

Stress Among Secondary School Teachers in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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Doi:10.5901/jesr.2013.v3n2p311

Abstract

The study examined the various sources of stress among teachers of secondary schools in Ekiti State. It also examined the coping strategies of these teachers with stress. The descriptive research design of the survey type was used for the study. The population consisted of all the teachers in public secondary schools in the State. The sample was however made up of 180 teachers from 20 secondary schools across the three senatorial districts of the State. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the sample. A self-designed instrument tagged 'Stress Among Teachers' Questionnaire (SATQ) which was validated by research experts in Tests and Measurement was used to collect data for the study. A test-retest method of reliability was used and a reliability coefficient of 0.79 was got using the Pearson product moment correlation. The data collected were analysed using percentage score and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The study revealed that poor working conditions, poor relations with superordinates and late payment of teachers' salaries were major sources of stress among teachers in the state. The study also revealed that organising one's time effectively is the main strategy of coping with stress among the teachers. The study further revealed a significant relationship between sources of stress and the teaching effectiveness of the teachers. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that government should improve the working conditions of the teachers through better pay and some other social facilities. It was also recommended that teachers should make good use of their time as well as relate cordially with their super-ordinates and colleagues.

Keywords: stress, teaching, effectiveness, secondary schools

1. Introduction

Teaching is perceived as the oldest and the noblest of all professions. Teaching is any activity or set of activities with the sole intention of bringing about learning. Akindutire (2001) posited that teaching are those actions by the teacher and the learner that make learning successful than it would have been without such teaching.

According to Adiotomre & Adams (2005), the teacher in any school system is alongside the principal responsible for the day-to-day running of the school as well as the enhancement and promotion of quality education. The authors argued that the quality and effectiveness of every education system anywhere in the world is dependent on the competences, effectiveness, efficiency and devotion of the teaching force. The extent to which the objectives of teaching are achieved determines teaching effectiveness. This is why every good teacher ensures that the objectives of teaching are achieved at the end of his teaching.

However, it appears that teachers have not been effective in Ekiti state in the recent time. A lot of factors have been adduced for the ineffectiveness of teachers in the state but the most prominent appears to be the stress experienced by the teachers. Teachers' job is fast becoming more stressful in recent times, and this tends to affect the level of teaching effectiveness.

Selye (1978) defines stress as any external events or internal drive which threatens to upset the organismic equilibrium. Akhlaq, Amjad, Mehmood, Hussan and Malik (2010) posited that stress is a psycho-physiological process, which results from the interaction of the individual with the environment and results in disturbances caused to the physiological, psychological and social systems, depending upon individual characteristics and psychological processes.

This stress comes from various aspects of life including developmental and social changes, financial and accommodation problems, work demands, and the specific demands of academia (Busari, 2011). Murphy (1995) submitted that stress can be the result of any number of situations in the workplace. The author illustrated the following as categories of workplace stressors: (1) unique to the job include workload; meaningfulness of work; hours of work; physical environment; isolation at the workplace. (2) role in organisation which include: role conflict; role ambiguity; responsibility for staff; conflicts occurring due to ill-defined organisational boundaries. (3) Career development; over promotion; under promotion; lack of job security; thwarted ambitions. (4) relationship at work; poor relations with boss, subordinates, or colleagues; difficulties in delegation, threat of violence, harassment. (5) organisational structure and climate which include: participation or non-participation in decision making; management style and communications patterns.

Stress has been shown to be either directly or indirectly responsible for early and untimely deaths through heart attack, stroke, high blood pressure and a multitude of other stress-related illness. Stress is proven beyond doubt to make people ill, and evidence is increasing as to number of ailments and diseases caused by stress. Stress is known to contribute to heart diseases; it causes hypertension and high blood pressure, and impairs the immune system. Stress is also linked to strokes, IBS (irritable bowel syndrome), ulcers, diabetes, muscle and joint pain, miscarriage during pregnancy, allergies, alopecia and even pre-mature tooth loss.

Whatever causes the workplace stress epidemic, it has been established that it is one of the key problems of modern working life. Wainwright & Calnan (2002) suggested a strategy for coping as locating work stress in the responses of the individual and see the solution in terms of therapeutic intervention. Cahill, Landsbergis & Schnall (1995) opined that it is important that individuals have personal coping strategies at their disposal for when stress inevitably occurs.

Besides, Kagan, Kagan & Watson (1995) and Cooley & Yovanoff (1996) suggested physiological coping strategies against stress. The authors suggested the following: (1) biofeedback: electronic measurement of mind-body functions (muscle tension, intestinal activity, blood flow, breathing, heartbeat) and techniques to control those functions. (2) muscle relaxation: self-regulated, progressive body relaxation that puts the individual in an extremely restful state. (3) aerobic activity: any type of activity that raises the level of one's pulse rate such as bicycling, swimming or jogging.

The question is to what extent are teachers in secondary schools in Ekiti State exposed to stress in the workplace? It is against this background that this study sought to examine the occurrence of stress (if any) among teachers in the state.

2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the various sources of stress among secondary school teachers in Ekiti State. The study was also designed to find out the coping strategies of the teachers with stress. The study investigated if there was any relationship between sources of stress and teaching effectiveness of the teachers.

3. Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What are the sources of stress among secondary school teachers in Ekiti State?
2. What are the strategies for coping with stress among secondary school teachers in Ekiti State?

4. Research Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between the sources of stress and teaching effectiveness.

5. Methodology

The descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of all the teachers in public secondary schools in Ekiti State Nigeria. The sample was however made up of 180 teachers selected from 90 secondary schools across the three senatorial districts of the state. Stratified and simple random sampling technique were used to select the sample.

A self-designed instrument tagged 'Stress Among Teachers' Questionnaire (SATQ)' was used for the study. SATQ had four sections; *section A* sought the background information of the respondents; *section B* contained 7 items designed to elicit information on the sources of stress; *section C* had 7 items also to collect information on the coping strategies of the teachers and *section D* had 10 items specifically designed to elicit information on the teaching effectiveness of the teachers.

The instrument was validated by research experts in the areas of Tests and Measurement and Stress Management in Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. It was based on their comments and judgments the instrument was adjudged to have met both face and content validity requirements. A test-retest method of reliability was adopted for SATQ while Pearson product moment correlation was used to determine the reliability coefficient which stood at 0.79.

The data for the study were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics used include frequency counts and percentage scores while the inferential statistics employed was the Pearson product moment correlation. The hypothesis formulated was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

6. Results

The results of the study were presented as follows:

Research question 1: What are the sources of stress among secondary school teachers in Ekiti State?

Table 1: Sources of stress among teachers

S/N	Items	Agree	%	Disagree	%
1.	Indiscipline among students	138	76.7	42	23.3
2.	Inadequate physical facilities in schools	142	78.9	38	21.1
3.	Late payment of teachers' salaries	146	81.1	34	18.9
4.	Poor working conditions	155	86.1	25	13.9
5.	Lack of support from parents	138	76.7	42	23.3
6.	Poor relations with superordinates	150	83.3	30	16.7
7.	Poor relations with colleagues	142	78.9	38	21.1
	Mean		80.2		19.8

Results in table 1 shows that 86,1% of the respondents agreed that poor working conditions is a primary source of stress among teachers in Ekiti State secondary schools. Also, 83,3% of the respondents agreed that poor relations with superordinates is another source of stress.

Of the respondents 81,1% agreed that late payment of teachers' salaries is a source of stress to the teachers. While 78,9% of the respondents agreed that inadequate physical facilities in schools and poor relations with colleagues are sources of stress among teachers, 76,7% agreed that indiscipline among students and lack of support from parents constitute sources of stress among teachers.

On the average, 80,2% of the respondents agreed the items generated in the table are sources of stress among secondary school teachers.

Research question 2: What are the strategies for coping with stress among secondary school teachers in Ekiti State?

Table 2: Strategies adopted for coping with stress among teachers

S/N	Items	Agree	%	Disagree	%
1.	I organise my time effectively	163	90.5	17	9.5
2.	I get 7 to 8 hours sleep everyday	122	67.8	58	32.2
3.	I maintain cordial relationship with my colleagues	134	74.4	46	25.6
4.	I try to make do with my salary before the following month's salary is paid	83	46.1	97	53.9
5.	I attend to problems as and when due	121	67.2	59	32.8
6.	I drink (alcohol) in response to stress	43	23.9	137	76.1
7.	I exercise the body to the point of perspiration to relieve myself	106	58.9	74	41.1

Results in table 2 shows that 90,5% of the respondents agreed that they organise their time effectively as a way of coping with stress in the workplace. Also, 74,4% of the respondents agreed that they maintain cordial relationship with their colleagues. The table shows that 67,8% of the respondents agreed that they had up to 7 to 8 hours of sleep everyday as a way of coping with the stress.

Of the respondents, 67,2% agreed that they attend to problems as and when due. While, 58,9% of the respondents agreed that they exercise their body to relieve themselves, 46,1% of them agreed that they make do with their salary before the following month's salary is paid, and just 23,9% said they take to alcoholic drinking to relieve the stress in them.

Relationship between Sources of Stress and Teaching Effectiveness

Table 3: Test of relationship between sources of stress and teaching effectiveness

Variables	N	r_{cal}	r_{tab}
Stress	180	18.233	1.645
Teaching effectiveness	180		

P<0.05

Table 3 shows the relationship between sources stress and teaching effectiveness. The result obtained from the analysis shows that the value of r_{cal} (18.233) is greater than the value of r_{tab} (1.645) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This implies that there was significant relationship between sources of stress and teaching effectiveness of the teachers.

7. Discussion

The study showed that poor working conditions, poor relations with super-ordinates and late payment of teachers' salaries were major sources of stress among teachers. These were followed by poor relations with colleagues, inadequate physical facilities in schools, indiscipline on the part of the students as well as lack of support from the parents. This submission was in line with Murphy (1995) and Busari (2011). Murphy submitted that a number of situations can result to stress in the workplace which include factors related to the job itself, and relationship at work. Busari (2011) also submitted stress comes from various aspects of life including developmental and social changes, financial and accommodation problems as well as work demands among others.

The study also revealed that organising one's time effectively is the main antidote for coping with stress among teachers in secondary schools in Ekiti State. The other strategies include maintaining cordial relationship with colleagues, enjoying uninterrupted sound sleep up to seven or eight hours in a day as well as attending to problems as and when due. This submission is also in line with Cooley & Yovanoff (1996) who suggested, among other things, muscle relaxation, progressive body relaxation that puts the individual in an extremely restful state as a strategy for coping with stress.

It was again revealed in the study that there was a significant relationship between sources of stress and teaching effectiveness. This suggests that a stressful work situation disrupts job performance.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that teachers in secondary schools in Ekiti State face some stressful work situations. It was also concluded that effective time management among the teachers is the main strategy towards coping with stress in the workplace. It was again concluded in the study that a stressful work situation affect or hamper the teaching effectiveness of the teachers.

It was therefore recommended that government should improve the working conditions of the teachers by providing them with better pay, some social facilities such as Satellite TV, computer with internet connections to enable them cope with stress in the workplace. Government should also provide enough physical facilities to aid effective teaching and learning in the schools. Teachers should make good use of their time as well as maintain cordial relationship with their super-ordinates and their colleagues.

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