

## IMPACT OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG TEACHERS ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

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### **Abstract**

*This study investigated the Impact of Occupational Stress among Teachers on the Management of Secondary Schools in Vandeikya L.G.A of Benue State. The descriptive research design was adopted and 260 teachers constituted the sample population. Four research questions and four hypotheses tested at 0.05 alpha level guided the study. A face and content validated Impact of Occupational Stress among Teachers Questionnaire (IOSTQ) was used to collect data. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions while the Chi-square was used to test the hypotheses. The study found out that, delayed payment of salaries, lack of instructional materials, heavy work load and students' indiscipline significantly impacted on the management of secondary schools. The study recommended that payment of teachers' salaries should not be delayed, instructional materials should be provided, work load should not be too heavy and students' indiscipline should be checked for the effective management of secondary schools.*

### **Background of the study.**

Life span in developing nations and indeed Nigeria is diminishing sharply day-by-day today. By ones thought and imagination in the 21st century, it does appear a contradiction. For the period in reference here ideally is a science and technology scenario where modern medication, improved status of personal and environmental hygiene should afford us longevity of life. Unfortunately, this is far from reality. Badu (2005) noted that, the argument of some Nigerian historians that our forefathers lived longer and satisfied lives more than the 21<sup>st</sup> century could easily be a fact or fad. According to findings by World Health Organization (2004),

the average life span in Europe and USA stands at 70 years; Asia, 60; Africa and indeed Nigeria, 50 years! A report by Beehr (2008) has even indicated a reduction of this recently to less than 50 years. Furthermore, after graduation from school (primary, secondary and tertiary), one takes up an employment as a means of livelihood, personal happiness and the satisfaction of some personal needs as outlined in Maslow's Needs Theory. It is no gainsaying that, this much desired job-satisfaction leading to optimum job performance is eluding some employees in our country today. It may be assumed that the continued decrease in live span among Nigerians can be attributed to the occurrence of the some incurable diseases like the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Such an assumption to an extent could be right. But there is still more it than meets the eye. There is an alarming silent killer in Nigeria, and that is 'stress'.

Stress is a generalized non-specific response of the body to some physical and psychologically tasking demands made on it. An average Nigerian according to Denga and Ekpo (1994) is struggling to survive. The global economic recession, sporadic political and social upheavals as well as the worsening standard of living have increasingly stimulated stress even among workers. Many people have increasingly experienced premature debility and in chronic cases, untimely death as a result of stress-related illnesses. According to Cohen (2006), even civil servants are at times compelled by unhealthy economic circumstances to go on and on cracking their brains in order to make ends meet. Stress can

also be described as an alarm action in our body system indicating that all is not well.

Stress has become a popular concept for explaining a wide and almost wild range of outcomes, mostly negative that otherwise seems to defy explanation. It is also fashionable to attribute erratic or inexplicable behavioural excesses of friends and even co-workers to stress. Some underlying factors with multifaceted dimensions have been reported to contribute significantly to occupational stress. Anene (1997) and Beehr (2008) have identified these factors to include role ambiguity, work over load, work under load, personal attributes, poor working conditions, poor promotions, poor remunerations, delayed salaries and allowances, conflicting or unclear management policies, lack of working tools or materials, lack of training and retraining opportunities for workers, poor attention to personnel issues, lack of adequate skills or knowledge among others. These stressors have also affected teachers significantly.

There is much in literature regarding the concept of stress. According to Selye (1974) who is often regarded as the father of 'stress research', stress describes the body's response to everything from viruses and cold temperatures to emotions such as fear and anger as well as other outside forces acting on the organism, or the wear and tear of life. Amadi (2007) looked at stress as a state of psychological tension produced by some forms of forces or pressure imposed on the body either internally or externally. From these definitions, we can infer that, stress is an unpleasant emotional reaction and response the body makes when it perceives an event to be threatening. The common forms of stress are (i) Eustress—'EU' is a Greek word meaning 'positive'. Hence eustress according to Amadi (2007) is positive stress which is experienced by people due to tasking life events that yield beneficial and rewarding outcomes. Eustress is experienced when people engage in normal competitions such as sports, games, debates and

interviews; wedding ceremonies; going to pick either an admission or employment letter; driving home a newly bought car, thesis defence, etc. (ii). Distress—'De' is another Greek word meaning bad or negative. Distress is therefore negative stress which is experienced through events that produces unpleasant and regrettable consequences. Distressors include death of a loved one, contracting HIV/AIDS, automobile accidents, demotion, harsh economic conditions, breach of societal or environmental equilibrium, etc.

There are three main levels of stress. (i) Normal stress—according to Selye (1974) and Ode, (2012), no one can live without stress. It is in fact, the spice of life. Normal stress is short-lived due to its regular occurrence. As soon as the difficult condition is resolved, normalcy is restored. Normal stress cannot be avoided, for example, bad phone network, flat tyre, etc. (ii). Severe stress—this is a level of stress where a traumatic event triggers off a remarkable impact that last for a considerable period of time in the life of the victim. This form of stress often results to serious illnesses because of the great shock that usually accompanies it; for example, rape, divorce, impeachment and marital disappointment. (iii). Chronic stress—this is the advanced stage of stress where a full blown post-traumatic stress disorder is experienced. For example, witnessing the death of loved one during an accident, seeing many dead bodies during wars, etc. Occupational stress is a misfit between a person's skills and abilities and the demands of the job, and a misfit in terms of a person's needs supplied by the job environment. If a worker is for instance overloaded with a task, the moment he perceives the task to be threatening and not matched with his or her abilities which are needed to perform such a task, occupational stress will set in. Stress attacks everybody, rich or poor, young or old, male or female, experienced or inexperienced, and so on. Teachers in

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Vandeikya Local Government Area of Benue State too are susceptible to stress. This is because, since stress is neither occupation nor location specific and other works by Omeje (2012) and Allison (2011) have found out stress occurring among teachers. Teachers in the area are likely susceptible to occupational stress. Other factors that cause stress include lack of instructional materials, the state-wide delay in the payment of salaries and allowances; work over load, poor promotions, and lack of training and retraining opportunities for teachers, etc. Since occupational stress breeds job dissatisfaction, it becomes pertinent to identify the impact of occupational stress and proffer solutions hence the present study.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

It is normal to say that a healthy mind must always be harboured in a healthy body for effective performance in any given task. In any business, the sole purpose is for maximization of either consumer satisfaction or profit. It is for this reason that body equilibrium should be pursued and attained. In fact, the body equilibrium should be pursued and maintained in all occupations. The teaching occupation is no exception. There is no gainsaying that the teaching occupation is invariably laden with tasking demands or stressful events. These stressors such as poor salaries, delayed payment of salaries and allowances, delayed promotions, disruptive students, overcrowded classrooms, lack of training and retraining opportunities for teachers, lack of instructional materials, unreasonable government policies, heavy work load of teachers, poor working conditions among others. These stressors are potentially capable of reducing job satisfaction and inducing reduced performance and productivity among teachers in secondary schools. This is confirmed by the works of Ode (2012). It is against this background that the researches wish to find out the impact of stress due to delayed payment of

salaries, lack of instructional materials, heavy work load and students' indiscipline on the effective management of secondary schools in Vandeikya Local Government Area of Benue State.

#### **Research Questions**

The conduct of this research was guided by the following research questions.

- i. In what ways does stress due to delayed payment of salaries and allowances impact on effective staff discipline in secondary schools?
- ii. To what extent does stress due to lack of instructional materials affect effective teaching and learning in secondary schools?
- iii. How does stress due to heavy work load impact on effective lesson planning in secondary schools?
- iv. Does stress due to students' indiscipline affect teachers' job satisfaction in secondary schools?

#### **Research Hypotheses**

The following research hypotheses were tested:

- i. Stress due to delayed payment of salaries and allowances will not significantly impact on effective staff discipline in secondary schools.
- ii. Stress due to lack of instructional materials will not significantly affect effective teaching and learning in secondary schools.
- iii. Stress due to heavy work load will not significantly impact on effective lesson planning in secondary schools.
- iv. Stress due to students' indiscipline will not significantly impact on teachers' job satisfaction in secondary schools.

#### **Methodology**

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study because it was difficult to study the entire population of respondents. The target population of this study was all the teachers in the study area. There were 946 teachers in all the 49 private

and 23 public secondary schools in the area (M.O.E, 2016). A sample of 220 teachers drawn through simple random sampling represented 23.3% of the target population.

**Instrumentation**

An Impact of Teachers' Stress Questionnaire (ITSQ) was designed by the researchers and validated by two research experts. It was divided into four parts. Part A elicited information on occupational stress due to delayed payment of salaries and allowances; part B was on occupational stress due to lack of instructional materials; Part C elicited information on occupational stress due to heavy work load of teachers; while Part D was on occupational stress due students' indiscipline. Each part contained five items. A 4-point Likert-type rating scale was provided for the respondents to make their responses on the question. The responses were graded as follows: Strongly agree—4 points; Agree—3 points; Disagree—2 points; and Strongly disagree—1 point. The reliability index of 0.8 through the Spearman-Brown Correlation Coefficient was obtained for the instrument. A mean of 2.50, (cut off point of acceptance or rejection of an item) was used to answer the research questions while Chi square analyzed using the SPSS package was used in testing the hypotheses.

**Data presentation and analysis.**

**Research question 1.** In what ways does stress due to delayed payment of salaries and allowances impact on effective staff discipline in secondary schools?

**Table 1 below shows the opinions of respondents on the impact of delayed payment salaries and allowances on effective staff discipline in secondary schools.**

**Descriptive statistics.**

Items	N	Mean	Std. deviation
When salaries and allowances are delayed, i absent myself from school work to cater for my financial needs.	220	3.74	.30312
I no longer attend my lessons regularly when salaries and allowances are not paid on time.	220	3.52	.41304
I engage in order business activities when salaries and allowances are delayed.	220	3.69	.48719
I press on the school management to provide me with credit facilities when salaries and allowances are delayed.	220	3.79	.58234
I make use of any school money in my possession of personal use when salaries and allowances are delayed.	220	3.62	.52046
Valid N (listwise)	220		

On table 1 above; respondents accepted that, delayed payment of salaries and allowances has negative impact on staff discipline in secondary schools. All the items had a mean score above 2.50.

**Research question 2.** To what extent does stress due to lack of instructional materials affect effective teaching and learning in secondary schools?

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**Table 2 shows respondents' position on the impact of lack of instructional materials on effective teaching and learning in secondary schools.**

**Descriptive statistics.**

Items	N	Mean	Std. deviation
When there is no chalk in the school, I don't attend my lesson.	220	3.69	.30312
When needed apparatuses are lacking, I skip topics the involve experimentation.	220	3.55	.41304
If I am not provided with relevant textbooks and other teaching materials, I don't plan and deliver my lesson.	220	3.62	.48719
When students complain of not following any of my lessons, I simply tell that the school management did not provide the needed materials to plan and teach well.	220	3.70	.58234
I make fewer efforts to improve my teaching if the school management fails to provide me with the recommended instructional materials.	220	3.75	.52046
Valid N (listwise)	220		

On table 2 above, respondents accepted all items indicating, that lack of instructional materials has negative impact on the management of secondary schools. All items had a mean score above 2.50.

**Research question 3:** How does stress due to heavy work load impact on effective lesson planning in secondary schools?

**Table 3 showing the respondents' views on the impact of heavy work load on effective lesson planning in secondary schools.**

**Descriptive statistics.**

Items	N	Mean	Std. deviation
When my work load is too heavy, I find it difficult to plan and deliver my lessons effectively.	220	3.48	.30312
I absent from the school if I have a heavy work load.	220	3.36	.41304
When I am assigned to a work load above my capacities, I carry out just a little part of it.	220	3.70	.48719
If my work load is too much, I simply reject it completely.	220	3.73	.58234
Having too much work to do in the school make me uncomfortable.	220	3.65	.52046
Valid N (listwise)	100		

**Hypotheses testing.**

The Chi square test analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and the results are presented below.

**Hypothesis 1:** Stress due to delayed payment of salaries and allowances will not significantly impact on effective staff discipline in secondary schools.

**Table 5: Impact of Stress Due to Delayed Payment of Salaries and Allowances on Staff Discipline in Secondary Schools.**

Response	Observed frequency	Expected frequency	df	X <sup>2</sup>	Sig.	Decision
No impact	11(5.0)	110	1	27.000	0.0005	Ho rejected.
Impact	209(95.0)	110				
Total	220(100)	220				

Values in parentheses are percentages. ( $\chi^2=27.000$ ;  $df=1$ ,  $P=0.05>0.0005$ ,  $H_0$  rejected). As seen on table 5, 95.0% of the respondents agreed that stress due to delayed payment of salaries and allowances have an impact on staff discipline in secondary school. The Chi square result shows a statistically significant impact ( $P=0.05>0.0005$ ) of stress due to delayed payment of salaries and allowances on staff discipline in secondary schools. Null hypothesis was rejected.

**Hypothesis 2** Stress due to lack of instructional materials will not significantly affect effective teaching and learning in secondary schools.

**Table 6: Impact of Stress Due to Lack of Instructional Materials will not Significantly Affect Effective Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools.**

Response	Observed frequency	Expected frequency	$\chi^2$	Sig.	Decision
No impact	42(19.5)	110	145.000	0.0005	Ho rejected.
Impact	117(80.5)	110			
Total	220(100)	220			

Values in parentheses are percentages. ( $\chi^2=145.000$ ;  $df=1$ ,  $P=0.05>0.0005$ ,  $H_0$  rejected).

As seen on table 6, 80.0% of the respondents agreed that stress due to lack of instructional materials will not significantly affect effective teaching and learning in secondary schools. The Chi square result shows a statistically significant effect ( $P=0.05>0.0005$ ) of stress due to delayed payment of salaries and allowances on staff discipline in secondary schools. The null hypothesis was rejected.

**Hypothesis 3** Stress due to heavy work load will not significantly impact on effective lesson planning in secondary schools.

**Table 7. Impact of Stress Due to Heavy Work Load will not Significantly Impact on Effective Lesson Planning in Secondary Schools.**

Response	Observed frequency	Expected frequency	$\chi^2$	Sig.	Decision
No impact	23(10.5)	110	164.000	0.0005	Ho rejected.
Impact	197(89.5)	110			
Total	220(100)	220			

Values in parentheses are percentages. ( $\chi^2=164.000$ ;  $df=1$ ,  $P=0.05>0.0005$ ,  $H_0$  rejected).

As seen on table 7, 89.5% of the respondents agreed that stress due to heavy work load will not significantly impact on effective lesson planning in secondary schools. The Chi square result shows a statistically significant effect ( $P=0.05>0.0005$ ) of stress due to heavy work load on effective lesson planning in secondary schools. The null hypothesis was rejected.

**Summary of Findings**

From the data analysis, the following findings were made:

- i. Stress due to delayed payment of salaries and allowances significantly impact on effective staff discipline in secondary schools.
- ii. Stress due to lack of instructional materials significantly affect effective teaching and learning in secondary schools.
- iii. Stress due to heavy work load significantly impact on effective lesson planning in secondary schools.

### **Discussion of Findings**

Occupational stress is a variable that has been reported to have significantly negative impact on job performance in all worlds of work. The findings of this research indicated that, where salaries and allowances are delayed, teachers will exhibit a variety of deviant behaviours. This finding agreed with Achalu (2000) who asserted that improper administration of staff salaries and allowances makes staff uneasy to be governed or controlled. In the same vein, Roberra (2011) found out that, where salaries and allowances were delayed, university lecturers absconded their responsibilities to cater for their personal needs at the detriment of organizational goals and objectives.

The findings also indicated that, stress due to lack of instructional materials and heavy work load of teachers has negative impact on the management of secondary school teachers. Contributing on this, Ogbogbulem (2010) note that, lack of equipment drastically contributes to occupational stress among teachers and this affects their performance of duties assigned to them in the school. Allison (2011) too noted that, stress due to lack of instructional materials not affects the quality of the teaching staff, but also both individual and group performance in the classroom. Additionally, Ogbonnya (2009), Ade (2011) and Agande (2013) noted that, lack of appropriate and adequate instructional materials for carrying out teaching coupled with heavy work load of teachers make the task of teaching intensely stressful. The end result of this anomaly is that, the management cannot effectively coordinate the teachers in the school towards the actualization of the educational objectives. Consequently, a lot of students would pass through the school without the school passing through them.

### **Conclusion**

Teaching is a highly stressful venture which has negative physical and psychological

consequences on both the victims and the entire school system. Conflicts bothering on interpersonal relationship between the teachers and school management can exist to exacerbate occupational stress among teachers. No matter how hard a teacher may try to be adjusted, he is still predisposed to stress arising from many deficiencies such as delayed payment of salaries and allowances, lack of instructional materials, heavy work load, disruptive or uncouth students, pressure from uncharitable parents and a negative societal view of the teacher. All these among others can boil down to serious effects on the management of secondary schools. No school can function effectively when teachers are under undue stress. The government, Non-Governmental Organizations, and all stakeholders in education should endeavour to address issues of teachers' salaries and allowances, the provision of instructional materials and regulating the work load of teachers as well as curbing students' behavioural excesses. This will positively impact on the management of secondary schools.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the research, the following recommendations are made:

1. Salaries and allowances of teachers are the most essential occupational demands of teachers so as to meet their financial obligations. The government should institute working machinery that will ensure the prompt payment of teachers' salaries and allowances.
2. All stakeholders in education should facilitate the procurement and disbursement of instructional materials to all secondary schools for effective teaching and learning.
3. School principals should ensure that the work load allocated to teachers is not burdensome such that it does not wear and tear them down.

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