

EFFECT OF STRESS ON TEACHERS' PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OGBOMOSO, OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the effect of stress on teachers' performance in selected private-secondary schools in Ogbomosho, Oyo State, Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted. 425 teachers were sampled from 19 private secondary schools in the study area. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection, while descriptive and inferential statistical tools were used for data to analysis. Findings revealed a significant negative effect of stress on teachers' performance and a significant difference in the effect of stress on performance of male and female teachers, with male teachers reporting higher stress levels than female teachers. The study concluded that stress negatively impacts teachers' performance, and male teachers have greater propensities towards stress than female teachers in the study area. Workload reduction, upward review and prompt payment of salaries, provision of favourable working conditions, and inclusion of stress management information in teaching, education, and leadership courses for teachers were recommended as strategies for effective management of work-induced stress.

Key Words: *Work-induced stress, Teachers' performance, Workload reduction, Stress management information, Stress management strategies*

INTRODUCTION

Stress refers to the negative psychological and physical response that ensue in a person when he or she cannot manage the demand being placed upon the same (Kyriacou, 2018). Stress is said not to be bad, particularly when it presents the potential to gain. But whatever form it takes, work-induced stress typically begins when a person is put in a working environment that is inharmonious with his or her working style or temperament. It gets worse when such a person discovers that they can wield either no or have minor control over the same (Matthew, 2023). Stress is basically normal in workers and among civil servants in Nigeria in general, however, when it is “severe” it can significantly lower work performance, disrupt an employee’s ability to engage in and contribute to work-life, and lead to high chances of substance abuse, and ultimately lead to potentially deleterious behaviour (Okeke, 2021). Stress is also termed as a “stressor”, an event which elicits complex reactions from the different body systems, and which can lead to deleterious effects to the body systems and organs to the extent that a person gets “stressed out” often resulting in a chronic illness.

Teaching has traditionally and stereotypically been perceived to be a low-stress job or profession, however the case is different over the past three decades specifically in private secondary schools in Nigeria (Ogunmakin, 2020). Bamisaye (2019) has provided evidence portraying teaching as the most stressful occupation or work when compared to other professions. It is no longer uncommon in the current time to find teachers working at Nigerian institutions developing bizarre attitudes and cold feet while working, particularly in private institutions (Obilade, 2018). The pressure put on the teachers in different private secondary institutions in Nigeria has raised the level of stress in teaching staff to the point where it is deemed an inevitable part of the job (Nakpodia, 2021). Additionally, it has also been observed in general terms that in the past few years, professional fulfillment has diminished, while job pressure has been increasing steadily for teachers (Etuk, 2021). All these have generated numerous concerns regarding the increasing situation of stress in teachers. It has also been documented that teachers’ stress impacts learning atmosphere and eventually leads to failure to achieve the educational objective of the teachers. This has contributed to lack of interest, negligence, bitterness and absenteeism in the case of the teachers, and may lead to the teachers quitting the job (Jeyaraj, 2013).

The problem of stress among private secondary school teachers has been causing serious concern to educational stakeholders (Okebukola & Jegede, 2019). This is so since, according to stakeholders in the majority of the private-secondary-schools in the region, the problem of stress might have accounted for the ineffectiveness of the teachers as evident in the aspects like poor performance of students in the entrance examination, poor performance of students in the admission and placement tests conducted in the schools and the poor performance of the students in the aptitude tests aimed at predicting performance in the various subjects in the schools, the skills they are supposed to learn, and the efficiency with which the schools teach the skills.

Based on the foregoing, this study examined the effect of stress on the performance of teachers in the study area. The specific objectives were to:

- i. assess the effect of stress on teachers' performance in selected private secondary schools in Ogbomosho, Oyo State, Nigeria.
- ii. analyse the difference in the effect of stress on male and female teachers' performance in selected private secondary schools in Ogbomosho, Oyo State, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Origin and Definitions of Stress

The term "stress" comes from the Latin word 'stringere', meaning 'to make tight' (Wikipedia). It refers to force, strain or vigorous attempt. It can apply to physical, mental or emotional strain. It is the degree of wear and tear put upon the body. Stress as a term was first used in its biological framework by the endocrinologist Hans Selye in 1956. Stress, according to Selye, is the force pressure, or tension placed upon a body, which may lead to insufficient or improper changes in the behavioural and the physiological controlling system. Increased from the initial status, it leads to various physical and psychological diseases. Subsequently, Selye expanded the concept of the physiological response to any requirement. Stress encompasses a very wide range of phenomenon from mild annoyance, to catastrophic dysfunction, and may result in severe break down in health (Wikipedia). According to Nakpodiya (2020), stress is a mental and physical response to demands from the situation in the surroundings and beyond the adaptive capacity and requirement of the individuals. According to Rao & Kumar (2020), stress is an emotional issue where the individual is presented with a choice, limitation or requirement about what they desire, and whose outcome is felt to be both obscure and significant. Panday (2020) noted that stress is a feeling predominant among teachers due to pressure emanating from the workplace and from outside the place of work.

The World Health Organization (WHO) refers to stress as a "world -wide epidemic"; due to the discovery that stress is the number one cause of visit to physicians. They view stress as a force which acts upon human beings physically, mentally, emotionally, socially and spiritually. Janelle (2019) defined stress as any activity or event that puts unique physical and psychological requirement upon the individual. It is anything capable of upsetting a person's level of equilibrium. Ezeocha (2020) described stress as the body's automatic response to any real or threatened harm that triggers increased physiological and psychological activity to neutralize the stressor. Murphy (2020) also described stress as the organized response activated by a potentially damaging stimulus to an organism. Summarily, stress can be viewed as being those excess

demands that impact a person physically and mentally. It is the physical or mental conditions resulting from perceived harm or danger and the pressure to eliminate it.

Nature of Stress

Stress is thought to be a complex entity since it is invisible and cannot be touched. One significant feature about the nature of stress is that it has both positive and negative dimensions. There are diverse ways in which people react towards stress. Stress (not in excess) can be a stimulant in a given scenario. While stress is viewed in terms of its negative impacts, it also has a number of positive roles to play in human life. Most professionals tend to view stress as a positive push to work hard and deliver quality. They regard the pressure behind the high workload as a positive challenge that adds quality to their work and the enjoyment they derive out of their work. However, excessive and prolonged pressure and demands beyond the perceived capability and resource of workers, should not be viewed as 'healthy pressure' or 'good stress' but as negative stress.

Symptoms of Stress

According to Brown & Uechara (2023), stress expresses itself in various forms. These can be classified under the three categories: Physiological, Psychological and Behavioural symptoms.

i. Physiological Symptoms

These are metabolism changes that accompany stressors. They include increased blood pressure and heart rate, etc. This causes wear and tear to the body and its effects become problematic. The results of this are back pains, headaches, insomnia, heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, and cancer, among others, which impact performance.

ii. Psychological Symptoms

These include anger, anxiety, depression, restlessness, irritability, aggressiveness and boredom which can lead to low performance, decreased self-esteem, resenting supervision, inability to focus, difficulty in making decisions, and job dissatisfaction. Furthermore, the psychological symptoms of stress may also lead to job burnout. Job burnout is a chronic detachment from work, making the sufferer devalue his/her work, and find it a cause of dissatisfaction.

iii. Behavioural Symptoms

Behavioural symptoms are also exhibited through increased or decreased eating habits, smoking cigarettes, alcohol and drug abuse, increased speech rate, fidgeting nervously, resulting in

absenteeism, job jumping and job hopping, avoidance behaviour, dishonesty through frequent lying, leading to the impairment in performance.

Factors That Trigger Stress and Their Effects on Private Secondary School Teachers' Performance

Stress exists in every organization regardless of its size, this could be due to the following:

i. Excessive Workload

Teaching load is the number of hours instructed weekly by a teacher (Bamisaye, 2019). Overloading teachers means assigning extra hours to the teachers' lessons and too many non-teaching responsibilities (Denga, 2018). Overwhelmed teachers charged with too much work such as lesson preparations and delivery, grading papers and report forms concerning day-to-day discipline issues, might have no time to rest or take care of their personal needs. In addition, they might lack time to engage with other important people in their lives such as children and partners. Such conditions can easily result in chronic stress resulting in burnout.

Teacher burnout is a form of chronic response to the cumulative effects of work stress whose effects, according to Nadeem (2019), are negative to the teachers and the students they teach. According to Hepburn & Brown (2020), work overload related to teaching is connected to paper work, time budgets and too many deadlines. They also admit the fact that the teaching profession is more stressful as teachers are required to meet numerous, almost impossible, deadlines. As noted by Obi (2017), the primary effect of excess workload is stress, causing poor focus, exhaustion, and lack of ability to make wise choices, resulting in inefficient and ineffective delivery of job responsibilities.

ii. Poor and Delayed Payment of Salaries

The matter of salaries has been of greatest concern as a factor bringing stress to private secondary schools' teachers in Nigeria in the recent past. This is so because more than several months may elapse before they receive their salaries, making it difficult for them to take care of their needs, which impacts negatively on their performance (Amadi, 2018). According to Maicibi (2019), timeliness in payment is vital since the workers need to take care of their responsibilities; if salaries are paid promptly, then the workers will be contented to work without any feeling of stress. Santavirta, Solovieva & Theorell (2020) report that high stress is being experienced by teachers as a result of low remuneration package and fringe benefits despite the magnitude of

work they do. Joule (2019) affirms that the matter of delaying or failing to pay teachers' salaries causes high job stress and low teachers' morale and the urge to leave the job in order to explore better job avenues. Amalu & Uche (2019) notes that if a man needs food then no other interest will remain, except food. Similarly, if the salaries of teachers are not remitted in time in order to maintain them and their families, they will face stress and then neglect their responsibility.

Teachers' Performance

In recent times, the topic of teachers' performance have attracted the attention of researchers and practitioners (Aruoren & Oisamoje, 2023). Okoro & Wali (2020) described teachers' performance as efficacy at the task-level and work quality and efficiency. The productivity of teachers significantly impacts their career and the performance of the school. They further stated that if a teacher is to work to a level of performance standards, the employer needs to ensure the performance of their assignments in a manner that serves the organization's goals. Some things more successful teachers do right have been identified by Hildebrand (2019). They include:

Organization and Clarity – ability to explain clearly and being well prepared.

Analytic / Synthetic Approach – having a thorough command of the field and being able to discuss viewpoints other than their own.

Dynamism and Enthusiasm – being energetic and dynamic.

Instructor-Individual Student Interaction – they are perceived as fair, especially in their methods of evaluation. They are seen by students as approachable and a valuable source of advice, even on matters not directly related to the course.

Theoretical Review

Theory of Stress and Adaption

The stress and adaption theory was advanced by Selye in 1956. The theory asserts that a human being relies upon constant mediation between adaptive capacities and environmental demands. The theory defined the physiological adaptive response to stress as a physical and emotional condition constantly occurring in human beings. Selye specified the symptoms of stress to be overt and covert, goal-oriented, initially protective, maintaining status quo, production and satisfaction up to the point feasible. Selye again laid focus upon stressors being a range of stimuli that include: eustress, everyday hassle and distress. Eustress is the stress resulting from successful adaption and that is beneficial or enhances emotional development and self-

actualization. Such is positive stress, the optimum approach to the demands of life, and the ability of the person to manage life and achieve optimum stress levels to a growth enhancing way of life. Optimal amounts of stress, when regulatory mechanism functions within boundaries and limited symptoms are evident, are beneficial and constructive

Daily hassles are the daily and chronic strains of everyday life. Daily hassles adversely affect somatic health and psychological status. The stress state is magnified when the stressors are excess or harsh, limits to the steady state are pushed, and the individual cannot manage the demands of the stressor. Distress is negative, noxious, unpleasant, deleterious stress arising when adaptive capacity is diminished or depleted. Stressor to one person might be deemed pleasurable to the other. Stress in the immediate enterprise can neither be quantified by considering the stressor or the cause of stress alone. Principles apply to the majority of people. The theory demonstrates adaptation or responding to stress over the life course are both local and general. The local adaption syndrome, exemplified by the inflammatory response, is the strategy employed to wall off and manage effects of physical stressors locally. When the stressor cannot be managed locally the entire body responds to get itself out of the way to survive to the best ability through the general adaption syndrome. The general physical response enhances body functions protecting the organization from harm, psychological and physical and inhibits those functions not essential to life.

There are implications of this theory to this study and they are as follows; it exposes the fact that when secondary schools' teachers experience a great amount of stress at work, they get used to it. The stress they find uncongenial or intolerable while doing a job can ultimately become what they think is the norm and they get used to it. Another is the fact that, when the work situation gets perceived as threatening to teachers in secondary schools, teachers can respond in terms of intensity and scope to the situation. This will certainly boost their performance regardless if the work is not enjoyable to them.

Empirical Review

Studies on Effect of Stress on Teachers' Performance

Xianping (2022) conducted empirical research on the effects of work stress on the work performance of university teachers in China. The research used a quantitative and qualitative research approach. Survey method was employed and findings revealed that teaching is not the primary cause of stress, but the quality and amount of work demanded from university teachers.

Kimama, George, & Mungai (2024) conducted a study on the impact of teachers' stress and burnout on their professional performance within the public secondary schools in Kenya. Survey design was employed and the research revealed that the majority of the teachers recognized the impact of stress and burnout towards their professional performance, leading to poor performance in the classrooms, demotivation, inability to focus and being disorganized.

Studies Comparing Male and Female Effect of Stress

Egenti (2019) conducted research on gender difference in perceived stress level and coping strategy among secondary school teachers in Delta state, Nigeria. Survey method was used and the result indicated the existence of significant disparity between perceived stress and coping strategy between male and female teachers. Female teachers indicated more perceived stress than the male teachers and the male teachers indicated more coping strategy than the female counterparts. Okoro and Ojide (2023) conducted a cross-sectional survey of public secondary school teachers in Ebonyi state, Nigeria, comparing gender differences in perceived sources of stress. Findings revealed that the male and female public secondary school teachers both had high stress levels since they are assigned the same work. The presented study targeted private secondary school teachers.

Methodology

The study was conducted among selected private secondary schools in Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria. The study population included all the eight hundred and sixty-one (861) teachers in all the private secondary schools within the study location. Purposive sampling technique was employed to choose 19 private secondary schools and a sample of 425 teachers. The research instrument was a structured questionnaire, while T-test and Chi-square analysis were employed for data analysis.

Results and Discussion

The Effect of Stress on Teachers’ Performance in Selected Private Secondary Schools in Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria

Table 1: Chi- Square Analysis on the effect of stress on teachers’ performance in selected private secondary schools in Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria.

	Df	Value	Sig	Decision
Chi –square	12	646.62	0.00	Reject
Likelihood Ratio	12	660.05		
Number of valid cases	425			

Source: Field Survey (2024)

The Chi-Square test results in Table 1 reveal a highly significant relationship between stress and teachers' performance, as indicated by the Chi-Square value of 646.617 with 12 degrees of freedom, yielding a p-value of .000. This result strongly suggests that the association between these two variables is not due to chance. The Likelihood Ratio test further corroborates this finding with a value of 660.052 and the same p-value, reinforcing the conclusion that stress has a significant impact on how teachers perform their roles. This suggests that as stress increased, performance of teachers decreased, and as stress decreased, performance of teachers increased.

Difference in the Effect of Stress on the Performance of Male and Female Teachers in selected Private Secondary Schools in Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Analysis of differences in the effects of physiological, psychological and behavioural symptoms of stress on teachers’ performance are indicated in Tables 2, 3 and 4 respectively.

Table 2: T-Test analysis on physiological symptoms of stress

			F	Sig	T	Df
1.	I often experience increased heart rate	Equal variance assumed	.381	.537	.600	425
2.	I do not feel back pains	Equal variance assumed	.955	.329	1.682	425
3.	I sleep very well all the time	Equal variances assumed	5.384	.021	2.244	425
4.	I often have headache	Equal variances assumed	.290	.590	.778	425

Source: Field Survey (2024).

The results from the T- Test as shown in Table 2 provide an analysis of the physiological performance of the male and female teachers under stress, measured through four distinct parameters (items 1 to 4). The significance values obtained for each parameter reveal that items 1, 2, and 4 have p-values greater than 0.05, suggesting that the variances are equal for these measures. However, for item 3, the significance value of 0.021 is below the threshold. The t-test results further elucidate the performance differences across the four physiological measures. For items 1 and 2, the t-statistics for equal variances do not exceed the critical value of ± 1.96 , this outcome suggests that there are no significant differences in physiological performance between male and female teachers in these contexts. Conversely, item 3 which says I sleep very well all the time, presents a notable exception with t-statistics exceeding ± 1.96 . It is inferred that a significant difference exists in performance under stress among female respondents for this particular measure. This finding emphasizes that some aspects of physiological response to stress reveal distinct disparities that may warrant further investigation across genders.

Table 3 : T-Test analysis on psychological symptoms of stress.

			F	Sig	T	Df
1.	I have difficulty in concentrating at times	Equal variance assumed	.844	.359	- .377	425
2.	I do not have trouble in making decisions	Equal variance assumed	.140	.709	.915	425
3	I usually experience burnout because of too much work	Equal variance assumed	.008	.929	- .109	425
4.	I feel happy at work all the time	Equal variance assumed	3.009	.084	- .671	425

Source: Field Survey (2024).

The results in Table 3 provide clarity on the psychological responses to stress experienced by male and female teachers. For items 1, 2 and 3, the t-statistics for equal variances do not exceed the critical value of ± 1.96 . Specifically, this suggests that there are no significant differences in psychological responses between male and female teachers in these contexts. The t-statistics for items 1, 3 and 4 are negative, indicating that female teachers may report lower scores on these measures compared to their male counterparts; however, these differences are not statistically significant. For item 2, a positive t-statistic indicates that male teachers have higher scores than female teachers.

Table 4: T-Test analysis on behavioural symptoms of stress

			F	Sig	T	Df
1.	I always find excuses for not coming to work	Equal variance assumed	.133	.715	-1.001	425

2	I feel compelled to look for another job	Equal variance assumed	2.057	.152	1.790	425
3.	I do not like to avoid duties	Equal variance assumed	.008	.931	.160	425
4.	I often feel nervous	Equal variance assumed	.343	.558	.620	425

Source: Field Survey (2024)

The results in Table 4 indicate that for items 1, 3, and 4, the t-statistics for equal variances do not exceed the critical value of ± 1.96 . Specifically, this implies that there are no significant differences in behavioural responses between male and female teachers across these parameters. The negative t-statistic for items 1 and 4 suggests that female teachers may exhibit lower scores in these measures compared to their male counterparts; however, these differences are not statistically significant. In contrast, for item 2, a positive t-statistic indicates that male teachers may display higher scores than female teachers in their behavioural responses to stress.

From the T-test analysis on physiological, psychological and behavioural symptoms of stress and the Chi-square analysis on the effect of stress on teachers’ performance, it can be inferred that stress has more negative effect on the performance of the male respondents than that of the female respondents because they have higher scores in the various symptoms of stress. Based on this result, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in the effect of stress on the performance of male and female teachers in private secondary schools in Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Testing of Hypotheses

Two hypotheses were formulated for the study and tested as follows:

HO₁: Stress has no significant effect on teachers’ performance in selected private secondary schools in Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Table 5: Chi- square analysis of the effect of stress on teachers’ performance.

	Df	Value	Sig	Decision
Pearson chi –square	12	646.62	0.00	Reject
Likelihood Ratio	12	660.05		
Number of valid cases	425			

Source: Field Survey (2024).

Sig= 0.00<0.005

Table 5 reveals that chi – square calculated value = 646.62, df =12 and sig = 0.00. Since the level of significance of 0.00 is less than the set alpha- value of 0.05 at 12 degrees of freedom, the null hypothesis which states that stress has no significant effect on performance of teachers of private secondary schools in Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria was rejected while the alternative

hypotheses which states that stress has a significant effect on the performance of private secondary school teachers in Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria was accepted.

HO₂: There is no significant difference in the effect of stress on performance of male and female teachers in selected private secondary schools in Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Table 6: Chi – Square analysis of the effect of stress on male and female teachers’ performance using physiological, psychological and behavioural symptoms of stress

Physiological symptoms of stress

	Df	Value	sig	Decision
Chi-Square	9	38.51	0.00	Reject
Likelihood Ratio	9	38.10		
Number of valid cases	425			

Psychological symptoms of stress

	Df	Value	Sig	Decision
Chi-Square	9	50.93	0.00	Reject
Likelihood Ratio	9	51.87		
Number of valid cases	425			

Behavioural symptoms of stress

	Df	Value	Sig	Decision
Chi –Square	9	356.67	0.00	Reject
Likelihood Ratio	9	366.97		
Number of valid cases				

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 6 shows that Chi-Square calculated value for Physiological symptoms = 38.51, df= 9 and sig = 0.00. Chi -Square calculated value for Psychological symptoms = 50.93, df = 9 and sig = 0.00 while Chi- Square calculated value for Behavioural symptoms = 356.67, df = 9 and sig = 0.00. Since the level of significance of 0.00 is less than 0.05 at 9 degrees of freedom, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the effect of stress on the performance of male and female teachers in selected private secondary schools in Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant difference in the effect of stress on the performance of male and female teachers in selected private secondary schools in Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria, was accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The first objective of the study was to assess the effect of stress on teachers’ performance in selected private secondary schools in Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that stress has a significant negative effect on the performance of the teachers in that high stress caused low teaching performance, low quality work and low level of work performance by the teachers. This finding is similar to the findings of Siwarak (2022) that stress negatively affects the performance of workers. Samphina (2022) also found that cognitive aspects trigger stress in teachers, resulting in low ability to focus, forgetfulness and inability to meet deadlines. Onyango

(2024) also stated that stress has many negative effects on teachers, resulting in poor performance in teaching, feeling of demotivation, lack of focus and low delivery in the classroom.

The second objective of the study was to analyse the difference in the effect of stress on the performance of male and female teachers in the study area. Results revealed that there is significant difference in the effect of stress on the performance of male and female teachers. This result is consistent with the findings of Ayesha (2021) who found that the perceived stress level is high in female secondary school teachers when compared to male secondary school teachers, although the current study revealed male teachers felt more stress than female teachers.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that stress has a significant negative effect on teachers' performance, and there is a significant difference in the effect of stress on performance of male and female teachers in the study area.

The following recommendations are suggested:

- i. Private secondary school administrators should ensure that their teachers are not burdened by excessive workload, there should be prompt payment and upgrading of teachers' salaries and emoluments, additional non-financial motivational methods such as commendation and recognition should be employed to make their teachers feel valued and happy, and there should be provision of favourable working conditions. All these are guaranteed to reduce work stress and make for optimal performance among the teachers.
- ii. Policy-makers in the education sector should incorporate stress management content in education and leadership courses for teachers in order to equip them with strategies to better to tackle life issues that can make them experience stress, while effectively accomplishing their professional work.

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