University education has been found to prepare high caliber professionals to take charge of policies and administrative management of a nation and to facilitate national development. Female students generally have been documented to experience many difficulties during their academic programs, but what is not well documented are the nature of the problems and the coping strategies they employ. Information about women's education in universities provides the need for greater efforts to expand and improve university education for women. Steel (2005) stated that understanding how female students cope with their difficulties will provide the building block for future intervention strategies designed to minimize problems, increase retention rates and improve academic performance. They are stressed and this requires effective strategies for coping with their stress to allow female students in the university perform academically well to reach their goals and still maintain healthy family environments.

There has been significant research devoted to understanding of stress among students generally in graduate student's outcomes. Nearly all the research that had been conducted prior to the mid-1970 on gender and marriage differences in graduate student outcomes, marriage would impact an outcome that places different demands on the time and mobility of men and women. A study by Patterson and Sells (1973) show that single graduate students of

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either gender spend about equal time doing household chores, However, married female graduate students spent more time that the single students and married male students spent less time. They further indicated that women are more likely to drop-out to accompany a spouse to a new location than vice versa.

Most recent research, in arrears unrelated to higher education, indicates potential explanations to expect a causal link between marriage and graduate student's outcomes. These include the effect of marriage on time use, productivity, risky behaviors, and mental and physical health. A good summary of studies that have explored these explanations is provided by both Waite and Gallagher (2000). The findings from these studies show that, compared to single men, married men are more productive, healthier (both physically and mentally), and engage in less risky behaviours. The effects of marriage are usually smaller for women since the behavioral changes that accompany marriage are smaller for women than men.

In the society these days where women are been encouraged to be empowered in the community tends to increase women education and combining motherhood with academics could be stressful, this study will be carried out to determine the factors of stress and how women will be able to cope with it in today's world this is line to achieve the millennium development goal MDGs 3: to promote gender equality and empower women.

In the development of females in Nigeria, it has been observed that important psychological processes have been affected by personal family stressor. Hence, associating stress load of conflict, frustration and tension have increased (Cutrona, 2006). In analyzing the delay in school attendance and imbalance of gender in school enrolment, Obodoegbulam (2007) revealed that social discrimination, economic deprivation, political marginalization and cultural annihilation had no intellectual justification in the issue of women education. However, Ogunboyede (2004) had earlier observed in analyzing women education and academic achievement in national development in Nigeria that gender did not influence the achievement of women Some other researchers observed cultural constraints such as early marriage and preference for male child as negative influences on female education in Africa and Nigeria in particular (Mammam, 2000; Ogunlade, 2000; Obi, 2001; Ugwu, 2002).

1.4   Research questions

The questions to which answers are being sought in this study are the following:

1. What are the physical sources of stress among married female students?
2. What are the social sources of stress among married female students?
3. What are the mental sources of stress among married female students?
4. What are the emotional sources of stress among married female students?
5. What are the stress coping strategies often utilized by female married students when they experience stress in their performance?

1.5   Broad objective of the study

To investigate the coping mechanism adapted to by married female students in postgraduate school University of Ibadan, Oyo State

1.6   Specific objectives of the study

1. To identify the physical sources of stress in school among married female
2. To identify the social sources that constitutes stress during course work
3. To determine the perceived mental effect of stress among married female students in their academic performance
4. To identify the emotional sources of stress among married female students
5. To determine the stress coping mechanism utilized by female married students

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LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Experience of females in academic environment

The interconnections between education, the family and social spheres of life are integral to the experiences and outcomes of female education. These relationships highlight the need to understand experiences in the life of the female married student. Female students generally have been documented to experience many difficulties during their academic programs, but what is not well documented are the nature of the problems and the coping strategies that the female married one's employ. Information about women's education in universities provides the need for greater efforts to expand and improve university education for women. Steel (2005) stated that understanding how female students cope with their difficulties will provide the building block for future intervention strategies designed to minimize problems, increase retention rates and improve academic performance. They are stressed and this requires effective strategies for coping with their stress to allow married female students in the university perform academically well to reach their goals and still maintain healthy family environments.

Mallinckrodt and Leong (1992) found that women in graduate programs experienced more stressors, role strain in dealing with their family obligations, less social support, and more depression than their male counterparts. Several researchers have determined that for most female students, the effect of managing multiple roles and additional stressors was determined largely by the student's perception of the enormity of the task (Giancola, Grawitch, and Borchert, 2009; Glynn, Maclean, Forte, and Cohen, 2009; Hammer, Grigsby, and Woods,1998; Home, 1997; Lawson and Fuehrer, 1989). The more stressors and conflicts experienced by students, and the more students viewed these as unmanageable or negative, the lower their overall life satisfaction and the more likely they were to use maladaptive coping mechanisms (Giancola et al., 2009;). Barnett (2004) discussed the notion that directly related to the increase in post-secondary educational achievement of women was the increase in married women, with children, returning to the workforce. The researcher predicted that it was likely that women would continue to manage multiple roles such as employee, mother, wife and student.

According to Johnson et al. (2008), many adult students were often already managing a job and family when they decided to return to school and found it extremely stressful to balance schooling with parenting, which could exacerbate attrition and low completion rates for female students. When women took on the additional role of student, there was an expectation that they would accommodate the new role without any reduction in the load of the responsibilities as mother, employee or wife (Mallinckrodt and Leong, 1992). In addition, stressful life events, such as divorce or loss of a job, became the instigator for adults to seek furthering their education (Johnson, Schwartz, and Bower, 2000).Several researchers studied the tensions and conflict surrounding women who were embracing both motherhood and academics (Devos, Viera, Diaz, and Dunn, 2007; Grenier and Burke, 2008; Lynch, 2008). Younes and Asay (1998) found that women felt stuck in a paradox within equal desire to be a good parent, as well as a focused student. This was supported by Lynch's (2008) study of graduate student mothers who struggled to balance the demands of two (or more) roles that required a large, and sometimes conflicting, emotional and time commitment. These issues created feelings of emotional dissonance and stress in attempting to succeed in both roles simultaneously.

Grenier and Burke (2008), in their co-generative ethnography regarding the authors' experiences with pregnancy and graduate work, identified stress as a major theme throughout their narratives, and the researchers' role strain, between being pregnant or being a new mother, and maintaining an expected level of productivity at school, as a primary source of guilt and stress. Home (1997) found that the perception of role strain and demands was a better predictor of stress than the actual responsibilities of the varying tasks. At some critical point, multiple responsibilities became overwhelming and perception of role overload created a level of stress that was negatively associated with mental health functioning. Glynn et al. (2009) found those women who maintained a perception of significant role overload experienced lower mental health functioning. In contrast; an assessment of women who were managing multiple roles indicated a moderate level of responsibility could be beneficial to women's mental health status (Barnett, 2004).

Additionally, Younes and Asay (1998) found that women who incorporated the responsibility of graduate work to their load of responsibilities reported feeling empowered and capable. In addition, a higher level of income, being employed, and the perception of positive role quality as a parent, spouse or friend positively contributed to women's mental health status. Giancola et al. (2009) found that students who viewed stressors as challenges to overcome

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had a more positive outlook, better adaptation skills and felt a higher level of general well-being. Bachay and Cingel (1999) concurred with Giancola and colleagues that some women had the ability to reframe their experiences, even adversity such as death and divorce, to view them as developmental opportunities. These findings suggest that busy women were more likely to have better mental health, but there was a limit to the number of tasks that could be undertaken. Barnett (2004) pointed out that many clinicians have ignored the positive mental health effect for women working outside the home and the author ultimately found the idea of women's multiple roles having a negative impact on women's health was largely a myth.

The married female students are the non-traditional female student who does not fit the typical scheme of a university student. In other words, she is a member of the working -class, has obligations outside of her school work, she has many roles such as mother, wife, caretaker, employee, and finally student. According to the National Centre for Education Statistics of the United States America (USA) (Choy, 2002; Horn, 1996), non -traditional students have one or more of the following characteristics; delayed enrolment in college, part –time attendance, full-time employment, may have or not have spouses, children and other dependents. Adjusting to an academic setting can be difficult for all students, no matter what stage of life they are in. The rigorous demand of the university level courses coupled with the patriarchal values of the institution can be overwhelming for even the most studious students. Instructors expect more with less guidance and may seem unapproachable to new students who have questions. Unlike a typical college student who moves from one dependent realm to another, however, non -traditional female students experience dramatic life –transitions when entering the higher institution. They often struggle with this transition because they feel insecure in their new role and anxious about the perceived loss of structure in their lives (Haynes -Burton, 2008).

To be clear, not all non-traditional women feel uncomfortable entering university. Because of their life experiences, some women feel adequately prepared for university and find themselves contributing more frequently in classroom discussions than their classmates. While traditional students often go to college because their parents expect them to, non-traditional women choose to go to school to improve themselves or their quality of life, and they may exhibit an eagerness to learn that other students do not display. In fact some women find it empowering to seek higher education while working and sustaining a family, no matter how difficult it may be. Along with possible personal feelings of inadequacy, non -traditional women may feel overwhelmed by their numerous responsibilities which often take

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precedence over school work. The number of hours Americans work each week has increased over the last 20 years, essentially adding an extra month of work to each year. Working mothers, many of whom are also students, work an average of 65 hours per week, including paid work for an employer and unpaid work in the home (Aronson, 1998). When hours for sleeping, commuting, and eating are also factored in, few hours are left which the student may devote to study.

In addition to these, non-traditional students are faced with employment demands and social and family responsibilities. No doubt, combining work commitment, family responsibilities, and school obligations may be very complex and tasking. Ultimately, the struggling and juggling inherent in this may create tension and health - related problems for the individuals' concerned (Ross, Neibling, and Heckert, 1999). When female students find time to do schoolwork, they often do not have a quiet, private space in which to do so. Finding adequate time to do homework without interruption was identified as a major challenge student, with family responsibilities, face (Aronson, 1998). Another study that examined stress in non – traditional students found that returning to school creates significant stress within the student's family and home life (Kohler Giancola, Grawitch and Borchert, 2009). Working-class women may be perceived as moving beyond the social class to which the family belongs, making them outsiders in their own home (Gardner, 1993). Partners and children of female students may also feel neglected when time is devoted to schoolwork rather than family, causing conflict for the entire family.

In addition to the responsibility of jobs, bills, families, and community obligations, non-traditional women must learn to navigate through a patriarchal institution in which they feel invisible because of their gender, age, or circumstance. Academic institutions have upheld patriarchal values even since their inception, when women were excluded from rigorous study because of their fragile temperament and inferior intelligence. A hidden curriculum exists, one that is not stated in any course syllabus, which rewards those who reinforce the value of the patriarchy and punishes those who dissent (Kimmel, 2008), creating a hostile environment for many women. In fact, this hostile environment can act as a silencing factor for women, beginning as early as grade (upper basic) school. Girls see that their teachers call on the boys more often, spend more time with them, and give them more praise for academic achievement. When girls reach adolescence, they have learned that they are more valued for their appearance than their intelligence and begin to undervalue their academic abilities (Kimmel, 2008). These young women's voice are lost as they begin to perceive word as

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weapons, ''words were used to separate and diminish people, not to connect and empower them" Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule, (1986)

Another issue for non-traditional students is that the students are parents (Benshoff, 1991). In order to attend courses; they must first secure reliable childcare which is an additional expense. The issue of childcare is also a particular stumbling block for women trying to re-enter the realm which is why women in graduate schools are often older and less likely to be enrolled fulltime than their non -married counterpart Van and Agronow, (1982). Benshoff (1993) cites a study that found that women guilt over the school role is higher for women who have more traditional orientation towards marriage. However another study found that a woman in a marriage based on more traditional marriage expectations will experience less strain if she and her husband are both in agreement that her family role is the primary role Van and Agronow, (1982). Therefore, prioritization was important in managing stress. Some of the challenges that mature women students face include: process of socialization and gender roles; lack of encouragement by spouse; low self-confidence, and the under valuing of the benefits of higher education.

The challenges they face could be classified as emotional, psychological, and financial Carney and Tan, (2002). Adult students may take a longer period of time to develop a sense of autonomy and self-efficacy than it takes younger students (Macari, Maples and D'Andrea, 2005). Responsibilities outside of school limit the amount of time students are left with to participate in the college environment or interact with peers and faculty. If students arrive on campus immediately before class and leave right after class, they will be excluded from mutual understanding and support that adult student can provide each other and may experience feeling of social isolation (Macari, Maples and D'Andrea, 2005). Married students and those responsible for the care of children have family responsibilities before enrolling in higher institution and the responsibilities are not lessened after enrolment. The pressure to provide for families and concentrate on coursework overwhelms some students often laden with a disproportionate burden of household task and caregiver responsibilities when enrolled in university (Carney and Tan, 2002). Managing multiple roles is a source of stress for female students and parents feel guilty about being unavailable when their children need them, with mothers of children under thirteen reporting the most conflict (Terrell, 1990). Women with older children may persist to graduation; whereas those with younger children may interrupt their education to fulfill family responsibilities (Carney and Tan, 2002).

Unsuccessfully managed stress factors may result in premature withdrawal from school (Scott, Burns and Cooney, 1996). Work schedules and family responsibilities prevent most adult student from attending college full time. Other researchers suggest that conflict management might always be a problem for married female students because the institution of marriage is inherently constraining for women. In his study, Feldman (1973) tried to control for factors that he believed could contribute to role strain such as work and children by comparing married students and their divorced counterparts. He found that although they had similar non–academic obligation divorced women were still more academically successful as graduate students. It is interesting because it raises the question that perhaps there might be something endemic to the institution of marriage that makes it an academic liability for these women within it. However, married men performed better academically than their divorced counterparts suggesting that marriage benefits men academically (Feldman, 1973). Research has shown that undergraduates face a lot of challenges such as the problem of burn out, stress, and school obligations, with their accompanying psychological side effects. These students are not married, yet they face several challenges. Hence, married undergraduate female students are used for this study since they are expected to face more challenges

2.2   Stress

Stress Definition

Five definitions of stress could be summarized from this study:

Definition 1: Stress is a state of mind being under pressure which is caused by conflicting outer and inner self factors, experienced by all categories of age and gender.

Definition 2: Stress is a situation when people tend to focus on the negative feelings and emotions it produces.

Definition 3: Stress is a condition of mental pressure for particular individual facing problems from environmental and social well-being which leads to so many diseases.

Definition 4: Stress is a state of worry experienced by a person in particular circumstances such as environment/ surrounding and physical, mental, and social conditions, etc.

Definition 5: Stress is unstable emotions that lead to piling which disables us to think wisely.

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), stress is a mental or physical phenomenon formed through one's cognitive appraisal of the stimulation and is a result of one's interaction with

the environment. The existence of stress depends on the existence of the stressor. Feng (1992) and Volpe (2000) defined stressor as anything that challenges an individual's adaptability or stimulates an individual's body or mentality that can be caused by environmental factors, psychological factors, biological factors, and social factors.

Different people may experience different stress from different events. By a simple definition, stress is 'a basic psychological stress that occurs when the individual is under a threat' (Foot, 1991). Driskell and Salas (1996) assigned stress in two forms: i) acute stress which resulted from short occurrence that disturbed one's achievement, and ii) chronic stress which resulted from repeated occurrences of one's achievements. A common response to stress is said to be flight or fight. When the body nervous system is aroused, hormones are released to sharpen the senses, quicken the pulses, increase respiration and tense the muscle. All of those help to defend against threatening situations (NIOSH, 2000). Stress are commonly noted among university students (Towbes and Cohen, 1996) as they are required to juggle many things at the same time including maintaining good results and adjusting to the new social environment. Towards the end of their study, other issues such as the need to land on good jobs adds to the existing ones, creating a higher level of stress D'Zurilla and Sheedy, (1991). Studies had shown that people with higher level of stress scored lower on self-perception, and self-esteem, Hudd, Dumlao, Erdmann-Sager, Murray, Phan, Soukas, and Yokozuka, (2000). However, Andersen and Pulich (2001) highlighted that not all stress experienced by the students are negative. As mentioned by Korthage (2003), several types of stress are able to stimulate students. Stressors are commonly defined as factors that resulted in stress. Recent years had seen the issues of academic stress becoming popular. The work of Wright way back in 1967 had shown various elements as the main stressors to students. Among the stressors include work overload, relationship with people, loneliness, and fear of failure and time management. Similar stressors were reported to be experienced by students (Hirsch and Ellis, 1996). In 2007, Byrne, Davenport and Mazanov analyzed 58 elements of stressors that lead to ten categories of stressors. Out of those ten, four categories were academic related. The others seemed to relate to the issues of interpersonal relationship.

2.3   Stress and higher education

Whilst stress can be common globally and all of us experience it on a regular basis, stress on college campuses may be high, as reports suggest that the university environments are different from other settings, yet levels of stress are no less serious (Burks and Martin, 1983). Again research indicates that college students are no strangers to varying degree of stress (kohn et al., 1991). Studies by Pierceall and Keim (2007) have reported 75 % to 80% of college students are moderately stressed and 105 to 12% are severely stressed while Hudd et al. (2000) established that during a typical semester, high levels of stress have been reported for 52% of college students. Stress is part of a college student's existence and has a profound impact on their ability to cope with college life (Dusselier et al., 2005).

In addition, college students have been shown to possess a unique set of stressors which can affect their daily experiences (Garrett, 2001). College is supposed to be enjoyed, not endured and therefore it is important to keep college stress under control. On the contrary stress on college campuses keeps increasing at an alarming rate with serious consequences. Statistic available indicates that one of the most frightening consequences of college student's stress is suicide because of depression (National College Health Assessment). The second leading cause of death among college students is suicide in America. In 2003, a survey conducted at Penn State University (PSU) found that 42 percent of their students felt depressed at least once in the past year and 10 percent seriously considered suicide. According to the 2005 National Survey of Counseling Centre Directors, 154 students committed suicide in America. While stress varies among college students' individual situations, the main causes summarized as pressure from family or the student's interior motivation, the desire to do best and het perfect grades amount of schoolwork, social acceptance, away from home and homesickness and peer pressure involving wanting to fit in by drinking, partying, skipping class or doing drugs which can be detrimental to the student's success in college (Mark and Owolabi 2011)

The results of a postgraduate student's postal survey at the University of Leicester (2001) indicated that the issues causing the greatest number of research students to be stressed and distracted were those relating to their studies, careers, finances, housing and self esteem. In comparison to the second year undergraduate students, research students expressed higher levels of concern about communicating with their department and the administration; their choice of course subject; and their general anxiety level. Research students reported a similar

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impact on their ability to attend lectures, meetings and appointments as undergraduate students due to personal, psychological or financial problems, but also reported a lower impact due to physical illness than undergraduate students. Research students perceived that they were receiving lower grades in their studies due to personal and psychological problems to a much greater extent than undergraduate students and reported similar levels due to physical illness and financial problems. Dill and Henley (1998) reported that attending social events could induce more stress on college students rather than reduce their stress. They suggested that significant differences exist between how traditional and nontraditional students perceive stressors. They gathered matched pairs and then proceeded to perform a descriptive study and found that nontraditional students experienced more family related stress due to their numerous roles as being older students. On the other hand, traditional students attributed most of their stress to peer and social activities related to college.

Cohen and Williamson (1988) found sex differences in perceived stress and Brody and Hall (1993) suggested that, self-report measures of emotional experience yielded fairly consistent sex differences in internally focused negative emotions. They have reported that age was significantly inversely correlated with perceived stress level (-0.18), suggesting that perceptions of stress tend to decline as age increases. Results of a study conducted by Aldwin, Sutton, Chiara, and Spiro (1996) indicated controversies concerning the influence of age on the stress and coping process, in part due to differences in methods across studies. They examined age differences in stress, appraisal, and coping, using both semi structured interview questions and a coping checklist in middle-aged, young-old, and old-old men. Despite extensive probing, nearly a quarter of the old-old reported having had no problems and they expended less coping effort even when they did have problems. The types of problems reported varied systematically with age. Middle-aged men were more likely to appraise their problems both as challenges and as annoyances than the older men. There were no age differences in perceived stressfulness of the problem, appraisals of harm/loss, or helpless appraisals, number of emotions reported, or coping efficacy. An interpretation of these results is that the nature of stress changes with age, from episodic to chronic, which in turn affects appraisal and coping processes.

A recent study of perceived stress by Sitz and Poche (2006) hypothesized that women would display more optimism than men and would report lower levels of perceived stress was supported by the results of their study. Taylor (2000) found that men are more susceptible to

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the health effects of stress. It has been proposed that women are more likely to be negatively affected by interpersonal events than men—a tentative factor underlying the emergence of gender differences in depression (Cyranowski Frank, Young and Shear 2000). Nolen-Hoeksema (1990) reported further that, women face a number of chronic burdens in everyday life as a result of their social status and roles relative to men, and these strains could contribute to their higher rates of depressive anxiety. Pearlin (1982) suggests that society, its value systems, the stratified ordering of its populations, the organization of its institutions, and the rapidity and extent of changes in these elements can be sources of stress. For example, Merton (1957) suggests that society can elicit stress by promoting values that conflict with the structures in which they are acted upon. Research indicates that greater sympathoadrenal responsiveness in males may be reasonably associated with aggression and immune suppression (Segerstrom and Miller, 2004; Lundberg, 2005). In women, the phase of menstrual cycle and pregnancy were found to have marked effects on physiological stress responses.

In particular, oestrogen has been shown to buffer the sympathetic and hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) arousal (Kajantie and Phillips, 2006). However, it has been reported that there is either no gender difference in stress reactivity or greater cortisol elevation in females than males, when a social rejection task was adopted as the stressor instead of achievement tasks (Dickerson and Kemeny, 2004). Frazier and Schauben (1994) used the Psychological Distress Inventory to obtain information regarding stress experienced by a group of female college students. The researchers found that female college students experienced stress related to financial problems, test pressure, failing a test, rejection from someone, dissolution of relationships, depression and feelings of low self-esteem. On the contrary, Ross, Neibling and Heckert (1999) conducted a study on college students and found a set of stressors that were common among all college students. The experiences associated with stress included change in eating and sleeping habits, new responsibilities, heavier workloads and breaks.

2.4 Domains of Stress

2.4.1 Physical factor

A physical stressor may include such conditions as environmental pollutants or other such pressures as extreme change in temperature or electrical shock. Physiological stressors may

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include a decrease in oxygen supply, prolonged exercise, hypoglycemia, injuries and other traumas to the body.

Females are mostly concerned about their physical appearances than about other aspects. Many of them are even dissatisfied with their physical appearances (Siegel and Lane, 1982). Wang and Ko (1999) pointed out that girls feel upset more easily than boys, mainly because of their concerns about physical appearances. Girls may perceive themselves as "very ugly", feel that they are too fat, too short, too high, or dislike their hair color or skin color. Lan (2003) mentioned that some physiological symptoms such as headache were signals of a mental overload. Other signals included fatigue, depression, anxiety, dissatisfaction with certain interpersonal relations, change of the current sleeping habit, and a drastic gain/loss of body weight. Feng (1992) pointed out that setting high goals, being a perfectionist, and comparing the self with others, and self-degradation may all cause stress and result in depression. Because college students often adopt unhealthy eating habits, sacrifice sleep for extensive studying and social activity, or consume alcohol and other substances as part of their regular activities, their physical health can become compromised.

Students who are chronically tired or do not feel well because of these contributing factors will find that their performance or attendance in class suffers. They also have less energy than healthier students to devote to academic and social concerns, which results in their need to take more time to perform tasks and study for classes. The excessive time required to achieve their goals can become an additional contributor to stress. This relates to how your physiology, your body reacts and responds to stressful situations. It is often discussed as physical stress and in relation to the physical stress symptoms you exhibit. For example, take a moment and think of a time when you have felt fearfulness, nervousness or trepidation. Now remember some of your bodily reactions to that stressful situation. These responses by your body are aspects of your physiological response to stress.

2.4.2 Mental factor

Mental factor are the psychological stress which results from reactivity within oneself to one's own thoughts or feelings about perceived threats, real or imagined. This involves the power of your own mind in how you think, rationalize and make meaning of your stress, hassles and worries. It is about how your brain, your psyche, your mind thinks about the stress in your life. It is often spoken of as emotional stress or mental stress and involves powerful feelings and emotions are the most complex and perhaps the most frequent type of

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stressors we encounter in our daily lives. To understand psychological stressors it is important to remember that they can fall into two distinct categories: real or perceived. Real psychological stressors are produced by the perception of an emotional danger or threat, in other words by a concern over something that is based on reality and does or may objectively occur. An example of this may be an impending relationship breakup. Perceived psychological stressors are produced by the same mechanism, and are a concern over events or situations that are often based on reality but may be exaggerated or may in fact never occur. An example of the latter may be a worry or concern over an unnamed threat that may keep us from being able to take an elevator, or ride in an aircraft.

2.4.3   Social factor

This relates to the stress involved in interacting, socializing and communicating with other human beings. It revolves around your relationship with other people. Some of these social interactions and relationships can be very stressful and tension filled experiences in your life. Others can be enjoyable and positive types of social stress and social interaction. Psychosocial stress may come from intense social interactions or their lack, or other variables associated with relationships.

Families with constant conflicts are characterized by a lack of parent-child communication and in-depth understanding of each other's expectations (Liu and Chen 1997). Totalitarian parents seldom show their care about their children. The control or punishment they impose will only increase the psychological stress on their children (Liu and Chen, 1997). Having to study poses challenges for women due to their family responsibilities and several challenges arise when individuals tend to negotiate the role of university students with their role inside of marriage and the family. Women from time immemorial have been saddled with many family responsibilities and are traditionally assigned many roles including custody of children, maintenance of the home, feeding and preservation of the family health. The married female students are also expected to perform duties as wife and mother, in addition to fulfilling their academic responsibilities. Within marriages, the strain faced can include, but are not limited to quarrels between spouses, feelings of exhaustion and resentment over inequitable division s of household labor, Abolanle and Feyisola (2014). Researchers studying the academic side of the conflict between school and marriage demands from students have examined how outside influences such as family and work impact academic achievement and retention rates among adult students Benshoff, (1991). Women occupying

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seemingly incompatible role positions, particularly women juggling the demands of family, studies and career experience the problem of family/school conflict. Family/school conflict refers to the demands faced by students in higher education who are married and who may or may not have children Hammer, Grigsby, and Woods, (1998). Another constrain faced by the married female student as revealed in a literature review by Benshoff (1993) is that women expressed guilt over their role as a student, over not being available for their children, over the quality and the expense of childcare, and over compromising their responsibility in the family as well as in the career world.

Conflict between husband and wife may affect the mental health of both marital partners and even their children. Family problems are also one of the most associated factors related to causes of stress among students in this study. Same finding reported by other researchers that students also faced family problems which might affect their learning ability and academic performance. Similar finding was reported by Shaikh and others in which the most common associated factors related to causes of stress were relationship problems in college or family. Similar findings reported by Seyedfatemi et al, that divorce between students' parents were among the stressors.

With the progress of human civilization and increasing plurality of our society, people need to play more roles. In the workplace, people may be a subordinate, a supervisor, a boss, a colleague to other employees, a member of an organization or a leader; at home, people need to be the wife or husband to our spouse, mother or father to our children daughter or son to our parents. Even in our leisure life, people may need to be a friend to others. Therefore, stress is ubiquitous in modern life. Formation of stress is highly associated with the social environment. Stress arises not only in a complicated and competitive environment but also in a monotonous and stimulus-less one (Feng, 1992).

2.5   Coping Strategies of Stress

Coping strategies refer to the specific efforts, both behavioral and psychological, that people employ to master, reduce, tolerate or minimize stressful events. The guidelines have stated that there are no standards for coping strategies, that might be vary depending on socio-cultural factors. On other hand, coping strategies have been shown to vary by region, community, social group, household, gender, age, season and time in history and are greatly influenced by individuals' previous experience.

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Counseling can be a good way deal with stress, talking to an expert to find solutions for problems. A similar finding was reported by Seyedfatemi (2007), that getting professional counseling and talking to a counselor were the common coping strategies used by nursing students in Iran.

Meditation such as yoga, taichi and prayers were the best way to deal with stress.

Sharing problems with others can also be among the best ways to deal with stress, sharing problems with trustful person.

Adequate sleep and going out with friends were among the best ways to cope with stress. Other coping strategies such as shouting, singing, time management, dancing, crying, massage, vacation, shopping, drinking a lot of water, watch cartons or comedies, eat chocolates, psychological treatment, optimistic thinking, and breathing. Other coping strategies can also be healthy lifestyles such as eating a balance diet, regular exercise, avoiding tobacco consumption and alcohol drinking, practicing meditation such as yoga and taichi and listening to soft music.

When talking about stress and stressors, the issue of stress management or coping strategies cannot be avoided. As defined by Bojuwoye (2000), coping strategies are the change of cognitive and behavior efforts of a person in managing specific external or internal demands that are deduced to exceed a person's resources. Kausar and Munir (2004) stated the coping behavior to come from two sources; emotional and problem management.

Folkman and Lazarus (1985) had used emotional and problem management coping methods as the basis for develop the Ways of Coping Checklist (WCC). Their study highlighted two situations. When individuals faced a stressor that they can control, they would most probably responded with problem management coping. However, when individuals faced stressor that they cannot control, they would most probably respond with emotional coping (Lazarus and Folkman 1984). Past studies had shown various indications of coping strategies. Justice (1988) earlier developed a coping matrix to be used in explaining the coping resources and coping strategies. Pines and Aronson (1988) categorized the coping method into four which were direct/action, direct/nonaction, indirect/action, and indirect/nonaction. In this case, the direct/action was indicated as the most active and beneficial method while direct/nonaction was indicated as the vice versa. Many other studies also in general studied two main coping strategies which are problem focused and emotional focused. According to Chew-Graham,

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Rogers and Yassin (2003), it is important for students to develop different coping strategies in order to encounter and manage stressful conditions. If not handled well, the stressors that originated from financial problems, sleep deprivation, societal activities and many more can affect student's ability to perform. Womble (2004) discovered that a correlation exists between the level of stress perceived by students and their academic performance.

2.6   Conceptual framework

The health providers and promoters need to understand that different people in the communities not only behave differently but also have different reasons and explanations for adopting a way of life and for engaging in different kinds of behaviour either healthy or risky behaviour. Hence the need to direct a health education programmes or intervention based on the diagnosis about health behaviours in each community is very important in the field of Health Promotion and Education. Therefore, Ecological model was used in this study to investigate the coping mechanism of stress utilized among married female post graduates of University of Ibadan, Oyo State.

The ecological model

Individual/ intrapersonal: knowledge of the woman, Skills she acquired, her beliefs and her Attitudes. These include biological and personal history factors that may lead to stress among married female students.

Relationship/interpersonal: At the family level Inter-relationship with the husband, in-laws and children. This includes factors that increase stress among married female students such as a result of relationships with peers, intimate partners and family members. These are a person's closest social circle and can shape their behaviour and range of experiences. For example, lack of support from partners and other family members.

Community: These include Social networks, norms and culture of the community where she stays. This is refer to the community contexts in which social relationships are embedded – such as schools, workplaces and neighborhoods and seeks to identify the characteristics of these settings that are associated with the married female students

Society/organization and policy: This includes the larger, macro-level factors that influence, the rules and regulations of the schools systems, societal norms and economic or social policies that create or sustain gaps and tensions. A good counseling center with the right policies and standards would be effective in helping female married students in a healthy way.
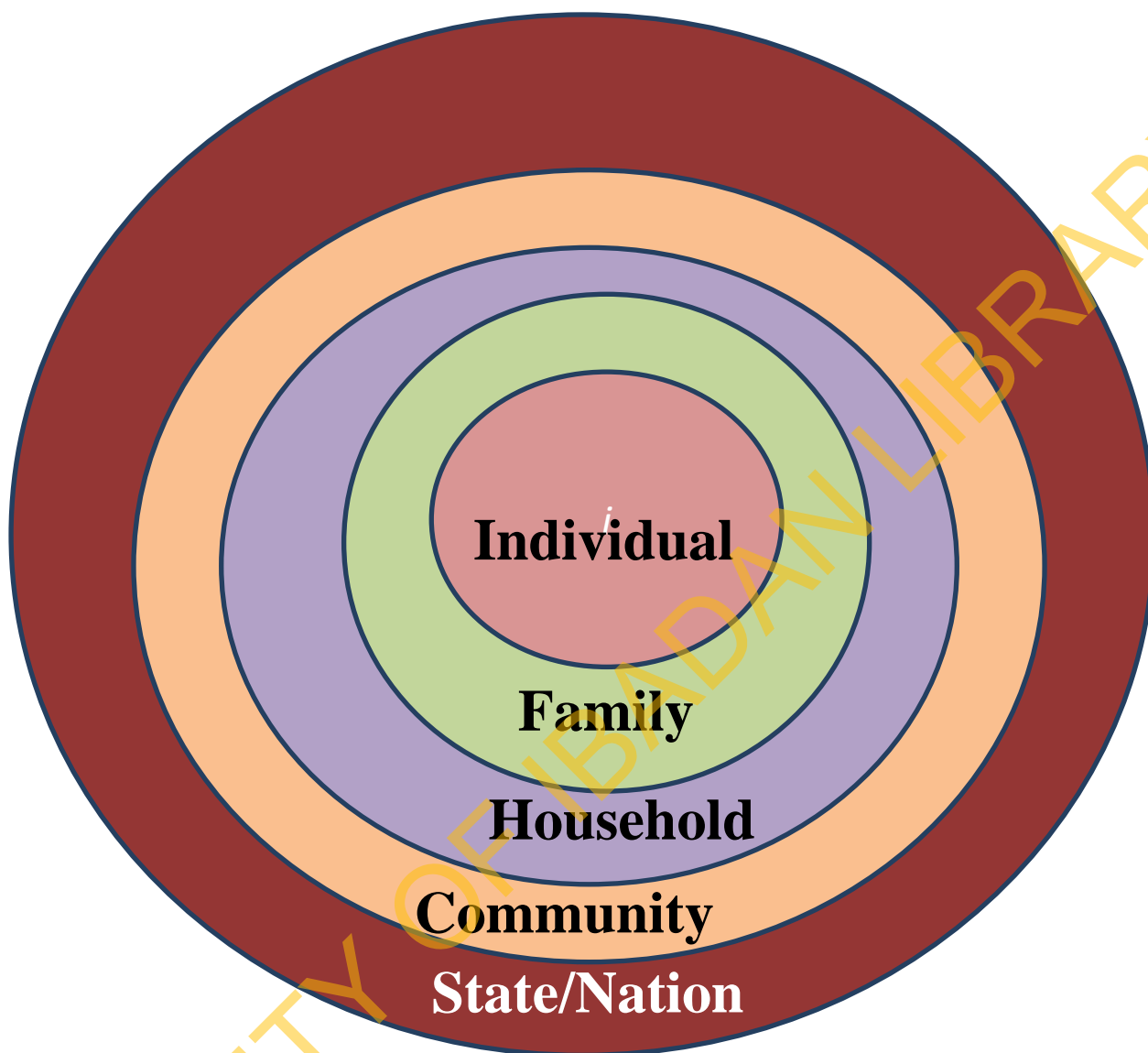
Figure 2.1: Ecological illustrating the stages of coping mechanism among students

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the description of the study area and describes the research deign. The other components of the methodology include the study population, sample size and sampling technique, methods and instruments for data collection, validity and reliability, data collection process, data management and analysis, and ethical consideration.

3.1   Study design

The study utilized a descriptive cross sectional design involving the use of quantitative methods to obtain information on the coping mechanism for stress among married female postgraduate students of the University of Ibadan.

3.2   Study Setting

The University of Ibadan started off as the University College, Ibadan (UCI) which was founded in 1948, occupying, at first, the old site at Eleyele. It later moved to the new site which covered over 2,550 acres of land. The establishment of the university could be traced directly to the reports in 1945of the Asquith and Elliot Commissions which were set up by the British Government in 1943. The formal of the school took place on 25th march, 1948. The University of Ibadan, then University College, awarded its first postgraduate degree in 1952, when the University was under a "scheme of special relation" with the University of London. Since becoming and independent academic institution in 1962, the University has enrolled 81,768 postgraduate students and awarded 45,709 higher degrees, including 2 DSC, 4,366 PhDs,36 MD/MS, 4,700 MPhil/Professional Master's degrees,32,525 Academic Master's Degree and 4,281 Postgraduate Diplomas. Over the years, University of Ibadan students have meaningfully contributed to society in many ways from establishing other institutions of higher learning in Nigeria to impacting various sectors of the global economy. The University College in 1948 had three founding faculties (Arts, Science and Medicine). Today, there are 13 faculties: Arts, Science, Agriculture and Forestry, the social sciences, Education, Veterinary Medicine, Technology, Basic Medical Sciences, Pharmacy, Clinical Sciences, Law, Public Health and Dentistry.

The vision of the institution is to be a world-class institution for academic excellence geared towards meeting societal needs. And the missions are as follows; to expand the frontiers of

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knowledge through provision of excellent conditions for learning and research, to produce graduates who are worthy in character and sound judgment, to contribute to the transformation of society through creativity and innovation, and to serve as a dynamic custodian of society's salutary values and thus sustain the integrity.

This study was carried out among the postgraduate students of the University of Ibadan. The institution was established in 1948 as a College of the University of London and the postgraduate school was funded in 1952 and at present, there are thirteen faculties and six institutes. The Postgraduate School, University of Ibadan as it is presently structured, was approved by Senate (Senate Paper No. 2618 of 29th May 1978).

3.3   Study area
The study was carried out among postgraduate students of the University of Ibadan and the respondents are the married female students of the postgraduate school University of Ibadan

3.4   Sample size determination
The population of registered postgraduate students of the University of Ibadan is 27,000 combining two sessions of admitted students.

The sample size was calculated using the Epi info Statistical software package; the needed data for this calculation are;

- Population size estimated to be 27,000
- Expected frequency or prevalence estimated to be 77%
- Confidence limits given as 5%
- Design effect given as 1.0
- Clusters which is =1

Applying the Epi info formula will give a sample size of 222.

However, in order to make allowance for non-retrieval of instruments, an additional 10% of the calculated sample size was added to the sample size;

    10% of 222 = 22

Sample size =222 + 22

        =244

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3.5   Sampling technique

A multistage sampling technique was used for this study to select 400 married female postgraduate students from the postgraduate student population.

Respondents were selected from all the thirteen faculties that run postgraduate programs University of Ibadan was recruited.

Stage one: Proportionate sampling technique was used to determine the number of students to be selected from each faculty.

Stage two: Proportionate sampling technique was used to determine the number of respondents that was selected from each department.

Stage three: Simple random sampling was used to select respondents from each department.

3.6   Data collection

The quantitative data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire that was administered by the researcher and assisted by three trained field assistants. The semi-structured questionnaire was self-administered since the participants were able to read. The sections in the questionnaire include the socio demographic section (Section A), Section B elicit information on the sources stress faced among married female students, Section C constitute information on the effect of these stress on their academics, Section D elicit information on the effect of stress at home, Section E elicit information on their coping mechanism.

3.7   Validity of the instrument

Validity of the instrument was ensured through the development of a draft instrument by consulting relevant literatures, subjecting the draft to independent, peer and expert reviews, particularly expert in public health and comments from supervisor was also used to further fine-tune the instruments.

3.8   Reliability of the instrument

The instrument used to collect data for the study was pre-tested among the postgraduate students pre-tested among the female married postgraduate students of the University of Ilorin, Kwara State considering the fact that this postgraduate school shares the same similar characteristics with that of the study site. The questionnaire was administered among 10% of the sample size eligible respondents. Thereafter, the questionnaires were subjected to a measure of internal consistency using the Cronbach's Alpha model technique. The reliability

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value obtained for the study was 0.7. The reliability coefficient obtained from this analysis was used to ascertain the statistical reliability of the instrument.

3.9 Data analysis

The principal investigator checked all copies of administered questionnaire one after the other for the purpose of completeness and accuracy. Serial number was assigned to each questionnaire and question for easy identification and for correct data entry and analysis. A coding guide was developed to code and enter each question into the computer for analysis. Analysis was done with the use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The data entered into the computer was subjected to Descriptive (mean, median, and mode). Finally, information obtained was summarized and presented in tables.

3.10 Ethical consideration

The confidentiality of the respondents was ensure and protected as there was no request for names and personal addresses. The researcher and the research assistants were of good conduct and did not act coercively or in any unethically unacceptable manner. The nature, purpose and processes involved in the study were well explained to the participants with emphasis on confidentiality, privacy and anonymity of information provided. In other to ensure anonymity of responses, code numbers was given to each participant and any form of identification was not included in the questionnaire. Information gathered from the respondents was stored in the computer package for analysis by the principal investigator and with no access to unauthorized persons while the questionnaires that were filled by the respondents were kept and stored in a safe place. Informed consent was obtained from the respondents before administration of the questionnaire.

3.11 Limitation of the study

The study is limited in that it was carried out in a school environment which has many categories of postgraduate studies involving few selected students, thereby making the research participants very selective. Any generalization of the results of this study was made with caution.

RESULTS

4.1   Respondents' Socio-demographic Characteristics

A total of 244 postgraduate students of University were interviewed and the socio-demographic profile of the respondents is presented in Tables 4.1a and 4.1b

Most of the respondents 48.4% were between the 21 – 30 years of age, followed by 31 – 40 years of age which are 28.3%, and 19.3% were between 41 – 50 years while ages 50 years and above were 4.1% (see Figure 1). For the aspect of religion, a large proportion of the respondents 80.3% were Christians while 19.7% were Muslims.

Majority of the respondents 82.4% were master's students, 13.5% were MPhil/PGDE students and 4.1% were Ph.D students. Majority 85.7% were Yoruba followed 4.1% who are Igbo, 1.6% were Hausa and 8.6% belongs to other tribe. 78.3% of the respondents claimed they are married before they start their programme while 21.7% claimed they got married during the programme. 22.1% of the respondents said they have 2 children, 20.5% claimed to have 1 and 3 children, while 9.4%, and 0.8% claimed to have 4, and more than 4 respectively, 3.3% claimed to they have no children.

More of the respondents 63.1% said they don't have anybody to assist them to take care of their family responsibility in their absence while few, 36.9% claimed they have. 11.9% reported that their mothers do help them, 11.5% said their husband, 4.9% said their first daughter and 3.3% said they have a nanny. Few 36.1% claimed they find the help rendered reliable. The details and the rest of the socio- demographic characteristics are presented in the tables below.

Table 4.1a Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

N=244

Variables		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age group	21 – 30 years	118	48.4
	31 - 40 yrs.	69	28.3
	41 - 50 yrs.	47	19.3
	51 yrs. and above	10	4.0
Religion	Christianity	196	80.3
	Islam	48	19.7
Faculty	Arts	9	3.7
	Education	69	28.3
	Mass communication	4	1.6
	Science	48	19.6
	Peace and conflict studies	2	.8
	Agric and forestry	36	14.8
	Clinical science	4	1.6
	Law	26	10.6
	Public health	46	18.9
Programme	Masters	201	82.4
	MPhil/PGDE	33	13.5
	Ph.D	10	4.1
Ethnic group	Hausa	4	1.6
	Igbo	10	4.1
	Yoruba	209	85.7
	Others	21	8.6
Duration of marriage	1 - 5 yrs.	135	55.3
	6 - 10 yrs.	50	20.5
	11 - 15 yrs.	22	9.0
	15 + yrs.	37	15.2
Married before the programme	Yes	191	78.3
	No	53	21.7

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Table 4.1b Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

N=244

Variables		Frequency	Percentage (%)
How long after marriage did you start the programme	Less than a year.	53	21.7
	1 – 5 years	99	40.6
	6-10 years	45	18.4
	11 - 15 yrs.	20	8.2
	15 + 20yrs.	27	11.1
	0	11	4.5
	1	60	24.6
Number of children	2	64	26.2
	3	59	24.2
	4	45	18.4
	More than 4	5	2.1
Do you have anybody assisting you to take care of your family responsibility in your absence	Yes	90	36.9
	No	154	63.1
	Mother	29	11.9
	Husband	28	11.5
Relationship with the person	First daughter	12	4.9
	Guardian	2	.8
	Nanny	8	3.3
	Brother	7	2.9
	Children	2	.8
	Colleague	2	.8
Finding the help rendered by the person reliable	Yes	88	97.8
	No	2	2.2

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4.2 Physical sources of stress in school among married female students

Respondents' were asked if they find movement within school environment stressful.12.3% of the respondents do not find it stressful, 15.2% rarely find it stressful, 38.9% often find it stressful while 33.6% always find it stressful. 8.6% of the respondents do not consider the duration of lectures stressful, 34.4% rarely consider it stressful, and 39.8% often consider it stressful while 17.2% always consider it stressful. 17.6% of the respondents do not feel backache while sitting for lectures, 33.2% rarely feel backache while sitting for lectures, 31.1% often feel backache while 18.0% always feel backache. 22.1% of the respondents do not find the timing of lectures comfortable and stress-free, 33.6% rarely find the timing of lectures comfortable and stress-free, 38.1% are often comfortable with the timing of lectures while 6.1% are always comfortable with the timing of lectures.16.8% of the respondents never get to school tired after doing home chores, 37.7% rarely get tired, 36.9% often get tired, 8.6% always get to school tired after doing home chores. 20.5% of the respondents do not find the distance from where they reside to school far, 17.6% rarely find the distance far, and 20.1% often find the distance far while 41.8% always find it far. The daily trip from where the respondents reside to school and back is not strenuous to 18.4% of the respondents, it is rarely strenuous to 17.6%, it is often strenuous to 29.9% while it is always strenuous to 34.0%.

At the end of each day's lecture 2.9% of the respondents do not feel tired or worn out, 14.3% rarely feel tired or worn out, 44.7% often feel tired or worn out while 38.1% always feel tired or worn out. The academic schedule of 7.4% of the respondents are not that busy so they find time to rest, the academic schedule of 28.3% is rarely busy, the schedule of 46.3% is often busy also 18.0% of the respondents find their schedule always busy. The sitting arrangement is not comfortable to 16.0% of the respondents, it is rarely comfortable to 25.4%, it is often comfortable to 29.1% while it is always comfortable to 29.5% of the respondents. 24.6% of the respondents never find reading easy after doing house chores, 50.8% rarely find it easy to read after doing house chores, 18.4% often find it easy while 6.1% always find it easy to read after doing house chores. Responsibilities makes 27.9% of the respondents physically stressed at home and domestic chores makes 72.1% of the respondents physically stressed at home. Noise makes 2.5% of the respondents physically stressed in the school environment, long lecture duration makes 66.4% stressed in the school environment, registration/assignment makes 20.1% stressed, climbing stairs makes 8.6% stressed and

sitting for long makes 2.5% physically stressed in the school environment. Academics is the physical event that makes 52.0% of the respondents stressed, family responsibilities makes 34.4% stressed, religious functions make 3.7% stressed while other type of physical events make 9.8% of the respondents stressed. 57.8% of the respondents find reading convenient in the mid-night, 13.1% find reading comfortable in the day, and 23.8% find reading comfortable in the morning, 2.9% during the weekend, while 2.5% do not have a specific reading time. . 56.6% of the respondents find reading convenient at home, 30.7% find reading convenient in the library, and 7.0% find reading comfortable in the school, 3.3% find reading convenient in the office, while 2.5% do not have a specific reading place. 30.3% of the respondents wake up at 4am, 20.5% wake up at 6am, and 44.3% wake up at 5am while 1.6% wakes up at 1am and 3.3% do not know the exact time they wake up (see Tables 4.2a and 4.2b).

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Table 4.2a Respondents' experience about physical sources of stress in school

N=244

Variable	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Finding movement within the school environment physically stressful		
Never	30	12.3
Rarely	37	15.2
Often	95	38.9
Always	82	33.6
Considering the duration of lectures stressful		
Never	21	8.6
Rarely	84	34.4
Often	97	39.8
Always	42	17.2
Feeling backache while sitting for lectures		
Never	43	17.6
Rarely	81	33.2
Often	76	31.2
Always	44	18.0
Do you find the timing of lectures comfortable and stress free		
Never	54	22.1
Rarely	82	33.6
Often	93	38.2
Always	15	6.1
Often get to school tired after doing the home chores		
Never	41	16.8
Rarely	92	37.7
Often	90	36.9
Always	21	8.6

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Table 4.2bRespondents' experience about physical sources of stress in school

N=244

Variables	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Finding the distance from where you reside to school far		
Never	50	20.5
Rarely	43	17.6
Often	49	20.1
Always	102	41.8
Finding the daily trip from where you reside to school and back strenuous		
Never	45	18.4
Rarely	43	17.6
Often	73	30.0
Always	83	34.0
Feeling tired or worn out at the end of each day's lecture		
Never	7	2.9
Rarely	35	14.3
Often	109	44.7
Always	93	38.1
Rarely find time to rest because of the busy academic schedule		
Never	18	7.4
Rarely	69	28.3
Often	113	46.3
Always	44	18.0
Comfortable class sitting arrangement		
Never	39	16.0
Rarely	62	25.4
Often	71	29.1
Always	72	29.5

Table 4.2c Respondents' experience about physical sources of stress in school

N=244

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Finding reading easy after doing house chores		
Never	60	24.6
Rarely	124	50.8
Often	45	18.4
Always	15	6.2
Physical sources of stress at home		
Responsibility	68	27.9
Domestic chores	176	72.1
Physical sources of stress in the school environment		
Noise	6	2.5
Long lecture duration	162	66.4
Registration/assignment	49	20.1
Climbing stairs	21	8.6
Sitting for long	6	2.4
Physicalevent(s) that the main source(s) of stress		
Academics	127	52.1
Family responsibilities	84	34.4
Religious functions	9	3.7
Others	24	9.8
Convenient period for reading		
Midnight	141	57.8
Day	32	13.1
Morning	58	23.8
Weekends	7	2.9
Non response	6	2.4
Convenient place for reading		
At home	138	56.6
Library	75	30.7
School	17	7.0
Office	8	3.3
Non response	6	2.4
time normally wake up		
4am	74	30.3
6am	50	20.5
5am	108	44.3
1am	4	1.6
Non response	8	3.3

4.3 Respondents' responses on the social factors that constitutes stress during coursework

Accessing the social factor that constitutes stress during course work, 34.8% of the respondents do not experience a poor communication with their lecturers, 42.6% rarely experiences a poor communication, 18.0% often experience poor communication with their lecturers, while 4.5% always experience poor communication with their lecturers. 76.2% of the respondents do not encounter difficulty in communicating with other students because of their marital status, 18.9% rarely encounter difficulty in communicating with other students, and 4.9% often encounter difficulty in communicating with other student because of their marital status. 70.9% are not subject to personal harassment in form of unkind words or behaviour within the school environment, 23.8% are rarely subject to personal harassment in form of unkind words, 4.5% are often subject to personal harassment in form of unkind words, and 0.8% is always subject to personal harassment in form of unkind words.

Majority, 75.4% are not subject to personal harassment in form of unkind words at home, 17.2% are rarely subject to personal harassment in form of unkind words at home, 4.9% are often subject to personal harassment in form of unkind words at home while 2.5% are always subject to personal harassment in form of unkind words at home. 6.6% of the respondents do not get moral support from their husbands concerning their academic situations, 4.1% rarely get moral support from their husbands concerning their academic situations, and 10.2% often get moral support from their husbands concerning their academic situations, 79.1% always get moral support from their husbands concerning their academic situations. Relating with their husbands does not make 7.4% feel better every day, relating with their husbands rarely makes 4.9% of the respondent feel better every day, relating with their husbands often makes 18.4% of the respondents better while relating with their husbands always make 69.3% feel better every day. 14.8% of the respondents do not get moral support from their in-laws concerning their academic situation, 18.0% of the respondent rarely gets moral support from their in-laws concerning their academic situation, and 32.8% often gets moral support from their in-laws concerning their academic situation while 34.4% always get moral support from their in-laws concerning their academic situation. 5.3% do not get moral support from their relatives concerning their academic situation, 8.2% rarely get moral support from their relatives concerning their academic situation, and 30.7% often get moral support from their relatives concerning their academic situation while 55.7% always get moral support from

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their relatives concerning their academic situation. 9.0% of the respondents cannot talk to their lecturers easily on topics they do not understand for better explanation,

Few, 32.4% rarely talk to their lecturers easily on topics they do not understand for better explanation, 36.1% often talk to their lecturers easily on topics they do not understand for better explanation, 22.5% always talk to their lecturers easily on topics they do not understand for better explanation. 6.6% of the respondents are not supported by their course mate when dealing with academic challenges, 9.8% are rarely supported by their course mate when dealing with academic challenges, 42,2% are often supported by their course mate when dealing with academic challenges, 41.4% are always supported by their course mate when dealing with academic challenges. 22.1% of the respondents do not find time to visit friends/families despite strenuous schedule, 61.1% rarely find time to visit friends/families despite strenuous schedule, and 14.8% often find time to visit friends/families despite strenuous schedule while 2.0% always find time to visit friends/families despite strenuous schedule. Combiningschool activities with household responsibilities does not give me time to attend social functions like wedding ceremony, birthday ceremony or burial ceremony with 8.2% still able to attend, 41.8% rarely unable to attend and 32.4% often unable to attend while 17.6% always unable to attend. 24.2% belong to an association/ group and 73.4% do not belong while 2.5% did not respond. 0.8% belongs to NAPPS, 2.9% belongs to church hospitality, and 3.3% are to Sunday school teacher, 3.7% are youth fellowships leaders, 3.3% belong to a Christian group, 8.6% belong to a Christian band, 0.8% belongs to NRCS, 0.8% belongs to NSSN while 75.8% do not belong to any group/ association (see Tables 4.3a and 4.3b).

Table 4.3aRespondents' responses on the social factors that constitutes stress during Course work

VARIABLE	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Poor communication experience with lecturers		
Never	85	34.8
Rarely	104	42.6
Often	44	18.1
Always	11	4.5
Difficulty in communicating with other students because of your marital status		
Never	186	76.1
Rarely	46	18.9
Often	12	4.9
Subjected to personal harassment in form of unkind wordsor behavior within the school environment		
Never	173	70.9
Rarely	58	23.8
Often	11	4.5
Always	2	.8
Subjected to personal harassment in form of unkind words or behavior at home		
Never	184	75.4
Rarely	42	17.2
Often	12	4.9
Always	6	2.5
Getting moral support from your husband concerning your academic situation		
Never	16	6.6
Rarely	10	4.1
Often	25	10.2
Always	193	79.1
Relating with husband about the school activities makes me much better everyday		
Never	18	7.4
Rarely	12	4.9
Often	45	18.4
Always	169	69.3
I get moral support from my in-laws concerning my academic situation		
Never	36	14.8
Rarely	44	18.0
Often	80	32.8
Always	84	34.4
I get moral support from my relatives concerning my academic situation		
Never	13	5.3
Rarely	20	8.3
Often	75	30.7
Always	136	55.7

Table 4.3bRespondents' responses on the social factors that constitutes stress during Course work

| | | N=244 |
Variables	Freq.	Percentage (%)
I can talk to my lecturers easily on the topics i don't understand for better explanation		
Never	22	9.0
Rarely	79	32.4
Often	88	36.1
Always	55	22.5
My course mate help provide support for me when dealing with academic challenges		
Never	16	6.6
Rarely	24	9.8
Often	103	42.2
Always	101	41.4
I find time to visit families/friends despite my strenuous activities		
Never	54	22.1
Rarely	149	61.1
Often	36	14.8
Always	5	2.0
Combining school activities with household responsibilties does not give me time to attend social functions		
Never	20	8.2
Rarely	102	41.8
Often	79	32.4
Always	43	17.6
Belonging to an association/group/club		
Yes	59	24.2
No	179	73.4
Total	238	97.5
System	6	2.5
Association/'group/club belonging to		
Napps	2	.8
Church hospitality	7	2.9
Sunday school teacher	8	3.3
Youth fellowship leader	9	3.7
Christian group	8	3.3
Christian band	21	8.6
Nrcs	2	.8
Nssn	2	.8
No response	185	75.8

4.4 Perceived mental effect of stress among respondents in their academic performance

Few of the respondents 17.2% claimed they do not get headaches after attending to their different responsibilities, 41.0% said they rarely get headaches after attending to their different responsibilities, and 32.4% reported they often get headaches after attending to their different responsibilities while 9.4% confirmed they always get headaches after attending to their different responsibilities. 20.5% do not lose concentration when they have a tight schedule, 34.8% rarely lose concentration when they have a tight schedule, and 36.5% often lose concentration when they have a tight schedule, 8.2% always lose concentration when they have a tight schedule. 31.6% of the respondents do not get forgetful when they have lectures towards the end of the day, 40.2% rarely get forgetful when they have lectures towards the end of the day, and 25.8% often get forgetful when they have lectures towards the end of the day while 2.5% always get forgetful when they have lectures towards the end of the day. 38.9% of the respondents do not find it difficult to make decisions concerning their family issues over their academics, 40.6% rarely find it difficult to make decisions concerning their family issues over their academics, 16.4% often find it difficult to make decisions concerning their family issues over their academics while 4.1% always find it difficult to make decisions concerning their family issues over their academics.

Less than half of the respondents40.6% do not find it difficult to reach practical solutions to their academic problems, 46.3% rarely find it difficult to reach practical solutions to their academic problems, 12.3% often find it difficult to reach practical solutions to their academic problems while 0.8% always find it difficult to reach practical solutions to their academic problems. 48.4% of the respondents do not find learning new information difficult, 45.1% rarely find learning new information difficult, and 4.9% often find learning new information difficult while 1.6% always found learning new information difficult. 16.4% of the respondents do not feel mentally fatigued from the large number of homework, 37.3% rarely feel mentally fatigued from the large number of homework, 34.4% often feel mentally fatigued from the large number of homework, 11.9% always feel mentally fatigued from the large number of homework. 79.9% of the respondents do not lose confidence in school due to their marital status, 17.2% rarely lose confidence in school due to their marital status, and 1.2% often loses confidence in school due to their marital status while 1.6% always loses confidence in school due to their marital status. Assignment and exams do not make 25.0% of the respondents worried, it rarely makes 34.4% worried, 30.3% often get worried while

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10.2% always get worried. 23.8% of the respondents do not have less interest in their appearance during examination period, 36.5% rarely have less interest in their appearance during examination period, and 26.6% often have less interest in their appearance during examination period, 13.1% always have less interest in their appearance during examination period. 32.0% are not worried about their academic progress, 29.9% are rarely worried about their academic progress, and 23.4% are often worried about their academic progress while 14.8% are always worried about their academic progress (see Tables 4.4a and 4.4b).

Table 4.4a Respondents' perceived mental effect of stress in their academic performance

		N=244
Variable	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
I get headache after attending to my different responsibilities		
Never	42	17.2
Rarely	100	41.0
Often	79	32.4
Always	23	9.4
I have a tight schedule of lectures and I tend to lose concentration		
Never	50	20.5
Rarely	85	34.8
Often	89	36.5
Always	20	8.2
Lectures towards the end of the day makes me get forgetful		
Never	77	31.6
Rarely	98	40.2
Often	63	25.8
Always	6	2.4
Finding it difficult to make decisions concerning my family issues over my academics		
Never	95	38.9
Rarely	99	40.6
Often	40	16.4
Always	10	4.1
Finding it difficult to reach practical solutions to my academic problems		
Never	99	40.6
Rarely	113	46.3
Often	30	12.3
Always	2	.8
Finding learning new information difficult		
Never	118	48.4
Rarely	110	45.1
Often	12	4.9
Always	4	1.6
Feeling mentally fatigued from large number of homework		
Never	40	16.4
Rarely	91	37.3
Often	84	34.4
Always	29	11.9

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Table 4.4b Respondents' perceived mental effect of stress in their academic performance

		N=244
Variables	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
My marital status makes me lose my confidence in school		
Never	195	79.9
Rarely	42	17.2
Often	3	1.2
Always	4	1.6
Assignment and exam make me worried, anxious and nervous		
Never	61	25.0
Rarely	84	34.4
Often	74	30.3
Always	25	10.2
Examination period makes me less interested in my appearance		
Never	58	23.8
Rarely	89	36.5
Often	65	26.6
Always	32	13.1
I am worried about my academic progress		
Never	78	32.0
Rarely	73	29.9
Often	57	23.4
Always	36	14.8

4.5 Emotional source of stress among respondents

The relationship of 75.8% of the respondents with their spouse or in-laws does not make them depressed, the relationship of 17.6% of the respondents with their spouse/in-laws rarely make them depressed, the relationship of 3.3% of the respondents with their spouse/in-laws often make them depressed while the relationship of 3.3% of the respondents with their spouse/in-laws always make them depressed. 50.0% of the respondents are not unable to control their feelings due to pressure from academic duties, 32.4% are rarely unable to control their feelings due to pressure from academic duties, and 14.3% are often unable to control their feelings due to pressure from academic duties while 3.3% are always unable to control their feelings due to pressure from academic duties. Disagreement with their spouses does not make 40.6% lose concentration in school; it rarely makes 26.2% lose concentration in school, it often makes 23.4% lose concentration in school while it always makes 9.8% lose concentration in school. 61.9% of the respondents do notfeel lonely despite their husband's encouragement at home, 23.8% rarely feel lonely despite their husband's encouragement at home, and 7.8% often feel lonely despite their husband's encouragement at home while 6.6% always feel lonely despite their husband's encouragement at home.

About half of the respondent 51.2% does not deal with others nervously why they try to provoke them, 35.2% rarely deal with others nervously why they try to provocate them, 11.1% often deal with others nervously why they try to provocate them while 2.5% always deal with others nervously why they try to provocate them. 57.0% of the respondents do not act with hostility when they are exposed to harassment and ridicule from students, teachers and their relatives, 30.7% rarely act with hostility when they are exposed to harassment and ridicule from students, teachers and their relatives, 10.7% often act with hostility when they are exposed to harassment and ridicule from students, teachers and their relatives while 1.6% always act with hostility when they are exposed to harassment and ridicule from students, teachers and their relatives. 31.1% of the respondents do nottend to react to slight irritations with an outburst of anger when they are tired, 41.0% rarely tend to react to slight irritations with an outburst of anger when they are tired, and 19.7% often tend to react to slight irritations with an outburst of anger when they are tired, 8.2% always tend to react to slight irritations with an outburst of anger when they are tired (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5 Respondents' sources of stress

N=244

Variable	Freq.	Percentage (%)
My relationship with my spouse/in-laws make me depressed		
Never	185	75.8
Rarely	43	17.6
Often	8	3.3
Always	8	3.3
Pressure from academic duties make me unable to control my feelings		
Never	122	50.0
Rarely	79	32.4
Often	35	14.3
Always	8	3.3
Disagreement with my spouse makes me lose concentration in school		
Never	99	40.6
Rarely	64	26.2
Often	57	23.4
Always	24	9.8
I feel lonely despite my husband's encouragement at home		
Never	151	61.9
Rarely	58	23.8
Often	19	7.8
Always	16	6.6
I deal with others nervously when they try to provoke me		
Never	125	51.2
Rarely	86	35.2
Often	27	11.1
Always	6	2.5
I act with hostility when am exposed to harassment and ridicule from teachers, students and my relatives		
Never	139	57.0
Rarely	75	30.7
Often	26	10.7
Always	4	1.6
I tend to react to slight irritations with an outburstof anger when am tired		
Never	76	31.1
Rarely	100	41.0
Often	48	19.7
Always	20	8.2

4.6 Stress coping mechanism utilized by the respondents

Some of the respondents 5.7% don't do their work one time at a time, 7.0% rarely do their work one time at a time, and 42.6% often do their work one time at a time while 44.7% always do their work one time at a time. 2.5% of the respondents do not know what had to be done, so they doubled their efforts and try harder to make things work, 4.1% rarely know what had to be done, so they doubled their efforts and try harder to make things work, 44.3% often know what had to be done, so they doubled their efforts and try harder to make things work while 49.2%always know what had to be done, so they doubled their efforts and try harder to make things work. 4.1% of the respondents do not make plans for everything they are to do then follow it, 9.0% rarely make plans for everything they are to do then follow it, 41.0% often make plans for everything they are to do then follow it while 45.9% always make plans for everything they are to do then follow it. 5.7% of the respondents do not have time to do personal activities, 34.8% rarely have time to do personal activities, and 40.6% often have time to do personal activities, while 18.9% always have time to do personal activities. 21.7% of the respondents did not spend some times with their friends discussing personal issues in school, 53.3% rarely spend some times with their friends discussing personal issues in school, 17.6% often spend some times with their friends discussing personal issues in school, 7.4% always spend some times with their friends discussing personal issues in school.

Minority of the respondents 9.8% did not seek advice from friends on challenging situations, 32.0% rarely seek advice from friends on challenging situations, and 39.8% often seek advice from friends on challenging situations, 18.4% always seek advice from friends on challenging situations. 23.0% of the respondents do not spend some times with their family by visiting relaxation centers, 41.4% rarely spend some times with their family by visiting relaxation centers, 22.5% often spend some times with their family by visiting relaxation centers, 13.1% always spend some times with their family by visiting relaxation centers. 22.1% of the respondents do not seek advice from their relatives on challenging situations, 38.5% rarely seek advice from their relatives on challenging situations, 25.8% often seek advice from their relatives on challenging situations while 13.5% always seek advice from their relatives on challenging situations. 21% of the respondents do not have someone to assist them in family responsibilities, 30.3% rarely have someone to assist them in family responsibilities, and 29.1% often have someone to assist them in family responsibilities while 18.9% always have

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someone to assist them in family responsibilities. 53.3% of the respondents cope with multiple stresses by relaxing, 6.1% cope by treating less urgent matters, 23.0% cope by facing it, 4.5% cope by endurance and prayer, 4.9% coped by setting priorities, 0.8% cope by suspending it, while 7.4% did not have a way of coping see (Tables 4.6a and 4.6b).

Table 4.6a Respondents' stress coping mechanism utilized

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I do my work one at a time		
Never	14	5.7
Rarely	17	7.0
Often	104	42.6
Always	109	44.7
I knew what had to be done, so i double my effort and try harder to make things work		
Never	6	2.5
Rarely	10	4.1
Often	108	44.3
Always	120	49.2
I make plans for everything am to do then follow it		
Never	10	4.1
Rarely	22	9.0
Often	100	41.0
Always	112	45.9
I have time to do personal activities		
Never	14	5.7
Rarely	85	34.8
Often	99	40.6
Always	46	18.9
I spend some times with my friends discussing personal issues in school		
Never	53	21.7
Rarely	130	53.3
Often	43	17.6
Always	18	7.4

Table 4.6b Respondents' stress coping mechanism utilized

N=244

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I seek advice from friends on challenging situations		
Never	24	9.8
Rarely	78	32.0
Often	97	39.8
Always	45	18.4
I spend some time with my family by visiting relaxation centres		
Never	56	23.0
Rarely	101	41.4
Often	55	22.5
Always	32	13.1
I seek advice from my relatives on challenging situations		
Never	54	22.1
Rarely	94	38.5
Often	63	25.8
Always	33	13.5
I got someone to assist me with my family responsibility		
Never	53	21.7
Rarely	74	30.3
Often	71	29.1
Always	46	18.9
How do you cope when you experience multiple stress		
Relax	130	53.3
Treat less urgent matters	15	6.1
Face it	56	23.0
Endurance/prayer	11	4.5
Set priority	12	4.9
Suspend it	2	.8
Non response	18	7.4

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CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study explored the coping mechanisms for stress among married female postgraduate students of the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo state. This chapter explains the results given in the previous chapter. The demographic characteristics of the respondents, physical sources of stress in school among the respondents, social factors that constitute stress during course work, mental effect of stress among female married students in their academic performance, emotional source of stress among the respondents, and stress coping mechanism utilized by the respondents was also determined. Implication of the findings of this study to health promotion and education was also discussed and recommendations were made at the end of this report.

5.1 Respondents Socio-demographic characteristics

The findings of this study also illustrate that the female recruited in this study were young in marriage which is precisely less than five years in marriage and most have been married before been enrolled into their current course of study and most also for those that got married applied to their current course of study in less than five years after marriage. Also the study realize that there were few women who had more than four children as most have less than three children. Studies have shown that women's education has a role in reducing the risk of maternal mortality. According to Bartels (1999), women who began childbearing early had more children so there is an inverse relationship between female education and the number of children a woman bears. Hence, the more time women spend on academic pursuits, the fewer the number of children they can have. Sutton (1998) even added that the enhanced nutritional standard of educated mothers reduces child mortality by five to ten percent for each additional year of schooling. Hence, the higher the educational level of a mother the fewer her children.

Most of the female in this study do not have anyone assisting them to take care of the family's responsibility in their absence. However, for those that have someone, most of them have their mothers and husbands as the closest relative that help them in their responsibilities in the home which almost all of them approved that is it a reliable assistance. This can be

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complemented by a study conducted in Ghana by Forster and Offei-Ansah (2012) that confirmed that, to overcome their problems some students brought extended family members and paid domestic assistants into their families to take over their responsibilities. The other support-givers, namely mothers, grand-mothers, sisters and paid domestic assistants broke and entered the students' family boundaries to perform the family roles of a mother-wife-daughter and the student, who had also crossed the family boundary into the university system to assume the status of a student.

5.2 Physical sources of stress in school among married female students

According to Selye, 1956, Stress is the state manifested by a specific syndrome which consists of all the nonspecifically induced changes within the biological system. This study buttresses the physical sources among the married female students. Most of the female married students often find movement within the school environment physically stressful and also considered duration of lectures stressful. Few of the married female students have back aches during lecture sessions as a result of long lecture duration while most of the female married students often find the timing of the lectures comfortable and stress free. As Goodman (1993) identified the four types of stress which are academic, financial, time or health related, and self-imposed; he emphasized the fact that commonly occurs during certain time periods each semester, namely when studying for or taking exams, the pressure to get good grades, and the large amount of material to learn in a short amount of time. Also, (Kunkel, 2008; Murff, 2005; Misraand McKean, 2000) stated the fact that the course-load and particular major of choice will also affect the level of stress experienced throughout college.

Source of stressed could also be after a woman had already finish house chores at home and coming to school to learn. Findings of this study also shows that most of the respondents often feel tired after home chores and come to school to learn. Moreover, most female married students affirm that their academic schedule is often too busy that they find time to rest. This couple of stressful time will results in competition with peers for better grades and the feeling of being pressured to complete a large amount in a short time period (Larson, 2006; Misra and Castillo, 2004).

Distance where one resides to the learning center could be a factor that can lead to stress. Most of the female married students come from distant areas and they always find it strenuous. (Hall et al., 2006), affirms that being away from home couple with other factors can be a source of stress in college students. This could make a female student especially married to get worn out at the end of each day. After getting home most of these female married students rarely find reading easy after doing house chores. Further affirmation states that domestic chore makes them more stressed at home. This makes most of them to wake up around midnight at home to read in order to meet the competitions, assignments and other pressures as a result of academics and wake up as early as 5am to take care of the family responsibility, domestic chores and be ready for school. A larger number of female married students affirm that they prefer to study at home than in their offices or even school. Dyson and Renk, (2006) confirm this by saying there is a cycle of stress that goes on with the female married students. Therefore it is no surprise that this college student have difficulty adjusting to university life and experience constant stress on a daily basis. Life's demands continue to add stressors in the daily lives of college students even after they make the University transition and have settled into a routine (Dyson and Renk, 2006; Larson,2006).

More than half confirmed that the academic schedule is busy that they often and rarely find time to rest likewise some proportion also reported that the sitting arrangement in class is never and rarely comfortable. This is supported by Qaisy and Thawabieh (2012) that reported that physical factor affects students' mental health and causes stress to them in their academic, students feel unhappy with the university climate and they need more academic counseling to solve their problems. These factors cause the students many physical problems such as difficulty of sleeping and feeling tired and pain. This is also supported by Gazder, Ahmah and Danish (2014) claimed their study pointed towards academic stressor and also reported that an earlier work done by shah et al had labeled academic examination as the biggest stressor.

5.3 Social factors that constitutes stress

Social factors can also contribute to stressing up an individual or reducing it. It could be even from the learning environment. In this study, more students rarely experience poor communication with lecturers and also never encounter difficulty in communicating with other students as a result of their marital status. Also, most of the students are never subjected

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to personal harassment in form of unkind words or behavior within the school and home environment. Most of the female married students always receive moral support from husband, and most of them always relate school activities with their husband which could aid the reduction of stress. Most of the respondents also do receive moral support from in-laws and relatives concerning academic situations which makes life easier for them.

Most of the respondents talks to their lecturers easily on the topic they don't understand and often times their course mates help to provide support when dealing with academic challenges. This could contribute to the accumulated stress that makes them rarely visit their families. This could also make them to rarely attend social functions as they need to meet up with their household responsibility. When there is accumulation of stress, it could also make individual not to be able to join associations or social clubs as reported by the respondents. This finding affirms that lesser married female students do not have associations or social clubs they belong to. Even those that belongs to an association, most of them tends to be in a religious group or association which happens to be a mostly Sunday when they have meetings. This can be supported by a survey conducted by Laurence, Williams, and Eiland (2009) among graduate students, where 25% reported elevated depressive symptoms, the study indicated the exams, fear of failing, shortage in clinical time, decrease in self-esteem and prompt reduction in time spent in recreational activity have been associated with higher stress levels.

5.4 Mental effect of stress among respondents in their academic performance

Despite the mental stress that accumulates as a result of academic stress and environmental stress, most of the married female students rarely have headaches after attending to different responsibilities. Also most of the respondents often lose concentration when they have a tight schedule and rarely get forgetful when they have lectures. Similarly, most married female students rarely find it difficult to make decisions concerning family issues over academics. Also, the study shows that married female students rarely find it difficult to reach practical solutions to their academic problems and they never find learning new information difficult. Also, most of the respondents rarely feel mentally fatigued from large number of homework. The findings support Skipworth (2011) who quoted Hall et al.(2006); Larson, (2006); Andrews and Wilding, (2004); Nonis et al., (1998); Shapiro et al., (1998); Cohen and

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Herbert, (1996) and Van Eck et al., (1996) that stress is known to have detrimental effects on the physical and mental well-being of students.

Besides, a large number of the respondents never lose confidence in school as a result of marital status. Most of the respondents rarely feel nervous or worried about assignment and rarely feel less interested in appearance during exams. The study also revealed that most of the respondents never get worried about my academic progress.

5.5 Emotional source of stress among respondents

Most respondents never get depressed with their relationship with their spouse/husband. They also never had pressure from academic duties that makes them unable to control their feelings. Also, few respondents during disagreement with their spouse make them loose concentration in school which could make them feel stressed. This could also make them treat others nervously when people try to provoke them. Similarly, most of the respondents never act with hostility when am exposed to harassment and ridicule from teachers, students and my relatives. Also, the study finds out that female married students tend to react to slight irritations with an outburst of anger when they are tired. This finding is ascertained with Skipworth K who quoted Nonis et al., (1998); Cohen, (1996); Cohen and Herbert, (1996); Van Eck et al., (1996) that increased perceived stress may commonly result in carrying out repetitive negative health behaviors, potentially leading to detrimental health outcomes (i.e. depression).

5.6 Stress coping mechanism utilized by the respondents

The study finds out that most of the married female students always do their work one at a time which is a major means of coping with stress. Also most of them always knew what had to be done, which lead them to double their effort and try harder to make things work. Similarly, most of the married female student make plans for everything they are to do then follow it. Also, most of them often have time to do personal activities. Moreover, few of the married female students rarely spend some times with their friends discussing personal issues in school. Most of the married female students seek advice from friends on challenging situations. Also, they rarely spend some time with their family by visiting relaxation centers and they rarely seek advice from my relatives on challenging situations. In assistance to family responsibility, most of the respondents rarely and often get someone to assist them

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with the family responsibility. Furthermore, most of the respondents relax when they experience multiple stresses.

5.7 Implication for Health Promotion and Education

Some of the important component of health promotion and education includes health education, service improvement, creating supportive environment and to develop personal skills amongst others. By health education component; information is directed to individuals, families and communities to influence their knowledge, attitudes and practices, service improvement; this could be achieved through improvement in quality and quantity of service availability, outreach and input supplies, create supportive environment; changing patterns of life, work and leisure have a significant impact on health, work and leisure should be a source of health for people, develop personal skills; health promotion supports personal and social development through providing information, education for health and enhancing life skills, by so doing, it increases the options available to people to exercise more control over their own health and over their environments, and to make choices conducive to health.

This study has identified that some of the married female postgraduate students have a lot to deal with whether socially, physically, mentally or emotionally when dealing with stress at home and school. Providing health education on how to manage each of the domains of this stress has to be emphasized whether as part of their orientation has they come in for the programme or in between their lectures like developing their personal skills on how to cope with any type of stress in which they might find themselves.

The academic settings in terms of transportation within the school, time for lectures, long duration of classes and sitting arrangements can be addressed by a component of health promotion and education which is by creating a supportive environments for the to learn and transportation system, having a serene, comfortable classes and chairs for their lectures.

5.8 Conclusion

In this study, the purpose was to investigate the coping mechanisms for stress among married female postgraduate students of the University of Ibadan and this research is based on the premise that education and family life are not separate entities but interact and impinge on

each other with particular implications for the position of women within each entity. The less attention a woman gives to family life the more time she will have for her intellectual development and the easier the attainment of her academic aspirations.

This study has helped to reveal that the physical sources of stress common to the married female is finding movement within the school environment and they also get to school tired after doing the house chores. The social sources of stress did not affect the respondents much has provided in their responses which may be as result of the emotional support they do receive from the relationship with their spouse/in-law that does not make them feel depressed. The study also provided substantial information stress coping mechanism utilized by the respondents amongst which are making plans for everything they want to do and follow it, relaxing and they know what to do, they double their effort and try harder to make everything work.

The results provided us with evidence of moderate level of perceived stress and therefore there could be substantial improvements in the quality of life experienced by the married female postgraduate students if they develop friendships or social networks with their colleagues, who help with adjustment and create and support self-identity.

5.9 Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

The university should support students in providing stress management programmes or seminars and trainings for students to enable them manage their time and everyday life demands. The content of such programmes could be informed by an online survey of postgraduate students. It may be appropriate for new postgraduate students to complete an online "needs assessment form" to ascertain their potential problems so as to deal with them as quickly as possible. This should help them to learn how to manage their stress at a much earlier stage.

The school should also provide an effective grid system that can provide a proper direction for students to make movement easy within the school so as to reduce the physical sources of stress as identified by the respondents.

The society should also be enlightened through media to always provide moral support for the married female students to further encouraged to develop interest in academics

Further research could be carried out that would shed further light on stress levels perceived by fresh postgraduate students. In particular it is possible that stress levels will vary during the academic year and therefore further research could explore the impact on these areas of particular events, e.g. examinations, arriving on campus for the first time. It would be interesting to carry out a study with a sample of married students who do not report high perceives stress levels to tease out the factors that enable such students to manage well at the university. Such factors might relate to personality types (hardiness, assertiveness, locus of control and self-efficacy), teaching and learning environment and their standard of English and number of courses of study.

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APPENDICES

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent,

Greetings; am a master of public health student in the Department of Health Promotion and Education, Faculty of Public Health, College of Medicine, University of Ibadan. I am conducting a research project titled '**COPING MECHANISM OF STRESS AMONG MARRIED FEMALE POSTGRADUATES OF UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN'** as part of the requirement for award of the degree. I intend to gather information from you on the topic and will be very grateful if you can spare some minutes to participate in the study by completing the questionnaire.

No name is required and utmost confidentiality of your identity, response and opinion will be ensured. You are requested to provide honest responses as much as possible as you complete the questionnaire.

S/n……………

SECTION A (SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION)

Instruction: please fill slots or mark (√) in boxes provided (as appropriate)

1. Age in years (as at last birthday) …………………

2. Religion   (1) Christianity□   (2) Islam□   (3) Traditional□   others.............

3. Faculty ………………………………………………………………

4. Level of study…………..

5. Ethnic group: 1. Hausa□   2. Igbo□   3. Yoruba□   4. Others (specify)………

6. How long are you married (year).....................

7. Were you married before starting this programme?(1) Yes □ (2) No □   (if no skip to 9)

8. How long after marriage did you start this programme? ....

9. Number of children............................

10. Do you have anybody assisting you take care of your family responsibilities in your absence? (1) Yes □ (2) No □   (if no skip to the next section)

11. How is this person related to you? ....

12. Do you find the help rendered by this person reliable? (1) Yes □ (2) No □

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Instruction; kindly fill in the correct response by ticking the right box

SECTION B: PHYSICAL STRESSES IN SCHOOL AMONG MARRIED FEMALE STUDENTS

S/n	Question	Always	Often	Rarely	Never
13.	Do you find movement within the school environment physically stressful?				
14.	Do you consider the durations of lecture stressful?				
15.	Do you feel backache while sitting for lectures?				
16.	Do you find the timing of lectures comfortable and stress-free?				
17.	Do you often get to school tired after doing the home chores?				
18.	Do you find the distance from where you reside to school far?				
19.	Is the daily trip from where you reside to school and back strenuous?				
20.	At the end of each day's lecture, do you feel tired/ worn out?				
21.	Is your academic schedule busy that you rarely find time to rest?				
22.	Is the sitting arrangement in class comfortable?				
23.	Do you find reading easy after doing house chores?				

Instruction: kindly fill in the gap to indicate your response to the following questions

24. What makes you physically stressed at home? …………………………

25. What makes you physically stressed in the school environment? ………………………….

26. What physical event(s) is/are the main source(s) of your stress? (1) Academic□ (2) family responsibilities□ (3) religious functions□ (4) others (specify)…………………………….... (multiple response)

27. When do you find reading convenient? ………………………………………………

28. Where do you find reading convenient? ………………………………………………

29. What time do you normally wake up? ....

SECTION C: SOCIAL STRESSES DURING COURSE WORK FOR MARRIED FEMALE STUDENTS

S/n	Question	Always	Often	Rarely	Never
30.	Do you experience poor communication with your lecturers?				
31.	Do you encounter difficulty in communicating with other students because of your marital status?				
32.	Are you subjected to personal harassment in the form of unkind words or behaviors within the school environment?				
33.	Are you subjected to personal harassment in the form of unkind words or behaviors at home?				
34.	Do you get moral support from your husband concerning your academic situations?				
35.	Relating with my husband about the school activities make me much better everyday				
36.	I get moral support from my in-laws concerning my academic situations				
37.	I get moral support from my relatives concerning my academic situations				
38.	I can talk to my lecturers easily on topics I don't understand for better explanation				
39.	My course mate help provide support for me when dealing with academic challenges (e.g. in getting materials, in copying note or submitting assignments)				
40.	I find time to visit friends/family despite my strenuous activities				
41.	Combining school activities with household responsibilities does not give me time to attend social functions like wedding ceremony, birthday ceremony or burial ceremony				

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Instruction: kindly fill in the gap to indicate your response to the following questions

42. Do you belong to any association/group/club? (1)Yes □ (2) No □ (if no skip to question 45)

43. Which association/group/club do you belong to? …………………………………………..

SECTION D: MENTAL STRESSES AMONG MARRIED FEMALE STUDENTS IN THEIR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

S/n	Questions	Always	Often	Rarely	Never
44.	I get headaches after attending to my different responsibilities				
45.	When I have a tight schedule of lecture, I tend to lose concentration				
46.	When I have lectures towards the end of the day, I get forgetful				
47.	I find it difficult to make decisions concerning my family issues over my academics				
48.	I find it difficult to reach practical solutions to my academic problems				
49.	I find learning new information difficult				
50.	I feel mentally fatigued from the large number of homework				
51.	My marital status makes me lose my confidence in school				
52.	Assignments and exams make me worried, anxious or nervous				
53.	Examination periods make me have less interest in my appearance				
54.	I am worried about my academic progress				

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SECTION E: EMOTIONAL STRESSES AMONG MARRIED FEMALE STUDENTS

S/n	Questions	Always	Often	Rarely	Never
55.	My relationship with my spouse/in-laws makes me depressed				
56.	Pressure from academic duties make me unable to control my feelings				
57.	Disagreement with my spouse makes me lose concentration in school				
58.	I feel lonely despite my husband's encouragement at home				
59.	I deal with others nervously when they try to provocative me				
60.	I act with hostility when am exposed to harassment and ridicule from students, teachers and my relatives				
61.	I tend to react to slight irritations with an outburst of anger when I am tired				

SECTION F: COPING STRATEGIESADOPTED TO BY THE MARRIED FEMALE STUDENTS

S/n	Questions	Always	Often	Rarely	Never
62.	I do my work one at a time				
63.	I knew what had to be done, so I doubled my efforts and try harder to make things work				
64.	I make plans for everything am to do then follow it				
65.	I have time to do personal activities				
66.	I spent some times with my friends discussing personal issues in school				
67.	I seek advice from friends on challenging situations				

68.	I spent some times with my family by visiting relaxation centers e.g. amusement parks, tourist centers or cinemas				
69.	I seek advice from my relatives on challenging situations				
70.	I get someone to assist me in family responsibilities				

Instruction: kindly fill in the gap to indicate your response to this question

71. How do you cope when you experience multiple stresses?...