



**MODERATING INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL  
FACTORS ON STRESS AMONG ACADEMIC STAFF  
OF MAKERERE UNIVERSITY, UGANDA**

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**Abstract:**

The study investigated whether personal factors had a moderating influence on stress among academic staff of Makerere University. The phenomenon of stress is a major factor that negatively affects work performance in universities and negatively affects the workers' health state. Therefore, to mitigate the effects of stress, it is necessary to minimize factors, particularly personal factors that cause stress among employees. Pragmatism paradigm was used to conduct this research and cross-sectional survey too with an approach of convergent parallel survey was used to arrive at the findings of this study. The researcher used 253 respondents for data collection. The researcher further used disproportionate stratified sampling to select colleges and staff, and purposive sampling for administrators. The collection of Quantitative data employed stress questionnaire and inferential statistics and descriptive analysis were used for data analysis. On the other hand, structured interview was used to collect qualitative data and thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data. Findings from this study showed that individual factors (self-esteem, locus of control as a personality factor, and optimism) partook a moderating impact on academic staff stress. The combination of predictors and moderators contributed 41.9% of the variance in academic stress (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .419). It was further revealed that there is high stress at 74.38% that the Makerere University academic staff reported. Consequently, intra-organizational factors and extra-organizational factors partake a bearing on academic staff stress, and individual factors interact with intra-organizational and extra-organizational factors to

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effect stress among academic staff at Makerere University. It was thus recommended that organizations and institutions should initiate and embolden a communication that is open and honest so as to advance a working environment where there is less likelihood of stress among the employees. There should be an assurance from the academic staff Managers and supervisors in universities about intra-organizational factors such as workload and responsibility for people having no bearing on stress amongst academic staff of Makerere University.

**Keywords:** moderating influence, personal factors, academic staff, stress

## 1. Introduction

Universities contribute greatly to human capital development through providing specialized knowledge which is a necessary contribution in concert with other factors to the success of national efforts to boost productivity, competitiveness, and economic growth (Fagoyinbo, 2013). This is only possible when universities have high performing academic staff. Research on stress among university staff from around the world shows that workplace stress at universities has increased disturbingly (Winefield, 2014). In numerous workplaces, stress has stayed a cause of tension in unions and employers.

However, stress is a major factor that negatively affects work performance. This is because stress negatively affects the workers' health state; making low-performance levels, leads to absenteeism at work, employee turnover, increased chances of committing counterproductive and risky behaviors among others (Petreanu, Iordache & Seracin, 2013). Therefore, to mitigate the effects of stress, it is necessary to minimize factors that cause stress among employees (Bhui, Dinos, Galant-Miecznikowska, de Jongh & Stansfeld, 2016). Research that was done recently on behalf of the American Psychological Association (APA) revealed that about 70% of Americans that were surveyed between 2007 and 2010 saw "work" as one of the major causes of stress (APA, 2010).

The research conducted on indicators of occupational stress among academic staff in institutions of higher education of South African where the academic staff is used as units of analysis, Barkhuizen and Rothmann (2008) inferred that work overload, work-life balance, job control, availability of resources, pay and benefits and communication, and job characteristics instigated stress amongst academic staff. In the same way, Yeboah et al. (2014) in Ghana investigated the relationship between administrative influences and stress among health care professionals in a teaching hospital in Ghana. The results revealed that organizational factors namely demand factors including workload and relationship factors namely relationship with colleagues and relationship with managers had a positive significant impact on employees' stress.

In Makerere University, there has been contextual evidence, which shows that academic staff had problems indicative of stress, and factors likely to cause stress are also visible (Omaswa 2014; Mugizi, Bakkabulindi & Bisaso, 2015; Kasozi, 2019; Rwendeire, 2017). For instance, there's a tall predominance of representative turnover of academic

staff, committing counterproductive behaviors such as strikes that always frequent, dangers of strikes, and truancy (Mugizi et al., 2015), Although the presentation is not yet built up all these might have brought about from intemperate stress among the staff of Makerere university.

Be that as it may, there has been a need of clarity on the indicators of stress among academic staff of Makerere University. This research hence looked at whether individual factors had a moderating impact on stress among the Makerere University academic staff. Without knowledge on these factors, interventions will not be designed, and the academic staff will continue to suffer stress threatening their mental and physical health and the performance of the university will suffer.

## **2. Summary of Literature**

### **2.1 Moderating Influence of Personal Factors on Stress**

The relationship that appears between intra-organizational factors (responsibility for others, workload, organizational culture and interpersonal relationships), and extra-organizational factors (relationships in family and socioeconomic status), and stress is not forthright. There are other factors called moderators that can influence this relationship. These moderators include; traits of personality (optimism, locus of control, and self-esteem).

A moderator is an attribute that is appreciated and can affect the relationship nature (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Much as several moderators are very vital, the focus of this research was on; personality factors and demographics. Most of the moderator variables measure the causal relationship using the regression coefficient. The moderator variable, if found to be significant, can cause an amplifying or weakening effect between independent variables (IV) and dependent variables (DV). In ANOVA, the effect of a moderator variable is signified by the consequence of interaction between the DV and the factor variable.

Personal factors be defined as differentiating features among persons that have emotional impact behaviour. Ivancevich and Matteson (1980) denote personal factors as; personality factors (self-esteem, locus of control, optimism). Eysenck and Eysenck (1985) postulate that to some extent, personality determines the predilections that go with different categories of profession and work-related success. Eysenck (1970) expounds that the temperament, ingenuity, and body of a personality determine his distinctive adaptation to an environment. Scholars (e.g. Bak, Andersen, Bacher & Bancila, 2012; Colacion-Quiros & Gemora, 2016; Desa et al., 2014; De Silva & Thilakasiri, 2014; El-Amin, Abdul-Moniem & Singh, 2015; Kaewanuchit & Muntaner, 2015; Reevy & Deason, 2014) partake connected individual features and stress.

### 2.1.1 Locus of Control and Stress

Locus of control can be defined as the propensity to see consequences on life that result from one's actions and then beneath one's control (i.e., internal locus of control). This is different from external factors' determination, for instance prospects or other dynamics (i.e., external locus of control) (Rotter, 1966; Keenan & McBain, 1979). There has been often association of control of effects of health (i.e., internal locus of control) with decent health and happiness, whereas reliance on the opportunity and/or other influences (i.e., external locus of control) has been related with deprived health and undesirable stress (Reknes, Visockaite, Liefoghe, Lovakov & Einarsen, 2019). Individuals who have an internal control that is high often attempt to control their environment, while those individuals that have high external control levels regularly feel unable to help themselves for the reason that they realise that the consequences on life are outside their control (Keenan & McBain, 1979).

Personality trait was the first description of locus of control that denotes to the beliefs of personal efficacy that are unwavering (Rotter, 1966). Well ahead, nonetheless, the description of the locus of control changed to a tool for coping, supplementing some coping styles (Newton & Keenan, 1990; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Van den Brande et al., 2016). It is important to note that, situating the reason for the consequence on others (i.e., the external locus of control) is interconnected with evasion / leaving work, stress that is severe, and deprived health (Evers et al., 2000; Gianakos, 2002; Gore et al., 2016). Internal locus of control, however, is related to looking for assistance and a thinking that is positive, including levels of general work stress that are lower (Gianakos, 2002; Gore et al., 2016; Gray-Stanley & Muramatsu, 2011).

In an analysis by Jha and Bano (2012), it was revealed that there is an effect of locus of control on job stress in a study comprising employees from numerous fields India. It was further inferred that the internal locus of control had a significant relationship that is negative with organizational role stress. In another analysis by Kalyanasundaram, Manickam, and Senthilkuma (2018), the authors focused on impact of locus of control on organizational stress where by the Indian employees working in Coimbatore were used. Therefore, studies have inferred that workers who have an internal locus of control are much often stressed less in their employments.

Even though theoretically, it is rational to assume that locus of control may play as a vital moderator of other intra and extra-organisational factors and relationships that are stressful, the theory however, largely ignores the prediction. However, some studies have used other similar structures as the current study and conflicting findings. For instance, in a study by Ariza-Montes et al. (2017), it was found out that internal locus of control minimised stress and strain on job amongst administrators. Correspondingly, research by Dijkstra et al. (2011) shows that the internal locus of control low that is low has reinforced the relationship that is between conflict between persons at work and psychological distress, which suggests that the internal locus of control that is higher may alter as a buffer.

Furthermore, Sassi et al. (2014) denotes that external locus of control is connected with a high level of over workload and stress that is perceived, with in the sense that high levels of external locus of control have reinforced these relations. The findings from Chen and Silverthorne (2008) revealed that there was a possibility of individuals who have internal locus of control of a high level to a smaller extent experience stress from work. However, Schat and Kelloway (2000) contends that the locus of control had no prediction of the relationship that exist between aggression at the place of work and fear, nor did it moderate the relationship between emotional well-being and fear, somatic health, and neglect, correspondingly.

Thus, even though some research has suggested that the internal locus of control may possibly act as a disruption in stress relationships that are health, despite the fact that the external locus of control strengthens this relationship, certain consequences are unreliable and not consistent.

It is out of the above that this study was designed to investigate how the locus of control moderates the relationship between intra and extra-organizational factors and stress with the use of concepts of internal- and external locus of control, correspondingly.

### **2.1.2 Self-esteem and Stress**

Coopersmith, 1967 and Damon, (1983) generally describe Self-esteem as person's general universal assessment of themselves as an individual, from negative to positive. Self-esteem that is positive has been related to adjustments that are fruitful through a varied diversity of domains (Kling, Hyde, Showers, & Buswell, 1999).

It has been shown Self-esteem is beneficial to persons facing numerous health challenges, comprising of work pressures (Mossholder, Bedian, & Armenakis, 1981). As a trait of self, self-esteem has been useful in the description of person's perceptions of how they esteem themselves or accept themselves and how they feel (Rosenberg, 1965; Lou et al., 2011). Research continues to show that self-esteem has a protecting impact on the nurses' mental health that can be helpful in combating stress related to work and depression (Shimizu et al., 2004; Lee et al., 2013).

In a study conducted by Thompson & Gomez (2014) which involved 78 employees (32 males, 46 females), the notion that components that were key to self-efficacy were tested and self-esteem had the ability to moderate the relationship between stress at work (role conflicts and role ambiguity) and challenges (anxiety, stress, and depression). Their assumptions were supported by the results on the relationship between role ambiguity and anxiety, between performance role ambiguity and stress (Thompson & Gomez, 2014). Self-esteem's part in ensuring people from strain is proposed to happen through standards contained inside the model of 'behavioral plasticity' (Brockner, 1988). Behavioral versatility alludes to the level to which the behaviour of an individual is influenced by factors outside to them. Individuals with high self-esteem show up to be ensured from the impacts of outside variables, which empowers them to proceed to have faith in their contemplations and activities, adjust less to the desires of others, and refuse criticism of one region of their work to generalize to other regions of their execution.

Labourers who are low in self-esteem need this 'buffer' against stressors and consequently are more likely to be delicate to, and influenced unfavourably by, the nearness of negative natural or working environment occasions.

However, the moderate effect of self-esteem has not been extensively evaluated. However, it has been established that there is a noteworthy relationship between self-esteem and organizational support (Liu and Liu, 2016). Based on the above literature, we assume that self-esteem can strengthen the correlation between extra and intra organizational factors and stress.

### **2.1.3 Optimism and Stress**

Optimism is an attribute which is psychological, regarded as positive anticipations about the outcomes of the future that have been connected with psychological and physical well-being that are better, especially for the duration of times of stress (Scheier & Carver, 1992; Smith & MacKenzie, 2006). Optimism is believed to act a protecting role in conditions that are stress-related for instance metabolic syndrome (Cohen, Panguluri, Na, & Whooley, 2010), reduced functioning of the immune (Roy et al., 2010), and cardiovascular diseases (Giltay, Kamphuts, Kabmijn, Zitman, & Kromhout, 2006; Nabi et al., 2010; Tindle, Davis, & Kuller, 2010).

Chan (2004) examined the relationship between optimism, the Five-Factor Model (FFM) of personality (conscience, openness, emotional stability, agreeableness, and extraversion), stress (perceived stress), and diversity of work performance (commitment, collaboration, independence-commitment, winning status, suitability, quality of work, promises/hospitality) among employees in the service industry in the USA. The study's findings further discovered that persons with a mentality that is optimistic could better safeguard themselves from the consequences of perceived stress. Optimism may affect health indirectly through health behaviours, as well as directly through psychophysiological processes. Both of these pathways can influence the development of cardiovascular and other chronic diseases (Matthews, Räikkönen, Sutton-Tyrrell, & Kuller, 2004; Tinker et al., 2007). There is considerable evidence that the protective role of optimism may involve in part greater engagement in health-protective behaviours (Carver, Scheier, & Segerstrom, 2010). In line with behavioral self-regulation theory (Carver & Scheier, 2000), how people face challenges or difficulties influences how they cope with stress (Carver et al., 2010). Having an optimistic point of view increases confidence, motivating individuals to achieve goals as well as increasing positive affect and well-being (Solberg Nes, Segerstrom, & Sephton, 2005).

Finally, in line with previous studies, we expected that optimism would positively moderate the relationship between extra and intra-organisational factors and stress among Makerere University academic staff.

### 3. Methodology

A mixed approach framed in the pragmatic paradigm guided this study to respond to the research problem, where quantitative data and quality data were analyzed. The study was positioned as a Convergent Parallel mixed methods design. Concurring to Creswell and Pablo-Clark (2011), a convergent parallel plan involves that the analyst concurrently conducts the quantitative and subjective components within the same stage of the research process, weighs the strategies similarly, analyzes the two components autonomously, and interprets the results together. This design was selected from other mixed designs because of its appropriateness and strengths in gathering, analyzing, and integrating quantitative and qualitative research data concurrently in a single study as argued by Creswell, (2014).

Under the Convergent Parallel design (QUAN+QUAL), in the quantitative method, a cross-sectional survey was, particularly adopted to collect information which helped the investigator to comprehend the issue under investigation. The survey method was also of paramount effect for this study because it allowed the researcher to collect information from very many respondents at Makerere University. This was done in a short duration hence decreasing on costs and time used in gathering data from the field. This approach helped in generalizing the results to the population of Makerere University. This was by Bakkabulindi (2015) who argues that positivists scholars handle relatively big samples that are representative of their parent population.

In the qualitative method, the researcher adopted the phenomenological strategy to investigate the importance of individual perceptions and their lived experiences (Creswell, 2014). These included the College Principals and Human Resource Officers. This design was adopted because it was very helpful in probing in-depth perceptions and experiences of the College Principals and Human Resource Officers on the predictors of stress among Makerere University academic staff.

**Table 1:** Target Population and Sample Size

Colleges	Target Population	Sample size
Agriculture and Environment Sciences	180	38
Business and Management Science	104	22
Computing and Information Science	85	18
Education and External Studies	108	23
Engineering, Design Art and Technology	148	31
Health Sciences	270	57
Humanities and Social Sciences	264	55
Natural Sciences	154	32
Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biological Security	88	19
School of Law	44	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>1445</b>	<b>304</b>

**Source:** Makerere University Human Resource Office Records (2019)

A sample size of 304 respondents was selected from a target population of 1455 full-time Makerere University academic staff. These were distributed in 9 constituent colleges and one school at the main campus of Makerere University. This was determined based on the table for sample size determination from a given population (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). To attain the sample size, the researcher used stratified random sampling whereby the academic staff was selected according to the Colleges (strata). Key informant interviewees were purposively selected to include: Human Resource Managers and College Principals. The sample for academic staff was as in Table 1.

For the third hypothesis on the moderating effect of personal factors, the moderation test was done using PROCESS (Hayes) provided in SPSS. These inferential statistics produced data necessary for the generalization of the findings. The qualitative data collected were coded and grouped according to the study objectives and emerging themes through thematic methods and content analysis.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Quantitative Data

This study set out to examine whether personal factors had a moderating influence on stress among academic staff of Makerere University. Personality factors were categorized as; locus of control, self-esteem, and optimism. Their descriptive statistics have been shown in Tables 2, 3, and 4.

**Table 2:** Descriptive Statistics for Locus of Control

Locus of Control Indicators	N	Mean	SD
It is my firm belief that I can solely overcome the obstacles at my workplace	252	3.17	1.14
I personally should be responsible for the failure of not reaching the work targets	249	3.14	1.15
My behaviour can greatly influence my work success	247	3.67	.80
My performance is strongly related to the efforts I have made	249	3.80	.71
Becoming an outstanding performer depends mostly on my timing and opportunity	251	4.01	3.40
A prayer for good luck may quite possibly outweigh my personal ability	242	3.17	.91
My performance today rests on chance	251	2.30	.86
It takes luck and good fortune to get a promotion in this university	251	2.76	1.03
I believe that job success is mostly influenced by powerful others	247	2.74	.87
My performance cannot be effective without the favour of important people	248	2.56	1.03
Becoming a competent performer depends on the help of some people in high positions	251	2.48	.82
The accomplishment I can achieve is often in the hands of powerful others.	247	2.49	.91
Valid N (listwise)	221		

Table 2 findings indicate that most respondents agreed (M=3.17) that they have a firm belief that they can solely overcome the obstacles at their workplace and they agreed (M=3.14) that they should personally be responsible for the failure of not reaching the work targets. The findings further indicate that most respondents agreed (M=3.67) that



their behaviour can greatly influence their work success and they agreed (M=3.80) that their performance is strongly related to the efforts they make. Most of the respondents agreed (M=4.01) that becoming an outstanding performer depends mostly on their timing and opportunity and they also agreed (M=3.17) that prayer for good luck may quite possibly outweigh their ability, however, few respondents agreed (M=2.30) that their performance rests on chance. Most respondents agree (M=2.76) that it takes luck and good fortune to get a promotion in this university and most respondents believe (M=2.74) that job success is mostly influenced by powerful others and their job performance cannot be effective without favor from important people. Findings from Table 2 indicate that most respondents agreed (M=2.48) that becoming a competent performer depends on the help from some people in high positions and the accomplishment they can achieve is often in the hands of influential others. It is therefore clear from these findings that the academic staff of Makerere University possess an internal locus of control.

**Table 3:** Descriptive Statistics for Self-Esteem

Self-Esteem indicators	N	Mean	SD
I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal pace with others	251	4.18	.81
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure	248	2.16	1.10
I feel I have a number of good qualities as a member of staff	251	4.16	.77
I am able to do things as well as other people	251	4.20	.73
I feel that I do not have much to be proud of	251	3.02	1.33
I take a positive attitude towards myself	251	4.34	.98
I wish I could have more respect for myself	251	3.43	1.18
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	251	3.90	1.14
I certainly feel useless at times	251	1.80	1.00
At times I think I am not good at all	251	1.10	1.18
Valid N (listwise)	248		

Field data (2020).

Table 3 findings indicate that most respondents agree (M=4.18) that they feel they are persons of worth, at least on an equal pace with others and most of them disagree (M=2.16) that they are inclined to feel that they are a failure. Instead, most of the respondents agreed (M=4.16) that they feel they have some good qualities as members of the staff and they can do things as well as other people. However, some respondents agreed (M=3.02) that they feel that they do not have much to be proud of, but most of them agreed (M=4.34) that they take a positive attitude towards themselves. Table 3 findings further indicate that most respondents agreed (M=3.43) that they wish could have more respect for themselves, though most of them agreed (M=3.90) that on the whole, they are satisfied with themselves. Most of the respondents disagreed (M=1.80) that they certainly feel useless at times and at times they think they are not good at all.

Table 3 findings indicate that most respondents agreed (M=2.94) that in uncertain times, they usually expect the best, and they agreed (M=2.9) that it is easy for them to relax. Most respondents agreed (M=3.17) that if something can go wrong for them, it will and, they agreed (M=2.95) that they are optimistic about their future. Findings from Table

3 further indicate that respondents agreed ( $M=2.80$ ) that they enjoy their friends a lot. Respondents agreed ( $M=2.94$ ) that it is important for them to keep busy because they agree ( $M=3.17$ ) that they hardly ever expect things to go their way. Most respondents further agree ( $M=2.77$ ) that they don't get upset too easily and most of them agreed ( $M=3.40$ ) that they rarely count on good things happening to me, however, they agreed ( $M=2.91$ ) that they expect more good things to happen to them than bad.

**Table 4:** Descriptive Statistics for Optimism

Indicators of Optimism	N	Mean	SD
In uncertain times, I usually expect the best	248	2.94	1.43
It is easy for me to relax	249	2.90	1.07
If something can go wrong for me, it will	244	3.17	1.10
I am always optimistic about my future	243	2.95	1.50
I enjoy my friends a lot	251	2.80	1.25
It is important for me to keep busy	251	2.94	1.25
I hardly ever expect things to go my way	243	3.17	1.13
I don't get upset too easily	247	2.77	1.15
I rarely count on good things happening to me	247	3.40	1.25
Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad	237	2.91	1.67
Valid N (listwise)	205		

Field data (2020).

Table 4 findings indicate that most respondents agreed ( $M=2.94$ ) that in uncertain times, they usually expect the best, and they agreed ( $M=2.9$ ) that it is easy for them to relax. Most respondents agreed ( $M=3.17$ ) that if something can go wrong for them, it will and, they agreed ( $M=2.95$ ) that they are optimistic about their future. Findings from Table 15 further indicate that respondents agreed ( $M=2.80$ ) that they enjoy their friends a lot. Respondents agreed ( $M=2.94$ ) that it is important for them to keep busy because they agree ( $M=3.17$ ) that they hardly ever expect things to go their way. Most respondents further agree ( $M=2.77$ ) that they don't get upset too easily and most of them agreed ( $M=3.40$ ) that they rarely count on good things happening to them, however, they agreed ( $M=2.91$ ) that they expect more good things to happen to them than bad.

#### 4.1.1 Hypothesis Three

To examine whether individual variables have a moderating impact on stress among academic staff, this study utilised a moderator analysis decide whether the relationship between two factors be determined by (is moderated by) the value of a third variable. In this manner, a moderator analysis was utilized to decide whether the relationship between intra and extra-organizational variables and stress is moderated by individual factors. Individual factors incorporate; identity factors (locus of control, self-esteem, and optimism). Multiple regression analysis of intra and extra organizational factors, and moderators on Academic stress.

The relationship that is between stress and intra-organizational factors (workload, interpersonal relationships, responsibility for others, and organizational culture) and

extra-organizational factors (family relations and socioeconomic status) is not essentially straight. These relationships may be influenced by stress moderators, such as; personality factors (locus of control, self-esteem, and optimism). In order to establish how the combined predictors and moderators predict academic stress, multiple regression was utilised.

**Table 5:** Multiple regression of Predictors, Moderators and Academic Stress

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	1.282	.519		.015	<b>.487</b>	<b>.419</b>
Age	.014	.045	.027	.758		
Sex	.084	.067	.091	.213		
Marital status	-.069	.065	-.084	.289		
Spouse's Education level	.058	.037	.142	.117		
Your highest level of education attained	-.051	.053	-.098	.340		
Health status	.076	.040	.144	.059		
Experience of teaching	.026	.031	.054	.402		
Your family size	.013	.028	.031	.634		
Educational level of father	.057	.036	.178	.114		
Education level of mother	-.027	.039	-.082	.484		
Economic Status	.026	.038	.061	.502		
Family Relations	.035	.049	.055	.475		
Responsibility to People	.041	.034	.093	.226		
Organisational Culture	-.062	.048	-.103	.200		
Interpersonal Relationships	.016	.040	.031	.689		
Workload	.242	.047	.457	.000		
Locus of control	.010	.004	.156	.020		
Self-Esteem	.011	.011	.085	.325		
Optimism	-.012	.005	-.213	.015		

The model summary Table 5 shows that the adjusted R Square is .419 using all the predictors and moderators simultaneously, meaning that 41.9% of the variance in academic stress can be predicted from all the variables combined.

#### 4.2 Qualitative Data

Participants reported that most of the academic staff do not have the locus of control since most of them submit to different authorities and do not take their own decisions. However, other participants reported that the academicians have a lot of control over the academic programs. The least participants reasoned that the academic staff depicts more of accountability, responsibility and management other than the locus of control. These sentiments are expressed in:

*"The academic staff do not have the locus of control because of what is happening to them is affected externally i.e. their control comes direct from the main building."*

*"The academic staff have a locus of control because there is no much interface from the management in what they teach as long as they are following the curriculum, what is on the ground and they are fully in the timelines given and the policies on ground."*

Participants reported that the academic staff has high self-esteem, followed by the male respondents who also reported high self-esteem. To this, participants noted that:

*"I think self-esteem is high. There is that feeling that I did sciences and I am getting a salary which is higher than other people in humanities so there is a way they have that self-esteem and satisfaction."* (Principal 1)

*"The academic staff have high self-esteem because they are very confident i.e. hold themselves in very high esteem e.g. am an architect, am a designer, or am an innovator."*(Principal 2)

*"The academic staff have high self-esteem because of the academic environment e.g. this is the only workplace with no bosses i.e. no one will ask why you are late for work, why you are leaving among others."* (Principal 3)

Participants conveyed that there is high optimism among the academic staff. Other participants noted that the academic staff is pessimistic.

*"I think there is a lot of optimism in everything we do. In teaching we are optimistic, doing research we have to exhibit optimism, treating patients we do that, getting well off, we are very optimistic because we have reached. Therefore, I think this is an area where people are highly optimistic."* (Principal 4)

*"The academic staff are pessimistic because they believe that university management is not doing enough to deliver to its expectations therefore, they are more pessimistic"* (Human Resource Officer 2)

## **5. Discussion and Conclusion**

In the view to achieving the aim of this study, qualitative information from interviews were analyzed and the hypothesis of the study examined whether individual factors had a moderating impact on the relationship between intra and extra-organizational factors and stress among academic staff of Makerere University. The hypothesis inferred from this objective was to the effect that individual factors have a moderating impact on stress among academic staff. It was revealed from the findings that by and large individual

factors (locus of control as a personality factor, sex, health status, and education level of guardians) had a directing impact on stretch among scholarly staff. In this manner, the directional hypothesis was held. These findings were supported up by the qualitative discoveries where most of the members reported as follows; *"...the academic staff do not have locus of control because colleges do not take independent decisions i.e. initially payments were being made by the centre so if you are doing anything may be for your personal gain but if you are doing anything for the good of the institution."*

The findings that health impacts stress among academic staff concur with the discoveries by Prasad et al. (2015) that persistent back pain was a positive and critical cause of stress. Moreover, Yahaya et al. (2011) found out that sick health and back pain, in conjunction with certain health-related activities such as smoking, and liquor intake led to stress among workers. This implies that individuals who have health complications are more likely to suffer work related stress. These quantitative findings were supported up by qualitative findings where the larger part of the members had to say; *"...the academic staff have not reported any health challenge because they have relatively young staff and also the staff are not badly economically"*.

The findings that locus of control had a significant influence on stress agree with Kalyanasundaram et al. (2018) who found out that workers who have an internal locus of control were less stressed by their jobs. These findings are supported by qualitative findings where most of the participants from human resources reported that; *"...the academic staff do not have an internal locus of control because colleges do not take an independent decision. What is happening is externally affected i.e. they are controlled directly from the main building"*. Similarly, Chen and Silverthorne (2008) that individuals with a higher internal locus of control were more likely to have lower levels of job stress. Likewise, Jha and Bano (2012) found out that internal locus of control has a significant negative correlation with organizational role stress. Regarding the finding that optimism had an insignificant influence on stress agrees with Chan (2004) revealed that individuals with an optimistic mentality could better buffer themselves from the effects of perceived stress. However, some participants narrated; *"the academic staff are pessimistic because they believe that university management is not doing enough to deliver to its expectations therefore, they are more pessimistic"*.

The above discussion proposes that individuals who have an internal locus of control and are idealistic are less likely to suffer from stress at the working environment. Concerning age being an inconsequential predictor of stress, these findings oppose this idea with the findings of past researchers. For example, Bak et al. (2012) noted that stress diminished as the financial circumstance made strides and individuals got old. Hjelm et al. (2017) revealed that age and education appeared no steady affiliation with stress. Relatedly, Rauschenbach et al. (2013) revealed that age had no significant impact on stress. Faraji et al. (2019) demonstrated that there was no statistically significant distinction between the mean occupational stress and factors of sex, age, academic degree, and working experience. The discussion above suggests that people did not suffer stress because of variations in demographic characteristics. With this study's findings

concurring with the findings of preceding researchers that other than sex, health, and parents' level of education, the other personal factors did not predict stress, it can be deduced that personal factors influence the stress of academic staff. Thus, personal factors interact with intra-organizational and extra-organizational factors to cause stress among academic staff.

## 6. Recommendations

Organizations and institutions ought to energize open and genuine communication to create an environment in which workers are less likely to be stressed out, empowering the workers to best utilize their capacities and abilities and, in this way, invigorating the workers to work execution. This would enable the likelihood of reducing stress and performance increment subordinate on moderating factors such as work complication, the abilities, and skill of the worker in performing an assignment, individual characteristics of the institutions' individuals/employees.

Managers and administrators of academic staff in universities ought to guarantee that intra-organisational factors such as workload and obligation for individuals have no bearing on stress among academic staff. This ought to include guaranteeing that academic staff feels esteemed, are respected, included in making of decision, work permits flex-time, campuses are free from the chance of violence, and participation is advanced. Moreover, they ought to advance collaboration, make agreeable working connections and advance the equality which boosts self-esteem. Furthermore, they ought to offer bolster to staff to realize their full potential, offer them abilities required for the work and create them through departmental training and sharing information platforms, and permit them the opportunity to express inventiveness. While implementing these interventions moderating factors of locus of control, self-esteem and optimism should be respected.

## Conflict of Interest Statement

None of the authors of this paper has a financial or personal relation with the other people or organisations that could inappropriately influence or bias the content of the paper.

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