

# Incidence and Sources of Stress Among Secondary Schools Teachers in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

The incidence of stress is a common knowledge among scholar in the field. Teachers are facing many stressful experiences particularly in Ekiti state such as irregular payment of salary, lack of basic facilities for teaching and lack of motivation which led to lower productivity problem. The thrust of the study therefore, investigated the incidence stress and causes in the midst of post-basic school instructors. The research design employed in this inquiry was descriptive-survey design. The entire teachers in post basic schools in Ekiti state were the target of this study. The representatives of this population comprised 378 teachers, randomly selected from one local government from the districts in the state. Structured questionnaire on incidence, sources of stress and coping strategies adapted from Ugwuja (2009) was the major instrument for the study. Descriptive statistics of percentage was used to answer the questions. It was discovered that: incidence of stress in post- basic -school in was high (86%); teachers' sources of stress in Ekiti State ranged from irregular payments of salaries, students' misbehaviour and large class size. Based on the findings it was concluded that irregularly payment of salaries, heavy work load, and lack of infrastructural facilities were causes of stress among teachers in Ekiti State. The implication is that if teachers were under stressful condition teaching productivity will not be significant. It is therefore recommended that school managers and administrators should device techniques of reducing the incidence of stress among secondary school teachers which was found to be high, Government and school administrators should employ more teachers in a bid to reduce teachers' workload and Seminars and workshops should be organized for teachers on stress coping strategies.

**Key Words:** Incidence, stress, sources, coping strategies, teacher

## INTRODUCTION

One of the universal phenomenons which its pattern of responses differ from person to person is stress. Researchers of repute like Bilge (2006), Izgar (2008) and Sun, Dunne, Hou, and Xu (2011) among others reported that, stress is a constant procedure in which people interact (relate to) their surroundings, evaluate the circumstances they have discovered one another in, and attempt to resolve any problems that may occur. When an individual experiences tension and is unable to handle it, such circumstance is referred to as stress. Stress has a definite detrimental impact on both individuals and organizations, making it more difficult for them to achieve their objectives.

Stress was defined by Bilge (2006) as a bad feeling that an individual has if they respect an incident as dangerous. Researchers claimed that the psychological response can be accompanied by higher physical activity as a result of the adrenal glands enhanced sensitivity. The occurrence on its own, sometimes known as a stressful incident in one's life, becomes the stressor. In the setting of this study, stress is a bodily state or

circumstance that increases a person's susceptibility to “anxiety, sadness, anger, hostility, feeling inadequate, and having a low threshold for frustration” (Wai, 2003). It can be inferred from the different definitions on stress that stress is every request which is viewed as endangering someone's health “triggers emotional, behavioural, and physiological reactions. Stress can have both pleasant and unpleasant effects on our behaviour because our rational assessment and assumption of the stressors affects how we respond to the perceived stressor and how we handle it”.

Stress, according to Sun, Dunne, Hou and Xu (2011), is an uneasiness and anxiety brought about by various problems of academic learning experience. Despair, malnutrition, substance use, and negative effect self-care skill are by products of stress. Izgar (2008), therefore, opined that these changes brought about by stress may lead to physical and psychological damages, which may vary with personality and external conditions. The three categories—physiological, mental, and behavioral—are used to classify the effects of stress. Excessive alcohol intake, impolite actions, and uneasiness are the behavioural results of people experiencing extended stress (Bloisi, 2007). Stress-related changes in physiology, psychology, and behaviour may be characterised as stress consequences. The physical effects of stress are chronic stress, which results in absenteeism, indecision, uneasiness, and other symptoms including blood pressure, headaches, and an accelerated heart rate. Sleep issues, increased drinking and smoking, irritability, and other behavioural effects of stress. When faced with behavioural stresses, some people choose to tackle the issue (Jarret, 2007).

Unarguably, one of the many basic challenges that plagues people throughout their lives is stress. According to Nweze (2005), “stress syndrome has been a popular topic in management development, seminars, and workshops in Nigeria for the past 25 years. This is due to a variety of evident causes”. First, among the reasons is the fact that, nobody is immune against stress as every individual circumstances that are filled with stressors. So stress may affect everyone, regardless of age, income, or job. It can affect specialists as well as laypeople. Furthermore, there's an attempt for the stress virtue in contemporary life since stress is seen as the sickness of growth and development. In human cultures, stress has become an inherent component of daily existence. Stress is created by the demands, dissatisfaction and hassles of everyday living. . In an educational sector, the both teachers and students suffer stress because none of them is operating under conducive environment especially in the Nigerian current social environment.

Stress is generally a daily experience that the academicians have come to term with in the present economic condition in Nigeria. The work of instructional leadership in the classroom is a herculean one but very poorly catered for in the Nigerian social environment. Symptoms of stress can be low attention span, while in term of feelings it often manifest in the form of “anger, irritation, mood swing, and depression, which always have adverse effects on the teachers’ functionality” (Morgan & Kitching, 2007). There are many strategies teacher can adopt in coping with stress. Such strategies can be personal, interpersonal, job related or even combination of strategies depending on the source(s) of the stress and depends on individual differences. The “amount of control a teacher feels they lack over a potentially dangerous situation is strongly correlated with the level of stress they experience”. According to Kyriacou and Chien (2004), “26% of the instructors said their job was very or extremely stressful. Higher levels of job discontent and occupational stress have been linked to teacher underperformance, absenteeism, and quitting the job”, according to Kyriacou, Kunc, Stephens, and Hultgreen (2003). Teacher’s job performance will be in the life line if his or her stress is not well managed.

Numerous studies have made an effort to categories to determine the factors that act as stressful circumstances, however it has been determined that the aspects related to the nature and environment of the work are the most significant contributors of workplace stress (Babatunde, 2013). The two main kinds of strains in the workplace are as diverse as they're in different aspects of life: Mechanical stressors, such as the demands of a particular profession and the working environment, and mental stressors, such as small and not-so-subtle aspects that an individual may find difficult, are two different types of stress (Landy & Conte, 2010). In the words of Choi (2008), mental stresses at the job include having to work quickly and diligently, having a lot on your plate, being pressed for time, as well as having to balance competing demands.

Numerous circumstances can lead for educators stress. Stress is frequently brought on whenever educators are having trouble controlling a variety of relationships with learners (Hepburn & Brown, 2001) or by any situation that is deemed to be excessively tasking, time-consuming, or disruptive of instruction (Blasé, 2000).

The easiest way to understand stress is to divide the causes of it into two distinct order stressors. First-order stressors, which “interfere with teacher effort directly, can include inattentive students, disruptive students, poor student attendance, large class sizes, high student-to-teacher ratios, paperwork, preparation work, careless coworkers, intrusive supervisors, a lack of effective leadership, such as assistant principals or principals, and parents who seem unsupportive”. Organizational problems involving learners, treatment, other instructors, and other workplace connections seem to be the kinds of stress that happen the most often (Blasé, 2000). Second order obstacles, which might include problems like a low wage, emotional exhaustion, annoyance, despair, sluggish monotony, and an absence of drive or excitement, do not immediately conflict with teachers' efforts.

Task expectations, educational issues, and social relationships are three areas into which fatigue among educators may be divided (Sutton, 2001). The gap between instructors' hopes and what they've done in that profession is believed to represent the source of work-related stress. Uncertainty, overload, conflict, readiness, and absence are all job demanding stresses (Sutton, 2001). Role need stresses may also be categorised as organisational traits as policies, structures, and processes. The term "instructional problems" or "task stress" refers to issues with a range of particular activities that instructors must carry out as part of their job duties (Child & Stoeber, 2012). Insufficient uniform assessments, rating structures, guidance, competency, unsuitable enrollment processes, information of subpar job results, being directly assaulted by learners, and scarce or unsafe workplaces are just a few examples of educational materials issues (2012) Child and Stoeber. Given the context of schooling, interpersonal relationships relate to the connections that instructors have with other educators or people of the community. Interaction inside networks and network management may also come under this heading. Conflict with coworkers and a lack of social support from managers and employees are the most frequent stresses in this group (Choi, 2008).

The outside world and personal stressors can both be contributors to teacher stress. Unfavourable working circumstances, severe duties, organisational issues, a shortage of supplies, a dearth of backing or freedom, and choices are just a few of the stresses that may be encountered in the workplace. In addition to operational constraints like leadership backing and position confusion, an employment atmosphere might also involve physical stresses like task-related loudness, congestion, the size of the classroom and/or school, safety concerns, or child abuse. Character traits, age, gender, socioeconomic background, the capacity to create and sustain supporting networks, cognitive appraisal of stresses, the capacity to deal, the type of instructor, and job unhappiness are just a few examples of individual features.

Excellence, determination to achieve, hypersensitive limit, competition, various responsibilities for women instructors (such as parent, carer, homemaker, and teacher), and harmony between private and academic goals all have links to distinct stress (Bachkirova, 2005). The kids themselves are a significant cause of teacher stress. According to survey and interview replies, instructors most frequently attribute the majority of their stress to their pupils (Hastings & Bham, 2003). Teachers who have to take on many roles—such as that of childcare providers, law enforcement professionals, and even strict authoritarians—are more likely to experience stress related to learner supervision (Choi, 2008). The most aggravating student misbehaviours according to the majority of instructors, are disrespect, attention, and friendliness (Hastings & Bham, 2003). Elementary school educators experience more pressure than secondary educators, according to Cox, Griffith, and Rial-Gonzalez's (2000) research. Since the main instructors are in charge of just one class for the whole of the academic year, they are also in charge of the ethical and social advancement of their students. The greatest amount of stress is experienced by primary school instructors due to increased workload, job stress, and disruptive behaviour from students. These actions, as well as the control of student behaviour, student indifference, student accomplishment, and student absenteeism, all lead to instructors feeling more stressed.

Alan, Chen, and Elaine (2009) evaluated the “job tension experienced by educators from middle and high schools in Hong Kong in an effort to better understand the level and causes of stress among employees. From the database of members of the Hong Kong Professional Instructors' Union (HKPTU), a random sample of 6000 instructors was created. The teachers of elementary and secondary schools in Hong Kong were mailed a self-administrated questionnaire together with a cover letter and a reply paid envelope. There were 1,710 complete surveys received. The findings showed that 91.6% and 97.3%, respectively, of the responding teachers reported an increase in their perceived stress levels as compared to one year and five years previously. The most often mentioned causes of work-related stress included heavy workloads, deadlines, training

changes, outside institution reviews, obtaining higher education, and controlling pupils' behaviour and learning". Sleeping, chatting with neighbours and acquaintances, self-relaxing, and viewing television were the four most often reported stress-reduction techniques, while increasing exercising or participating in athletics was a less often cited technique.

The rate of poor job performance among workers especially teachers is alarming and this is not far from common observation about students' performance in examinations (Yusuf, Olufunke & Valentine, 2015). Many reasons could have accounted for low performance of teachers among which stress cannot be left out. Job stress pervades the life of teachers and tends to impact adversely on the teacher's job performance. Excessive stress is capable of aggravating medical problems and equally minimizes output. This could have been a deficiency in the coping strategies among teachers. Several researchers have worked on stress and other variable such as Oyebanji (2001) who examined sources and management of stress among married women in banking professions in Kwara state Nigeria. Abah (2003) also worked on sources of job related stress as perceived by civilian workers in selected military institution in Nigeria. This indicates that study on workplace anxiety has significantly increased in recent years. Researches have demonstrated that a variety of mental and physical illnesses that might affect teachers' efficacy are brought on by stress (Copper, 2004; House, 2007).

It is currently shown that stress reduces efficiency and effectiveness at work, particularly among instructors (Copper, 2002). According to Reglin and Reitzammer (2008), educators were frequently subjected to elevated levels of strain owing to work discontent, poor drive, tardiness, and attrition. Despite the available studies related to the variable of this study, there appears to be a paucity of research combining incidence, sources of stress and coping strategies among secondary school teachers in Ekiti- State to the researcher. This is the rationale behind the researcher's motivation to start this study, which will help to fill the identified research gap and add to the body of knowledge.

The purpose of the study was to examine the incidence, sources of stress among secondary school teachers in Ekiti State. Specifically, this study examined the:

1. incidence of stress among secondary school teachers in Ekiti Sate;
2. sources of stress to secondary school teachers in Ekiti state.

The study will be of great importance to the masses by providing information on the incidence and sources of stress among secondary school teachers in Ekiti State. When teachers are in the right state of mind or emotionally stable, they will be alive to discharge their teaching responsibilities which will enhance teaching and learning process and boost students' academic performance. It is imperative to know that the study would provide adequate and timely intervention to ease off stress among market women and top government management officials.

### **Research questions**

- a. What are the incidences of stress among secondary school teachers in Ekiti state?
- b. What are the sources of stress to secondary school teachers in Ekiti state?

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population for the study comprised all secondary school teachers in Ekiti State. Specifically, the study involved only public secondary school teachers in Ekiti State. There are 16 Local Government Areas and three senatorial districts in Ekiti State. From each of the senatorial districts, one L.G.A. was selected for the study using simple random technique. According to Ekiti State Teaching Service Commission (2018), there were 203 secondary schools and 7,538 teachers across the three senatorial district of the state. Thus, seven schools were randomly selected from each of the Local Governments to make a total of 21 schools. From each of the schools, 18 teachers were randomly selected to make total of 378 teachers that participated in the study. This decision was to ensure equal representation of participants or subjects without been biased for the purpose of accurate generalization. More importantly, it

was in accordance with the 2006 Research Advisor that 365 (4.8%) sample is appropriate for population of 7,500.

Data were collected in this study with a closed structured-questionnaire which was adjudged the best for subjects having stress experience because it can be easier to understand, the formats offer simplicity, clarity and ease of response for participants, resulting in higher response rate; seamlessly compared and sorted into categories for accurate analysis of data on incidence, sources of stress and coping strategies adapted from Ugwuja (2009). The instrument had once been administered on some administrative staff of Nasarawa State University, Nasarawa, Nigeria. The instrument yielded the reliability co-efficient indices of .73 for sources of stress, .71 for stress management, and .81 for overall instrument respectively. The instrument gave a coefficient value of 0.84 and 0.63 for sources of stress sub-scale and coping strategies sub-scale respectively. The reliability coefficients justified the suitability of the instrument for the purpose of the study. To establish the validity of the adapted questionnaire, experts in Educational Psychology, Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation were consulted to face-validate the items that make up the test. Observation and inputs from professionals were considered before the data were collected. The students t-test was used in testing null hypothesis a. The choice of independent t-test was based on its potency in testing differences between two groups. Null hypotheses b and c were tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). All the hypotheses were tested at an alpha level of 0.05.

### Answering Research Questions

**Research Question 1:** What are the incidences of stress among secondary school teachers in Ekiti State?

**Table 2: Incidences of Stress Among Secondary School Teachers in Ekiti State**

Stress	Cut-off Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High	51-80	325	86.0
Low	20-50	53	14.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>378</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Results in Table 2 show the incidences of stress among secondary school teachers in Ekiti state. As shown in the Table, 86% has high incidence of stress while 14% has low incidence of stress. This means that incidence of stress among secondary school teachers in Ekiti state was high.

**Research Question 2:** What are the sources of stress to secondary school teachers in Ekiti State?

**Table 3: Ranking Order of Sources of Stress to Secondary School Teachers in Ekiti State**

S/N	Sources of Stress to Secondary School Teachers include;	Mean	Ranking
1	Students' misbehavior	3.14	2 <sup>nd</sup> *
2	Trouble with subordinates	2.87	11 <sup>th</sup> *
3	Large class size	3.11	3 <sup>rd</sup> *
4	High work load	3.01	5 <sup>th</sup> *
5	Lack of motivation	2.99	8 <sup>th</sup> *
6	Lack of welfare facilities	3.01	5 <sup>th</sup> *

7	Irregular payments of salaries	3.20	1 <sup>st</sup> *
8	Financial difficulties	3.00	7 <sup>th</sup> *
9	Sleep less than 8hrs per night	2.67	15 <sup>th</sup> *
10	Extra-curricular activities	2.57	17 <sup>th</sup> *
11	Short time frame for marking and submission of results.	2.84	12 <sup>th</sup> *
12	Lack of basic facilities for teaching	3.10	4 <sup>th</sup> *
13	Inadequate information about work	2.78	13 <sup>th</sup> *
14	Transfers	2.90	10 <sup>th</sup> *
15	Irregularity in the promotion of teachers	2.98	9 <sup>th</sup> *
16	Autocratic leadership styles of principals	2.67	15 <sup>th</sup> *
17	Threatening events in the school.	2.62	19 <sup>th</sup> *
18	Loss of a close relative, friend or colleague.	2.57	17 <sup>th</sup> *
19	Appointment to a new post	2.53	20 <sup>th</sup> *
20	Challenging events in the school	2.74	14 <sup>th</sup> *

**Key:**

Source of Stress = 2.50 – 4.00

Not a Source of Stress = 0.01 – 2.49.

Results in Table 3 show the origin of stress to high school educators in the State. As shown in the first table, the origin of stress to secondary school educators in Ekiti State were irregular payments of salaries which has a mean score of 3.20 and was ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, students’ misbehavior with a mean score of 3.14 and was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>, while large class size with a mean score of 3.11 was ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> among the origin of stress to high school educators. The other sources, as revealed in the analysis, were shortage of instructional materials, excessive work load, lack of welfare facilities, financial difficulties, lack of motivation, unstable educators advancement, transfers, trouble with subordinates, limited evaluation period, inadequate information about work, challenging events in the school, sleep less than 8hrs per night, autocratic leadership styles of principals, bereavement, friend or colleague, extra-curricular activities, threatening events in the school, and appointment to a new post.

**DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

The research investigated incidence, origin of stress, and coping strategies in the midst of high school teachers in Ekiti State. It was revealed that incidence of stress was high among the educators investigated. This meant that majority of the sampled participants in the study experienced highly stressed. This result might be due to the strains brought about by large class size, lack of motivation, irregular payment of salaries, lack of welfare facilities causing financial difficulties. This result supported the earlier work of Olive, Enosse and Juliius (2016) who explored the “levels of stress among secondary school teachers and its implication on students’ academic performance” in Kenya and reported high level of stress among the sampled educators.

The second finding of this researchers showed that educators sources of stress in Ekiti State ranged from irregular payments of salaries, students' misbehavior, large class size, lack of basic facilities for teaching, high work load, and appointment to a new post. This meant that teachers were likely to be stressed when their salaries were not paid or irregularly paid, when their students misbehave, teaching a large class with little facilities or lack of basic facilities for teaching, and when they were appointed into a new tasking post. This result is possible where the teachers' salaries cannot sustain them till when another money will be paid, or where the teachers lacked classroom management skills necessary for controlling students' behaviour, and where the teachers had no opportunities to improve his capacity at work. It agrees with Alan, Chen and Elaine (2009) report on "work stress of teachers from primary and secondary schools" and found among others that "heavy workload, time pressure, education reforms, external school review, pursuing further education, and managing students' behaviour as the most frequently reported sources of work stress".

## CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion, it meant that when teachers are not paid or irregularly paid, and made to teach large class, lacking infrastructural facilities, and over loaded in teaching the study, such teachers will be stressed. The implication is that if teachers are stressed they might not be able to be productive in teaching and learning. This might cause poor academic performance.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The under-listed were offered as recommendations:

1. Educational institution managers and administrators must device techniques of reducing the incidence of stress among employees which was found to be high.
2. Since excessive workload was revealed as a prominent contributor to educators' stress, it is recommended that government and school administrators must make concerted efforts to engage ample educators in order to relieve the overloaded ones.
3. Seminars and workshops should be organized for teachers on stress coping strategies.

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