

STRESS AMONG PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS IN ANAMBRA
STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

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Abstract

Secondary School System in Anambra State has turned a stressful environment because of the introductions of quality assurance instrument which requires all Secondary Schools to keep and maintain all records. Quality assurance involved all aspects of the school activity including infrastructure, teachers, learners, and learning environment. To maintain the status quo it become's stressful to both teachers and principals. Stress is an organism's total response to environmental demand or pressures. Causes, symptoms and effects of stress were highlighted. Three research questions guided the study. Anambra State was the area of study, sample of 100 principals and 200 senior teachers were used as respondents. The items use for the study were 47 items validated by 2

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experts. The internal consistency was computed using the Cronbach Alpha formula and it yielded an index reliability co-efficient of 0.84. The result analysis revealed that both principals and teachers have the same view of their stressors and also agreed that all the items in table 3 are strategies for managing stress. Four recommendations were listed among which is that there are stress situations in all works of life, but the way you manage your environment counts more especially on your health. So try to manage your affairs to avoid stress.

The Federal Government of Nigeria in the bid to improve Educational system introduced the quality assurance (FGN 2008). Quality assurance in education is a dynamic process that provides the needed guidance and support to schools to improve on learners outcomes (Rufa'i 2010). It has the primary purpose of regularly evaluating adherence to National quality standards. Quality Assurance is Standard oriented, evidenced based, and an activity based learning. In fact, it affects the totality of all the things done in the school. More so, it involves adequate surveillance in form of supervision, inspection, monitoring and evaluation both internally and externally. Anambra State became the first to preach, uphold and practise quality assurance instrument in their secondary school system (FME 2010). The secondary school is an organized environment where the business of teaching and learning takes place. It has inputs, processes and outputs which should yield an expected result through quality assurance for the educational objectives to be achieved.

The items expected to be kept in the school for the quality assurance assessment makes it so stressful for the teachers and principals to handle. Thus, Anambra State Secondary Schools have turned a stressful environment. Some principals delegate their duties to the teachers. The official closing time of Secondary Schools in Anambra State is 2:30pm but most often, teachers stay till 5pm doing one 'return' or the other. Teaching job is a 24 hours job which indicates that teachers' duty do not only end in the classroom, but in every activity of the school. Today, classroom situation does not only rely on teacher- centred but also the learner-centred learning environment (FME 2010).

Teachers hardly have time for themselves, thus poor time management causes stress. When such is the case stress comes in. Stress affects teachers and principals when they are sick and have to face the school work.

Hornby (2013) defines stress as the pressure, anxiety and worry caused by problems in somebody's life. Ohaedoghasi (2009) observed stress as the "wear and tear" our bodies experience as we adjust to our continues changing environment. Stress is the

sum of the biological reactions to any adverse stimulus, physical, mental or emotional, internal or external, that tends to disturb the homeostasis of an organism (Gallo and Mathews 2003).

Stress is used to refer to the stimuli that elicit the reactions e.g heat, nutrition, lactation, confinement, transportation etc. (Saunders 2007). In the words of Beers and Berkow (2004) Stress is an important stimulus of human growth and creativity as well as an inevitable part of life (Morah 2014). Stress is the reaction or physical responses to events that makes one feel threatened, such as tension, or when one senses danger, real or imagined, irritability, inability to concentrate (Wikipedia 2014).

Stress is no respecter of persons or professions, stress comes when one's daily activities become over bearing on the individual. Stress has been a canker worm in the lives of people and society at large. Stress has been given different names, meanings and understanding by different people, some call it anxiety, worry, pressure or depression. It is impossible for one to live without stress in this life, but if stress gets out of control, it may harm one's health, mood, emotions, relationships, productivity and quality of life. Harmful stress always affect the ages between 25-50 years, this age range is in danger zone. Stress could be caused by self-generated excessive worries about a thing that may or may not have happened or has irrational pessimistic thought about life. It could be fear of survival, obstacles, terrorism, suicide bombings, lack of parenting skills, lack of family support, frustration, tension, changes in life e.g. being old without getting married, faced with a mysterious disappointment, loss of job, loss of loved one, getting married, exhausting work situation, parking to a new house, relationship problems, so much noise, over-crowding events to mention but a few. Expectations and competition of more work to handle, some people may intend to use 'try to meet up' Syndrome, and they will work very late into the night to meet up. Bosses may become antagonized to their subordinates probably because they have stress in the office.

Symptoms of stress according to Wikipedia (2014) are firstly Cognitive Symptoms which include memory problems, inability to concentrate, poor judgement, inability to sleep well, feeling excessively tired, being anxious and worries much. Secondly, physical symptoms include aches and pains, dry mouth, a pounding heart, difficulty in breathing, diarrhoea, constipation, nausea, dizziness, loss of sex drive, frequent urination, sweating palms, frequent cold etc. Thirdly, behavioural symptoms include overeating, under eating, sleeping too much or less, isolating oneself, use of alcohol, drugs, cigarettes to relax, nervous habits such as nail biting etc. Fourthly, emotional symptoms include irritating, heart attacks, arthritis, inability to relax and sense of loneliness etc.

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The effect of stress cannot be over emphasised. Stress causes damage to one's physical and mental health, it is often a factor in the development of a long term sickness such as, high blood pressure, irritable bowel syndrome, poorly controlled diabetes, suppression of the immune system, increased risk of heart attack, infertility, speeds up aging process, leads to anxiety and depression (Morah 2014).

Stress atimes has advantages e.g. It helps one remain focused, energetic, and alert. In emergency situations, it can save one's life by providing one with extra strength to defend oneself. It helps one rise to meet challenges and it sharpens ones concentration drives to study for examination or screening exercise.

Principal and teachers face the recent quality assurance supervision which entails keeping and maintaining all aspects of the school record, environment, facilitates, plants, building, observation of teaching and learning etc.

In a bid to carry out their duties without applying caution, teachers and principals seem to be overwhelmed by challenges which makes them to be stressed out, some of them become sick, some hospitalized and will not come to school thereby thwarting the effective implantation of quality assurance program.

In view of the researcher's exposure of the causes, symptoms and effects of stress, there is need for the principals and teachers to be aware of the strategies for managing the challenges of stress in Anambra State Secondary Schools.

Research Questions

1. What are stressors among Anambra State Secondary Schools Principal?.
2. What are stressors among Anambra State Secondary Schools senior Teachers?
3. What are the strategies for managing stress among principals and teachers in Anambra State Secondary Schools?

Methods

Research design used in this study was a descriptive Survey design. Area of the study was Anambra State. Population of the study comprised all the principals and teachers of Post Primary School Service Commission in Anambra State. A sample of 300 respondents were selected from the six education zones of Anambra State i.e 100 principal and 200 Senior teachers through sample random sampling technique which shows 1 principal to 2 senior teachers from each of the schools used in Anambra State.

The researchers developed questionnaire on Stressors of principal and teachers in Anambra State Secondary School as well as strategies for managing stress. It comprised of four sections, Section A sought demographic information of the respondents while section B focused on the stressors of principals, Section C dealt on the stressor of teachers in the secondary schools and Section D considered the strategies for managing stress in Anambra State Secondary Schools. All had 47 items. These items were constructed on a four point rating scales of 4, 3, 2 and 1 for Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree respectively.

One expert in the department of Education Management and policy and one from the department of psychology both from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University. Awka validated the instrument. The researchers administered copies of the questionnaire on a sample of five principals and 10 teachers in Enugu State Post Primary School Management board. The mean ratings were computered using the Cronbach Alpha formula and it yielded an internal consistency of 0.84. This was high to consider the instrument reliable for the study. The researchers employed the services of two research assistants. The percentage return was 100%. Mean and Standard deviation were used in answering the three research questions. The mean scores of 2.50 and above were accepted as strongly agreed and agreed while scores below 2.50 were regarded as disagreed and strongly disagreed. Thus, 2.50 were adopted as the agreement level.

Results

Research Question 1:

What are the stressors among Anambra State Secondary Schools Principals?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Principals Stressors

S/N	Question Item	X	SD	Decision
1	Prepare and keep school site plan	3.00	0.81	A
2	Ensure all statutory records are kept	3.04	0.80	A
3	Staff list/ qualifications are kept	2.67	1.02	A
4	Continuous Assessment result	3.21	0.92	A
5	Staff personal files	3.08	0.84	A
6	List of clubs and societies	3.40	0.76	A
7	Students population book	2.72	0.92	A
8	Workshop file / note	3.06	0.76	A
9	P.T.A Account Book	3.24	0.71	A
10	JSC Examination file	3.45	0.73	A
11	SSC Examination file	3.50	0.70	A

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12	Financial records	3.30	0.74	A
13	Sick bay well kept	3.21	0.72	A
14	Trophy (s)	2.76	0.84	A
15	Awards	2.89	0.86	A

Table 1, revealed that the mean ratings of all the items are above 2.50 and within the ranges of 2.67-350. This simply implies that the principals agreed that those items are stressors among principals in Anambra State Secondary Schools.

Research Question 2: What are the Stressors among Anambra State Secondary Schools senior teachers?

Table 2: Mean rating on stressors in Anambra State Secondary School Senior Teachers.

S/N	Questionnaire Item	X	SD	Decision
1	Preparing up to-date lesson note	3.08	1.07	A
2	Preparing exam questions	3.45	0.77	A
3	Keeping question back	1.76	0.92	D
4	Preparing student for quiz / debating competition	2.52	0.73	A
5	First aid box	2.14	1.00	D
6	Ensure that the gatemen / Security are alert	3.31	0.95	A
7	Ensure that the dustbin are cleared	2.71	0.87	A
8	Planting of flowers in the compound	2.68	0.91	A
9	Making sure that the compound is clean	3.14	0.84	A
10	Punishing students that are late to school	2.58	1.07	A
11	Over populated students in the class	3.14	0.84	A
12	Monitoring of class teaching	3.15	0.81	A
13	Internal supervision of teachers	3.10	1.06	A
14	Ensure departmental meeting are held	2.23	1.05	D
15	Marketing students continuous Assessment test	3.58	0.75	A

In table 2, item 3, 5 and 14 had mean ratings below 2.50. However, the rest of the items have mean ratings above 2.50 indicating agreement to the fact that they are all stressors among teachers in Anambra State Secondary School.

Research Question 3: What are the strategies for managing stress among principals and teachers in Anambra State Secondary Schools?

Table 3: Mean Ratings on Strategies for Managing Stress

S/N	Questionnaire Item	X	SD	D	X	SD	D
1	Taking Charge of one's thoughts, emotions and problems.	2.84	0.91	A	3.15	0.85	A
2	Massage of back and shoulder	3.21	0.98	A	2.80	1.00	A
3	Avoid whatever that will give you stress	2.18	1.05	D	2.50	0.81	A
4	Avoid people who bring you stress	2.28	1.07	D	2.35	1.07	A
5	Control your environment	2.51	1.06	A	2.89	0.90	A
6	Avoid hot-button arguments	3.78	0.97	A	2.57	0.96	A
7	Cut down your list of activities	53.02	0.73	D	2.70	0.91	A
8	Management your time well	3.00	0.97	A	3.41	0.82	A
9	Focus on other good things that give you joy	3.17	0.83	A	2.91	2.83	A
10	Be more assertive	2.51	1.06	A	2.60	0.90	A
11	Adopt a health lifestyle	3.24	0.84	A	2.88	1.12	A
12	Take health diet	3.22	0.86	A	3.18	0.93	A
13	Take regular exercise	2.75	1.02	D	3.70	0.94	A
14	Think positive of yourself	3.1	0.76	A	3.43	0.82	A
15	Accept the things you cannot change	2.81	0.83	A	2.88	1.20	A
16	Make time for fun and relaxation	3.26	0.78	A	3.00	0.82	A
17	Avoid use of alcohol, caffeine and excess sugar	3.09	1.09	A	3.14	0.92	A

Tables 3 revealed that items 3, 4 and 13 are not strategies for managing stress because of their mean ratings that are below 2.50. While the other items had mean ratings of 2.50 and above. Though, the teachers agreed that all the items in table 3 are strategies for managing stress.

Discussion of Findings

Stress has been challenging to all and sundry irrespective of one's position or status. The findings of the study in table 1 revealed that the principals agreed that there are stressors in Anambra State Secondary Schools. These stressors are the things the principals suppose to keep in the school. Preparing and keeping school site plan, ensuring all statutory records are kept, ensuring staff list/qualifications are kept, keeping continuous assessment result, staff personal files, list of clubs and societies, pupils population book, workshop file, P.T.A. account book. Trophy(s) and Awards school achieved. Junior Secondary Certificate examination, Senior Secondary Certificate

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examination, financial records, sick bay established. Etc. All these are F.M.E (2010) requirement for the attainment of quality education.

Results in table 2 shown that senior teachers did not agree that keeping question bank, first aid box and ensuring that departmental meetings held are stressful. However, preparing up-to-date lesson note, preparing examination questions, preparing students for quiz and debating competition, ensuring that the Gatemen/Security are alert, clearing the dust bin, punishing students that are late to school, monitoring of class teaching, invigilation and supervision of teachers, marking students continuous assessment test etc. Thus, the senior teachers agree that the items mentioned above are stressors in Anambra State

Secondary Schools: These are in line with Ohaedoghasis (2009) view that stress is the “wear and tear” one experiences as one adjusts to one’s changing environment. When teachers handle all these above with the supervision of the principal who may be antagonist a times, it will become stressful for the teachers. And when such is the case, they face increased risk of heart attack, speeds up aging process and it could also leads to anxiety and depression (Morah 2014). The result in table 3 which highlighted the strategies for managing stress revealed that taking charge of one’s thoughts, emotions and problem, massage of back and shoulders, avoiding whatever that gives stress, avoiding people who bring you stress, control of one’s environment, adopt a healthy life style, take healthy diet, take regular exercise, accept the things you cannot change, make time for fun and relaxation to mention but a few are all strategies for managing stress according to the principals and the senior teachers responses. Wikipedia (2014) articulated that adopting a healthy life style or one focusing on other good things that give joy and cutting down on one’s list of activities help to manage stress. Beers et al (2004) observe that the best form of stress prevention appears to be parental modelling of healthy attitudes and behaviours within the family.

Conclusion

Stress has been a canker worm in the lives of hard working citizen. It should not be allowed to wear people down. As such, there is need for all and sundry to cut down their list of activities especially when you feel too weary. Check your health and have lots of rest and relaxation. In view of these, principals and teachers should use their holidays and breaks effectively.

Recommendations

1. There are stress situation in all works of life, but the way you manage your environment counts more especially on your health. So try to manage your affairs to avoid stress.
2. Principal and teachers should use their break time effectively since the adage that say's all work and no play makes jack a dull boy seems to be true.
3. Principals and teachers should check their body language at any point in time by having rest or relaxation when it is necessary.
4. Check your diet according to your health issue and avoid use of so much alcohol, caffeine and excess sugar.

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