



Received: 14-02-2023  
Accepted: 24-03-2023

## International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies

ISSN: 2583-049X

### Perceived effects of Job Stress and Coping Strategies of Agricultural Extension Professionals in Anambra and Abia States of Nigeria

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#### Abstract

The study assessed the job stress and coping strategies among agricultural extension professionals (AEPs) in Anambra and Abia States, Nigeria. Perceived effects of job stress; socio-economic characteristics influence on job stress level and job stress coping strategies of the respondents were assessed. Data were collected using 202 respondents, multistage sampling method and validated questionnaire. Descriptive and Tobit regression statistics were employed in data analysis. Results reveal that, the first three effects of job stress among the officers in Anambra State were feeling of fear (80.4%), lack of sleep (79.4%) and mistake making (72.5%) while those of Abia State were feeling of fear (84.0%), mistake making (75.0%) and poor memory (71.0%). The result of the influence of the level of job stress among agricultural extension professionals in Anambra

State revealed that 10% advancement in position will reduce their stress level by 0.2%. In Abia State, the pseudo  $R^2$  of 0.35 indicates that 35.2% of the deviation in the level of job stress is influenced by the agricultural extension professional's socio-economic characteristics. The results also shows that the Anambra AEPs coping strategies were positive thinking (100%), entertainment (92.2%) and watching television (91.2%) while those of Abia were positive thinking (100%) and entertainment (90.0%). To reduce AEPs job stress effects, government needs to establish agricultural extension policy that will target AEPs' reduced self-role distance, increased rest and fear reduction strategies which will include electronic agricultural extension, security trainings/services and appropriate leave opportunities.

**Keywords:** AEPs, Socioeconomic, Tobit, Nigeria

#### 1. Introduction

Agricultural improvement in Nigeria require major efforts to improve the quality of agricultural extension services available to farmers (Anyansina and Adeogun (2017). This is because agricultural extension bridges the gap between available agricultural technologies and farmers' old practices through the provision of technical advice, information and training (Oladele and Mabe 2010) <sup>[16]</sup>. It is revealed to be the foundation for any meaningful agricultural development and it is designed to provide farmers with appropriate skills and knowledge that would lead to agricultural production increase (Dessalegn, 2014). Information sources employed in disseminating agricultural technologies or research findings to farmers for the increased agricultural output include researchers, extension officers, knowledgeable farmers, research institutions, mass media and government agencies (Mubofu and Malekani, 2020) <sup>[12]</sup>. This indicates that Agricultural extension is one of the major sources of information on improved agricultural technologies. Agricultural extension also provides access to other opportunities for agricultural improvement through links to: research, sources of input supplies, training and possible markets or market niches. Effectiveness of agricultural extension is dependent upon the motivation of its employees (Oladele and Mabe 2010) <sup>[16]</sup>. This implies that knowing what motivates employees and incorporating this knowledge into the reward system will help agricultural extension managers identify, recruit, employ, train, and retain a productivity workforce. In evidence, Enibe *et al* (2020) <sup>[6]</sup> revealed that intermittent rewards are some of the good methods to keep the youths in agriculture and prevent its abandonment to old age population. This suggests that job stress of the agricultural extension professionals may be reduced through reward system. This is needed especially in this climate change time that Nigeria is reported to need agricultural extension professionals (Ayansina and Adeogun, 2017).

Akintayo (2012) <sup>[2]</sup> noted that job stress is the body's psychological, emotional and physiological responses to any demand that is perceived as threatening to a person's well-being. Rumbold (2012) <sup>[17]</sup> viewed job stress as a positive and negative response

to our actions because our rational evaluation and assumption of the stressors make difference in how we react to the issue that is perceived as stressor and how it is dealt with. Moreover, the discrepancy that exists between the level of demand and the person's ability to cope is a thing of concern (Cox, 2016). Occupational stress is a major problem facing both the employees and organizations in today's workforce. Job stress can result in employee's burnout, ill health, low turnover, absenteeism, low morale, reduced efficiency and performance (Okereke and Onu, 2007) <sup>[14]</sup>. Job stress is revealed to be the cause of psychological and physical illness to the employees when their resources are not insufficient to cope with the demands and pressures of the situation.

Many researchers affirm that stress at workplace has an impact on performance in one way or the other. In this regard, Yozgat and Yurtkoru (2013) <sup>[20]</sup> reported that job stress compels the organizational performance to go down. Prolonged stress leads to burnout which is defined as a state of emotional restlessness and depression. According to Oladele and Mabe (2010) <sup>[16]</sup>, physical and emotional exhaustion could result to doubts or believes that their organization is acting from selfish motives, which in turn have a potential to reduce work efficiency and output. Olatunji *et al* (2015) <sup>[15]</sup> found that extension agents were satisfied with their job routines and relationships existing among farmers and other staff of the extension service, but were not satisfied with remunerations, allowances, promotion conditions and their general work environments. This suggests the need to understand perceived effects of their job stress and coping strategies. Annakay and Diane (2021) <sup>[3]</sup> defined the word "coping" as the process of using cognition and behavioral approaches to manage conditions that are difficult or seen likely to produce unwelcome results, and plays fundamental role of maintaining physical and mental well-being of an individual. They added that coping strategies or mechanisms include unconscious or conscious decision which consoles or relieves a person in stressful condition.

Strong and Harder (2009) <sup>[19]</sup> revealed that major problem facing agricultural extension service delivery is high attrition rate among agricultural extension agents and consequently low extension agent farmers' ratio. They added that, the prevailing situation of low ratio of agricultural extension agents to farmers would result in work overload and the enormous demand on agricultural extension agents by the clientele and the institutions they serve would predispose them to frustrations and stress. Kutilek (2017) <sup>[9]</sup> noted that the ratio between 15,000 and 20,000 farmers to one agricultural extension agent is in contradiction to the World Bank recommended ratio of one agricultural extension agent to 800 farmers (1:800). This ratio suggests that agricultural extension agents work long hours on daily basis to reach as many farm families as possible and that there is usually enormous demand on agricultural extension agents by the clientele and the institutions they serve (Kutilek, 2017) <sup>[9]</sup>.

Available information on job stress and coping strategies reveals that there remains research gaps on the effects of job stress and coping strategies in agriculture and other job areas. These calls for a number of research questions which include the following: What job stress effects do the Agricultural extension professionals perceive in Anambra and Abia States of Nigeria? Are there differences in the job

stress coping strategies adopted by the agricultural extension professional in the two study states? How do the socio-economic characteristics of the Agricultural Extension professionals influence their job stress levels in the study area? How can the job stress levels of the agricultural extension professionals be reduced? The broad objective of the study is to analyze the effects of the job stress of the Agricultural extension professionals and their work coping strategies in Anambra and Abia States of Nigeria. The specific objectives were to: Determine the job stress effects perceived by agricultural extension professionals in the study area. Identify and compare the coping strategies adopted by the agricultural extension professionals in the study area. Examine the influence of the socio-economic characteristics of the agricultural extension professionals on their job stress levels. Suggest ways to reduce the job stress levels of the agricultural extension professionals.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Study Area

The study was conducted in Anambra and Abia States of Southeast Nigeria. Anambra State of Nigeria has 21 Local Government Areas (LGAs) and four Agricultural Zones (AZs) named Aguata, Anambra, Awka and Onitsha. The state is located in Nigeria between longitude 6° 36'E and 7° 21'E and latitude 5° 38'N and 6° 47'N. Anambra state is bounded with Kogi State on the north, Imo State on the south, Enugu State on the East, River Niger and Delta State on the west (Enibe, 2019). Abia State is one of the five southeast Nigerian states with Umuahia as her capital city. Abia State shared boundary with Enugu State in the North, in the South with Rivers and Akwa Ibom states, Cross River in the East, and on the West with Imo state, and Ebonyi State. The State has seventeen local government areas named: Aba North, Aba South, Arochuku, Bende, Ikwuano, Isialangwa North, Isialangwa South, Isuikwuato, Obioma Nwa, Ohafia, Osisioma Ngwa, Ugwuagbo, Ukwa East, Ukwa West, Umuahia North, Umuahia South and Umunneochi (Mbanaso, 2010) <sup>[10]</sup>. The two states have similar attributes of those other states of Southeast Nigerian political zone.

Southeast Nigerian is within the tropical rainforest region whose vegetation is evergreen and contains very many interesting tree species such as oil palm trees, breadfruit, pears mangoes and pears (Enibe, 2018) <sup>[5]</sup>. The zone has raining and dry seasons. Rain fed agriculture takes place mainly during the raining season. Raining season is reported to span from mid-march to mid-October of every year while dry season runs from mid-October to mid-march (Enibe, 2018) <sup>[5]</sup>. Farmers and extension professionals are busier during the raining seasons. More feasts in the rural communities take place during the dry seasons and at the beginning of rainy seasons and one of the reasons is because farmers are less busy in those dry season months such as November, December and January.

### 2.2 Data Collection

Questionnaire was designed, pretested and utilized for the study. The questionnaire contains questions on the effect of job stress among agricultural extension professionals (AEPs), job stress coping strategies of the AEPs, and socioeconomic characteristics of the Agricultural extension professionals. The effect of job stress provided in the questionnaire were: mistake making, poor memory,

depression, fear, lack of sleep, sadness, illness, muscle tension, restlessness, suicidal thoughts, social withdrawal, pains/fatigue and nervousness. The job stress coping strategies' information collected with the survey questionnaire were: staying away from stressful environments and situations, having normal sleeping, positive thinking, relaxation, watching Television programmes, speaking with like-minded persons, taking medications as appropriate and taking good time management. Multiple responses of the respondents were contained in the study.

### 2.3 Sampling Method

The study's population comprised all agricultural extension professionals in the two Southeast Nigeria study states. Multi-stage sampling method that involved purposive and random sampling procedures were employed to select 202 respondents. Questionnaire validated by the academic staff of the Department of Agricultural Economic and Extension of the Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University were used to collect the study's primary data that relates with the study's specific objectives.

### 2.4 Data Analysis

The study's specific objectives 1 and 2 were achieved with descriptive statistics such as rank, percentage and Tables. Objective 3 was realized with Tobit regression analysis. The hypothesis which states that the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents does not influence job stress level was tested with Tobit regression analysis. Tobit regression is a hybrid of ordinary least square regression and probability regression using a maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) approach. This approach helped the researcher to censor the respondents whose responses were below the benchmark. Pseudo  $R^2$ , Coefficients, standard deviations, and t-ratio were generated from the analysis of the socioeconomic characteristics and used for the results' interpretations. T-test was employed in testing the difference in the job stress levels of the respondents of the two study states.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Effect of Job Stress among Agricultural Extension Professionals

Table 1 presents the effects of job stress among agricultural extension professionals. A list of job stress was made from empirical review and the respondents had the opportunity to tick more than one problem (multiple response). The result was ranked according to severity of the effects identified by the agricultural extension professionals.

Table 1 reveals that the major ranked effects of job stress among the respondents in Anambra State were feeling of fear (80.4%), lack of sleep (79.4%), mistake making (72.5%) and poor memory (67.6%). For Abia State, Table 1 shows that the major effect of job stress were feeling of fear (84.0%), lack of sleep (84.0%), mistake making (75.0%) and poor memory (71.0%). Table 1 further reveals that the majority of the respondents pooled from Southeast Nigeria agreed that job stress lead them to: making mistakes (82.7%), poor memory (82.2%), depression (74.8%) and feeling of fear (70.3%). The result reveals that the major effects of job stress in the study area were fear, sleeplessness, mistake making and poor memory. The result indicates that there is no significant difference existing in the job stress effects of the respondents of the two study states. The reason may be because the respondents were facing similar working conditions and environments in the same Southeast Nigerian political zone. This suggests that the effects of job stress in the study area could be reduced given better working environment and agricultural extension policy and programmes. The effects of job stress in the areas of mistake making and poor memory seems to be higher in the pooled results from Southeast Nigeria than in Anambra and Abia States. The difference may be due to some other factors which may include the possible differences in health conditions of the respondents in the study area, suggesting the need for further investigation in this regard. This finding is in agreement with Hunter (2015) [8] who contended that job stress affects employee's health through depression, poor memory, feeling of fear, lack of sleep and nervousness.

**Table 1:** Effect of job stress among agricultural extension professionals

S. No	Variable	Anambra		Abia		Southeast (Pooled)	
		Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank
1	Make mistakes	72.5	3 <sup>rd</sup>	75.0	3 <sup>rd</sup>	82.7	1 <sup>st</sup>
2	Poor memory	67.6	4 <sup>th</sup>	71.0	4 <sup>th</sup>	82.2	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3	Depression	54.9	5 <sup>th</sup>	58.0	5 <sup>th</sup>	74.8	3 <sup>rd</sup>
4	Feeling of fear	80.4	1 <sup>st</sup>	84.0	1 <sup>st</sup>	70.3	4 <sup>th</sup>
5	Lack of sleep	79.4	2 <sup>nd</sup>	84.0	1 <sup>st</sup>	56.9	5 <sup>th</sup>
6	Sadness	52.9	6 <sup>th</sup>	54.0	6 <sup>th</sup>	54.5	6 <sup>th</sup>
7	Illness	40.2	13 <sup>th</sup>	42.0	13 <sup>th</sup>	53.5	7 <sup>th</sup>
8	Muscle tension	41.2	12 <sup>th</sup>	43.0	12 <sup>th</sup>	53.5	7 <sup>th</sup>
9	Restlessness	49.0	9 <sup>th</sup>	50.0	9 <sup>th</sup>	50.0	9 <sup>th</sup>
10	Suicidal thoughts	52.9	6 <sup>th</sup>	54.0	6 <sup>th</sup>	45.0	10 <sup>th</sup>
11	Social withdrawal	45.1	11 <sup>th</sup>	44.0	10 <sup>th</sup>	44.6	11 <sup>th</sup>
12	Pains and fatigue	52.9	6 <sup>th</sup>	54.0	6 <sup>th</sup>	42.6	12 <sup>th</sup>
13	Nervousness	46.1	10 <sup>th</sup>	44.0	10 <sup>th</sup>	41.6	13 <sup>th</sup>

Field Survey Data, 2020. \*Multiple Responses

### 3.2 Job Stress Coping Strategies used by Agricultural Extension Professionals

Table 2 shows that the major coping strategies adopted by the Anambra State respondents were positive thinking (100%), relaxation (100.0%), entertainment (92.2%), and speaking with like minds (88.2%). Also, the major coping

strategies for Abia State respondents were: positive thinking (100%), relaxation (100.0%), entertainment (90.0%) and speaking with like minds (88.0%). For Southeast Nigeria, Table 2 reveals that being away from work and sleeping (100%), positive thinking (91.1%), relaxation (91.1%), balancing of work-life (88.1%) and physical exercise

(76.2%) were the major job stress coping strategies.

The result reveals that the major job stress coping strategies adopted by the respondents in the study area were: positive thinking, relaxation, rest and sleeping, work life balancing and physical exercise. The result suggests that the ways to reduce agricultural extension workers' job stress include educating them on the power and values of positive thinking, rest, working in different work units and physical exercise. The implication of the result is that extension employers need agricultural extension policy that will guarantee diversified motivation of the workers and training

in the areas that include positive thinking, transfer of workers to different extension areas and work units.

The result agrees with Oladele and Mabe (2010) <sup>[16]</sup> who reported that the best way to manage stress is through practical guideline that include; work-life balance, positive thinking, relaxation, away from stressful environments and sleep. The result collaborates with Enibe, Ndubuisi and Egbe (2020) <sup>[6]</sup> who in a study of how Agricultural students choose careers concluded that sustainable involvement of youths in agricultural development is a felt need which requires diversified motivation attention.

**Table 2:** Job stress coping strategies used by agricultural extension professionals

S. No	Coping strategy	Anambra State		Abia State		Southeast (Pooled)	
		Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank
1	Away from stressful	76.5	6 <sup>th</sup>	76.0	6 <sup>th</sup>	76.2	6 <sup>th</sup>
2	Sleep	32.4	9 <sup>th</sup>	33.0	9 <sup>th</sup>	32.7	9 <sup>th</sup>
3	Positive thinking	100.0	1 <sup>st</sup>	100.0	1 <sup>st</sup>	100.0	1 <sup>st</sup>
4	Relaxation	100.0	1 <sup>st</sup>	100.0	1 <sup>st</sup>	100.0	1 <sup>st</sup>
5	Balancing of work-life	28.4	10 <sup>th</sup>	31.0	10 <sup>th</sup>	29.7	10 <sup>th</sup>
6	Physical exercise	28.4	10 <sup>th</sup>	31.0	10 <sup>th</sup>	29.7	10 <sup>th</sup>
7	Watching television	91.2	4 <sup>th</sup>	91.0	3 <sup>rd</sup>	91.1	3 <sup>rd</sup>
8	Reading books	15.7	12 <sup>th</sup>	18.0	12 <sup>th</sup>	16.8	12 <sup>th</sup>
9	Entertainment	92.2	3 <sup>rd</sup>	90.0	4 <sup>th</sup>	91.1	3 <sup>rd</sup>
10	Speaking with likeminded	88.2	5 <sup>th</sup>	88.0	5 <sup>th</sup>	88.1	5 <sup>th</sup>
11	Medications	41.2	8 <sup>th</sup>	40.0	8 <sup>th</sup>	40.6	8 <sup>th</sup>
12	Time management	62.7	7 <sup>th</sup>	62.0	7 <sup>th</sup>	62.4	7 <sup>th</sup>

Field Survey Data, 2020. Key: S/n = Serial number, Multiple responses were involved.

### 3.3.1 Influence of Socioeconomic Characteristics on Level of Job Stress Among Agricultural Extension Professionals in Anambra State

Table 3 shows the socioeconomic characteristics influence on the level of job stress in Anambra State. A tobit regression analysis model was used for the analysis. Table 3 shows that the Likelihood ratio of 19.05 which is significant at 0.01 alpha level of probability signals that the entire model was significant. Also, the Sigma value of 0.029 in Table 3 implies that 2.9% deviation from the Pseudo R<sup>2</sup> resulted from the influence of the external noise. The Pseudo R<sup>2</sup> of 0.457 seen in Table 3 indicates that 45.7% of the deviation in level of job stress was influenced by the agricultural extension professional's socioeconomic characteristics. The weak effect size could be traced to the fact that the regression is psychological and not experimental. The result agrees with Abdulahi *et al* (2017) <sup>[1]</sup> who in a study of Socio-economic Factors Influencing the Training Need among Extension Personnel in Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs) of Kaduna and Zamfara States of Nigeria found that the demographic factors need to be taken into consideration when planning and developing training programs for extension agents in the study areas.

Table 3 further shows that the coefficient of designation was negative and significant at 10% alpha level, implying that 10% advancement in position held by the agricultural extension professionals will reduce their stress level by 0.2%. This result indicates that the agricultural extension professionals' promotion is one of the ways through which their job stress can be reduced. The coefficient of work experience was positive and significant at 1% alpha level. This implies that a unit increase in the number of years spent in their extension professional's career will increase their stress level by 2.1%.

The result agrees with Abdulahi *et al* (2017) <sup>[1]</sup> who found that the estimated coefficients of age ( $p < 0.1$ ), education

( $p < 0.01$ ), working experience and specialization ( $p < 0.01$ ) has positive relationship with training and statistically significant. The result reveals that the annual increase in the stress level of the respondents appears to be greater than their annual professional advancement. This may be the why professional unions in Nigeria and some other countries go on industrial strike action in efforts for their salaries to take them home. The result indicates the need to increase the monetary values of the annual promotional steps/allowances offered to extension professionals and those in other such job areas.

**Table 3:** Socioeconomic characteristics influence on level of job stress among agricultural extension professionals in Anambra State

Level of job stress	Coefficient	Std. Dev.	t-ratio
Sex	-0.008	0.006	-1.34
Designations	-0.002	0.003	-1.69*
Age	0.000	0.002	0.23
Education	-0.003	0.003	-0.90
Work experience	0.021	0.007	3.16***
Marital status	-0.001	0.002	-0.70
Household size	-0.002	0.002	-1.07
Constant	2.458	0.051	48.60***
<b>Diagnostic tools</b>			
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.457		
Sigma	0.029	0.002	
Log-likelihood	218.12		
Likelihood ratio	19.05		
Observation	102		

Field Survey Data, 2020. (\*), (\*\*), (\*\*\*) significant at 10%, 5% and 1% respectively

### 3.3.2 Influence of Socioeconomic Characteristics on Level of Job Stress Among Agricultural extension professionals in Abia State

Table 4 shows the Likelihood ratio of 11.08 which is significant at 0.01 alpha level of probability and this signals



that the entire model is significant. Also, Table 4 shows the Sigma value of 0.056 indicating that 5.6% deviation from the Pseudo  $R^2$  resulted from the influence of the external noise. The Pseudo  $R^2$  of 0.352 indicates that 35.2% of the deviation in level of job stress is influenced by the agricultural extension professionals' socioeconomic characteristics. Table 4 shows that the coefficient (0.025) of sex was positive and significant at 5% alpha level. This implies that 5% increase in male target by the agricultural extension professionals will increase their stress level by 2.5%. The result indicates that there exist inadequate female extension professionals in Abia state. Ogbanga (2017) in his study of the Nigerian agricultural development and employment generation found that inadequate extension service contributes in constraining agricultural sector's development. In this consideration, the result suggests the need for extension organizations to factor gender issues in their employments and to employ more female extension professionals in situations where their employee are biased in favour of men. This is important for gender balancing, equality, stress reduction and agricultural development. The coefficient of marital status (0.042) was positive and significant at 10% alpha level of significance, indicating that an increase of the number of married extension professionals by 10% will increase the stress level of agricultural extension professionals by 4.2%. This is understandable because married people are commonly known to be saddled with some family responsibilities before and after office stress and hence, their stress levels are likely to increase unlike those of the youths.

**Table 4:** Socioeconomic characteristics influence on level of job stress among agricultural extension professionals in Abia State

Level of job stress	Coefficient	Std. Dev.	t-ratio
Sex	0.025	0.012	2.07**
Designations	-0.003	0.002	-1.15
Age	0.000	0.002	0.21
Education	-0.007	0.007	-1.00
Work experience	-0.002	0.002	-0.83
Marital status	0.042	0.022	1.92*
Household size	-0.003	0.005	-0.64
Constant	2.436	0.050	48.84***
<b>Diagnostic tools</b>			
Pseudo $R^2$	0.352		
Sigma	0.056	0.004	
Log-likelihood	146.16		
Likelihood ratio	11.08		
Observation	100		

Field Survey Data, 2020. (\*), (\*\*), (\*\*\*) significant at 10%, 5% and 1% respectively

### 3.3.3 Influence of Socioeconomic Characteristics on Level of Job Stress Among Extension Professionals in Southeast Nigeria

Table 5 shows that the Likelihood Ratio (LR) of 11.61 is significant at 0.01 alpha level and signals that the entire model is suitable. Also, the Sigma value of 0.139 implies that 13.9% deviation from the Pseudo  $R^2$  resulted from the influence of the external noise. The Pseudo  $R^2$  of 0.544 indicates that 54.4% of the deviation in level of job stress is influenced by the agricultural extension professionals' socioeconomic characteristics.

Furthermore, Table 5 shows that the coefficient of designation (0.007) was negative and significant at 10% alpha level of significance, this implies that 10%

advancement in position held by the agricultural extension professionals will reduce their stress level by 0.7%. This result indicates that the agricultural extension professionals' job stress tends to reduce as Extension officers advances in their job. Also, Table 5 shows that, the coefficient (0.010) of age was positive and significant at 5% alpha level. The implication is that every 5% increase in the age of the agricultural extension professionals will increase their level of job stress by 1.0%. This finding agrees with the *a priori* expectation which indicates that older people may not be able to withstand much pressure when compared to their younger counterpart. The result agrees with Rupinder *et al*, (2021) <sup>[18]</sup> who revealed that agricultural extension officers above 45 years of age, female functionaries and married employees had a higher level of role stress. This result thus agreed with Rupinder *et al*, (2021) <sup>[18]</sup> who concluded that there is an effect of gender, age and marital status on the role stress level of public agricultural extension officials. In line with *a priori* expectation, the coefficient (0.010) of work experience was negative and significant at 5% alpha level. This implies that an increase to the number of work experience by 5% will reduce the stress level of agricultural extension professionals by 1.0%. This is understandable because experienced professionals will normally learn from their previous mistakes and know how to handle different tasks or situations to avoid their repeat which may result to their being stressed up.

**Table 5:** Socioeconomic characteristics influence on level of job stress among agricultural extension professionals in Southeast

Level of job stress	Coefficient	Std. Dev.	t-ratio
Sex	-0.002	0.021	-0.09
Designations	-0.007	0.004	-1.72*
Age	0.010	0.004	2.52**
Education	0.012	0.010	1.18
Work experience	-0.010	0.004	-2.57**
Marital status	-0.010	0.004	-0.86
Household size	0.000	0.008	0.02
Constant	2.201	0.109	20.17***
<b>Diagnostic tools</b>			
Pseudo $R^2$	0.544		
Sigma	0.139	0.007	
Log-likelihood	112.57		
Likelihood ratio (LR)	11.61		
Observation	202		

Field Survey Data, 2020. (\*), (\*\*), (\*\*\*) significant at 10%, 5% and 1% respectively

### 3.3.4 Test of Hypotheses Result of the Socioeconomic Characteristics Influence on Level of Job Stress among Agricultural Extension Professionals

Table 6 shows the results of the t-ratios from Tobit regression analysis of the socioeconomic variables that significantly influence the extension professionals' job stress level in Southeast Nigeria. The study revealed that job designations and work experience were the two variables that influenced job stress of Anambra State respondents while sex and marital status were found to influence job stress level of Abia State respondents. Furthermore, the variables influencing job stress in Southeast were job designation, age and work experience. Based on the aforementioned variables the null hypotheses which stated that the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents does not influence job stress and hence was rejected. The result is in agreement with Rupinder *et al* (2021) <sup>[18]</sup> who

accepted that the socioeconomic characteristics of the extension professionals influence their job stress.

**Table 6:** Decisions on the null hypotheses tests over the socioeconomic characteristics influence on job stress level among agricultural extension professionals in Southeast

	Anambra State		Abia State		Southeast (Pooled)	
Level of job stress	t-ratio	Decision	t-ratio	Decision	t-ratio	Decision
Sex	-1.34	Accepted	2.07	Rejected	-0.09	Accepted
Designations	-1.69	Rejected	-1.15	Accepted	-1.72	Rejected
Age	0.23	Accepted	0.21	Accepted	2.52	Rejected
Education	-0.90	Accepted	-1.00	Accepted	1.18	Accepted
Work experience	3.16	Rejected	-0.83	Accepted	-2.57	Rejected
Marital status	-0.70	Accepted	1.92	Rejected	-0.86	Accepted
Household size	-1.07	Accepted	-0.64	Accepted	0.02	Accepted

*Field Survey Data, 2020*

#### 4. Conclusion and recommendations

This study of job-stress and coping strategies of agricultural extension professionals in Anambra and Abia State concludes that: job stress lead to mistakes making, poor memory, depression, feeling of fear, lack of sleep and sadness and that taking appropriate leave and normal night sleep should be prioritized amidst positive thinking, relaxation, balancing of work life, physical exercise and entertainments as work stress coping strategies.

The study recommends that employers of agricultural extension professionals and labour should prioritize increase of the: values of the annual promotional steps, allowances and granting of annual leave to their workers as the best way to reduce job stress.

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