

Prevalence of Job-Related Stress among Secondary School Teachers in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

The research investigated the prevalence of job-related stress among secondary school teachers in the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. This study employed a descriptive survey approach. The investigation was directed by two enquiries and two null hypotheses. The research population comprised 1,250 teachers from Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, with a sample size of 303 respondents determined using the Taro Yamene formula. The data collection instrument was a self-constructed 10-item questionnaire entitled “Teachers Stress Inventory” (TSI), designed on a Likert scale to gather information from respondents selected via stratified random sampling. The collected data underwent statistical analysis employing simple percentage, weighted mean (\bar{x}), and standard deviation to address the research questions, while an independent t-test was utilised to evaluate the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The analysis revealed that the stress levels of male and female teachers were compared, and the differences observed in their overall stress levels were not significant. Additionally, the stress levels based on the marital status of teachers showed no significant differences. The study revealed that gender and marital status are significant factors. The report advises implementing steps to alleviate teachers' workloads, which may include restricting extra non-teaching responsibilities and hiring more teaching personnel.

Keywords: Prevalence, Occupation, Stress, Teachers, School

INTRODUCTION

Job-related stress is a common menace which professionals, business men and women including artisans go through on a daily basis due to diverse work pressure and responsibilities that comes with it. This is because every field of human endeavours comes with sets of life stressors without which nothing can be achieved. When people are continuously exposed to such stressors, especially more than they can cope with they are bound to experience physical, emotional as well as psychological stresses Selye (2017).

Stress means different things to different people but difficult to define satisfactorily even when recognized. Selye (2017) further mentioned that everyone has stress, everyone talks about it but few have taken it as a responsibility to find out what stress really is.

Selye (2017) had also defined the word stress as the non-specific response of the body to any demand made upon it”. Hamilton (2017) also identified that stress could be induced by a number of conditions which may elicit extreme pleasant and exciting when it is induced by a triumph, a great sports victory, marriage and birth of a child. Stress can be extremely unpleasant and destructive when induced by disastrous business losses, a defeat in a game of football, physical injury or the death of a loved one.

Invariably, teachers are seen as a key role player, in the educational process. A teacher is a medium through which educational plans and policies objectives can be actualized. Therefore, teaching is often regarded as the mother of all professions which is because other professions are taught by teachers Uzoeshi (2018). But contrary to this assertion, teachers are often seen as charitable workers whose rewards are only to be received in heaven. Uzoeshi (2018) further noted that most bachelor teachers even find it difficult to marry because spinsters see them as not capable of running a home, vis-à-vis taking care of their financial needs.

The significance of educators in societal advancement and nation-building cannot be overstated. The role of education in national development cannot be acknowledged without seeing teachers as pivotal agents of nation-building. National progress depends on teachers' contributions to students' academic success. The primary responsibility of educators is the development of human resources, and no nation can progress beyond its people resources. Various professions cultivated by educators contribute to national development; however, Adeyemo and Ogunyemi (2015), Dorman (2015), and Linde (2000) have identified stress as a primary factor undermining their effectiveness in the educational environment.

According to Ejiogu (2016), teachers are often with diverse stress inducing factors such as poor salary and delayed salary payment, slow promotion, burn-out due to heavy work load, monotony of work as teachers need to teach same topics year after year which makes their work boring, autocratic supervision and a host of other factors. Uzoeshi (2018) defined teacher job-related stress as the response of teachers to threatening situations encountered in their professional roles, which may disrupt their physical equilibrium.

Cooper and Marshall, (2014) identified, also a set of organization variables which can pose as a source of stress to teachers. These variables are other variables related to their relationship or family problems such as financial crises, marital crises or that of the family such as (death) in the family etc. which also have direct impact most often on stress in the work place.

The teaching profession is commonly seen as a high-stress employment. Chan and Hui (2015); Pithers and Forgaly (2014). The Health and Safety Executive (2000) in the United Kingdom claimed that teaching is the most demanding profession compared to other fields such as nursing, management, and accounting. Job-related stress is recognised as the culmination of events that lead to negative emotions, including anger, despair, anxiety, and frustration, which are perceived as unpleasant and originate from certain complexities inherent in the teaching profession. The volume of study on job-related stress has consequently risen consistently and has now emerged as a significant research area across several countries. Kyriacou (2019).

This research work therefore tends to throw light on the weight of stress usually encountered by the teachers (as the independent variable) in secondary schools in Rivers State as a way of looking into divers escape routes out of this menace so as to provide a healthier work force for effectiveness in the teaching – learning process as well as plausible coping mechanisms that will reduce teachers job-related stress are equally recommended.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study aim to investigate the prevalence of job-related stress among secondary school teachers in Rivers State, looking at Obio/Akpor Local Government Area as a case study. The other specific objectives are to:

Assess the prevalence of job-related stress among secondary school teachers based on gender.

Investigate the prevalence of job-related stress among secondary school teachers based on marital status.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent is the prevalence of job-related stress among secondary school teachers in Rivers State based on gender?
2. To what extent is the prevalence of job-related stress among secondary school teachers in Rivers State based on marital status?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the prevalence of job-related stress based on teacher's gender.
2. There is no significant difference in the prevalence of job-related stress based on marital status of teachers.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The research design adopted in the study was a descriptive survey design.

Population of the Study: The study population comprised of all public school teachers in Obio/Akpor Local Government Areas of Rivers State. The population of the teachers in Obio/Akpor local government area of Rivers State was 1,250 (male = 394, female 856). (Source: Rivers State Secondary School Board (RSSSB) Department of Planning, Research and Statistics, June 2019).

Sample of the Study: The Taro Yamene sample size formula was used to determine the sample size of the study which was 303 (Three hundred and three) which formed the number of instruments covering the distribution of the sample based on age, educational qualification, rank, school type.

Sampling Technique: The study uses simple random sampling technique to ensure equal representation of all the school teachers within the Local Government Area; While stratified random sampling technique was used to select the respondents based on gender, marital status and educational qualification, location, age, rank and school type in twelve (12) public schools.

Instrument for Data Collection: A self-constructed questionnaire titled “Teachers Stress Inventory (TSI)” was created by the researcher for data gathering purposes. The instrument (TSI) was partitioned into two segments. Section A comprised demographic data, including sex, age, educational attainment, marital status, and duration of service, whereas Section B consisted of item statements. The instrument (TSI) was designed using a modified four-point Likert scale: Very High Extent (VHE) = 4, High Extent (HE) = 3, Low Extent (LE) = 2, and Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1.

Validity of the Instrument: In order to ensure both content and the face validity of the instrument, the TSI was subjected to scrutiny by two experts in measurement and evaluation of the department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counseling of the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt. The Researcher incorporated the corrections and suggestion.

Reliability of the Instrument: The reliability of the instrument was established with the use of test re-test technique. The researcher administered the instrument twice in two secondary schools outside of the selected sampled schools at interval of two weeks among 20 teachers, and the scores generated were tested using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistics and reliability index of 0.78 was recorded, meaning that the instrument was of high quality.

Administration of the Instrument: The copies of the instrument (TSI) were administered by the researcher to 312 teachers as subdivided based on the twelve schools randomly selected, making 26 copies of the instruments per school, out of which 303 was retrieved at different times during the period of one month from the various selected secondary schools across Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. Before administering the instrument, the researcher sought the consent of the school principal and solicited for the assistance of a school teacher in each school.

Method of Data Analysis: For this research, the demographic characteristics were divided into two distinct groups. Subsequently, the weighted mean and standard deviation were employed to address the study issues, while an independent sample t-test was utilised to evaluate the hypotheses at a 0.05 significant level.

RESULTS

Research Question One: To what extent is the prevalence of job-related stress among secondary school teachers in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State based on gender?

Table One: Mean and Standard Deviation of Prevalence of job-related stress among secondary school teachers based on gender

S/N	Item Statements	Male		Female		Total	Decision
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	SD		
1.	The workload that I handle as my normal duties are a source of stress to me.	3.08	0.99	3.10	0.97	3.09	VHE
2.	Shortage of teaching aids and equipment	3.06	1.01	3.06	0.99	3.06	VHE
3.	Inadequate remuneration in the occupation negatively affects my normal work schedules.	2.99	1.04	2.96	1.05	2.975	HE
4.	Pressure from principals and supervisors from the ministry	2.89	1.07	2.94	1.07	2.915	HE
5.	Working with difficult learners with impolite behavior	3.23	0.96	3.17	1.01	3.2	VHE
6.	Excessive administrative workload due to large number of students	3.27	0.93	3.22	0.90	3.245	VHE
7.	Lack of mutual trust among staff members	3.39	0.90	2.78	0.97	3.085	VHE
8.	Conflicting directives from senior officers	2.97	1.02	3.41	0.87	3.19	VHE
9.	Lack of time to spend on my personal and private demands	2.79	0.97	3.75	1.09	3.27	VHE
10.	I become tired and worn out from having to meet deadlines at work when I don't have enough time to accomplish the job.	3.09	0.81	3.07	0.98	3.08	VHE
	Grand Mean	3.07	0.97	3.14	0.99	3.11	VHE

The Criterion Cut-off Point is 2.5.

The results showed that female instructors had a little more work-related stress than male teachers. Female instructors said they were most stressed by not having enough personal time, while male teachers said they were most bothered by not trusting their coworkers. In Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, both men and women said they were very stressed at work.

Research Question Two: To what extent is the prevalence of job-related stress among secondary school teachers in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State based on marital status?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Prevalence of job-related stress among secondary school teachers based on marital status

S/N	Item Statements	Single		Married		Total	Decision
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	SD		
1.	My regular responsibilities cause me stress due to the amount of work I have to do.	3.05	1.01	2.92	0.85	3.00	VHE
2.	Shortage of teaching aids and equipment	3.05	1.03	3.01	0.91	3.04	VHE
3.	Inadequate remuneration in the occupation negatively affects my normal work schedules.	3.02	1.02	2.71	0.95	2.85	HE
4.	Pressure from principals and supervisors from the ministry	2.84	1.06	3.63	1.03	3.26	VHE
5.	Working with difficult learners with impolite behavior	3.29	0.90	3.43	0.94	3.33	VHE
6.	Excessive administrative workload due to large number of students	3.31	0.95	2.77	0.93	3.02	VHE
7.	Lack of mutual trust among staff members	2.94	0.99	3.81	0.84	3.60	VHE
8.	Conflicting directives from senior officers	3.37	0.93	2.92	0.87	2.95	HE
9.	Lack of time to spend on my personal and private demands	2.58	1.07	3.77	0.92	3.28	VHE
10.	Due to the lack of time to complete tasks on the job and the imposition of strict deadlines, I often experience weariness and exhaustion.	2.86	1.05	3.05	1.05	3.07	VHE
	Grand Mean	3.08	0.91	3.20	0.93	3.14	VHE

The Criterion Cut-off Point is 2.5.

The results show that married teachers in Obio-Akpor had a little more work-related stress than single teachers. Married teachers said that not having enough personal time was the most stressful thing for them, while single instructors said that getting mixed messages was the most stressful thing for them. In general, all teachers, whether they are married or not, experience a lot of work-related stress.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the prevalence of job-related stress based on teacher's gender.

Table 3: Independent samples t-test of the prevalence of job-related stress based on teachers' gender.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p	Decision
Male	126	3.07	0.97	301	0.61	0.54	Retain H ₀₁ p>0.05
Female	177	3.14	0.99				

The results presented in Table 3 indicate that a comparison of the mean ratings of male and female teachers regarding the prevalence of job-related stress in Obio-Akpor Local Government, conducted using an independent samples t-test, yielded a t-value of 0.61 and a corresponding p-value of 0.54, which exceeds the predetermined alpha level of 0.05 for this study. The p-value reveals no significant difference between the mean evaluations of male and female teachers regarding the incidence of job-related stress among teachers in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the prevalence of job-related stress based on marital status of teachers.

Table 4: Independent samples t-test of the prevalence of job-related stress based on teachers' marital status.

Marital Status	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p	Decision
Single	79	3.08	0.91	301	0.99	0.32	Retain H ₀₂ p>0.05
Married	224	3.20	0.93				

The results presented in Table 4 indicate that a comparison of the mean ratings of single and married teachers regarding the prevalence of job-related stress in Obio-Akpor Local Government, conducted via an independent samples t-test, yielded a t-value of 0.99 and a corresponding p-value of 0.32, which exceeds the predetermined alpha level of 0.05 for this study. The p-value reveals no significant difference between the mean evaluations of single and married instructors regarding the incidence of job-related stress among teachers in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The null hypothesis was thus rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study were discussed below:

We looked at the stress levels of male and female teachers and found that the general stress levels of male and female teachers were not very different. These results are similar to those of Chan, Chen, and Chong (2010), who found no big variations in the answers of men and women. But the results are different from those of Philips, Sen, and McNamee (2007) and Hanif, Tariq, and Nadeem (2011), who found that male and female instructors they investigated had quite different levels of stress.

In comparing the level of stress based on the marital status of teachers, figures obtained were not significantly different. This is in agreement with the report of previous local and foreign scholars: Aftab, & Khatoon (2000), Mmaduaknam, & Orizu (2014) that marital status of teachers is not a determinant of job-related stress among teachers. Contrarily, the finding of this present study is a deviation from that of Kemunto, Adhiambo, & Joseph

(2008) that reported marital status had an influence on job satisfaction and stress level of teachers as married teachers are much happier in their jobs than their counterparts who are singles, divorced or widowed.

CONCLUSION

The study on the prevalence of job-related stress among secondary school teachers in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State revealed that gender, marital status, and location do not significantly influence the stress levels experienced by teachers. The findings indicate that both female and male teachers experience similar levels of stress, aligning with previous research that suggests job-related stress is more likely influenced by job-related factors rather than gender differences. Additionally, marital status was not found to be a determinant of stress levels, implying that both married and unmarried teachers face similar work-related pressures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following were recommended by the study to alleviate the stress levels of teachers, as per the results of the study: -

Measures should be implemented to alleviate the teachers' workload. Measures may involve restricting the number of non-teaching activities.

The recruitment of additional instructional personnel to alleviate the burden on teachers.

The emphasis should be reduced on the performance of the individual. In other words, it is possible to implement an adaptable strategy. Teachers may receive incentives to encourage them.

Begin initiatives to educate students on acceptable conduct.

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