

IMPACT OF STRESS ON PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS IN OREDO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EDO STATE: IMPLICATIONS FOR PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

The study assessed impact of stress on public school teachers in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State and its implications for Performance. The teachers used in this study were randomly selected from each of the ten sampled public schools from the Local Government Area. The study consists of 142 teachers from given schools. The questionnaire on the impact of stress on public school teachers was used for data collection. The statistical method employed for analyzing the data was the frequency counts and percentage counts and percentage scores. The analysis of the response to the questionnaire yielded the following findings: public school teachers in Oredo Local Government Area have high stressed level because they have heavy work load, public school teachers in Oredo Local Government Area are exposed to stress because of repetitive nature of their job, low remuneration is responsible for public school teachers high level of stress. On the basis of the above findings, it was recommended that government, Ministry of Education and school administrators should be alive to their responsibilities.

Introduction

Stress has emerged over the past few decades as an increasing problem in the workplace. It can be understood more comprehensively as a condition which happens when one realizes the pressure on him or the requirements of a situation are wider than they can cope with or handle, if these requirements are huge and continue for a longer period of time without any intervention, mental, physical or behavioral problems may occur (Mackay, 2004). The understanding of stress originated in the empirical research of Derogatis (1987), this research was conducted using the Derogatis Stress Profile (DSP), a psychological questionnaire to measure individuals' stress dispositions. Derogatis based this questionnaire on Lazarus's (1966) social interaction theory of stress which consequently led this study towards Lazarus's more recent research and theories of stress and how to cope with it.

Teachers stress is a much talked about phenomenon, however, there is little consensus between different professional groups regarding its etiology or how to tackle it.

Based on a review of international research, it is concluded that teachers stress is a real phenomenon and that high levels are reliably associated with a range of causal factors including those intrinsic to teaching, individual vulnerability and systemic influences (Nyambongi 2004).

There is no universal definition of stress due to the complexity and multidimensional nature. Generally stress is usually associated with negative states, hence Seyle (1997) defined stress as pressure from an adverse force or influence on an organization. Costa and Macrae (1990) defined stress as the result produced when a structure, system or organism is acted upon by forces that disrupt equilibrium or produce strain. According to Chikwe (2009), stress is a process of adaptation between individual and environment, an ongoing interaction that involves perception, cognition, effect and coping efforts. According to the current World Health Organization (WHO), work-related stress is the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities which challenge their ability to cope. For Lazarus (1984), stress is an imbalance between demands and resources or as occurring when pressures exceed one's perceived ability to cope.

Lazarus definition and the definition of stress found in the Taber's Encyclopedic Medical Dictionary seem to agree, that for any event or changes in the environment to be acknowledged as causing stress, the forces should cause an imbalance or disruption in an individual's equilibrium. Consequently therefore, this paper investigates the impact of stress on public school teachers' performance in Oredo Local Government Area.

Methodology

The hypotheses of this study include:

- a. Teachers in public schools in Oredo Local Government Area have high stress level because they have heavy work load.
- b. Public school teachers in Oredo Local Area are exposed to stress because of the routine nature of their job.
- c. Low remuneration is responsible for public school teachers' high level of stress in Oredo Local Government Area.

Source of data/ study population/sampling

The main source of data for this study is the primary data which was sourced through questionnaire. The population for this study consists of all public school teachers in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. Since it would not be possible to study the entire population needed for the study, simple random sampling technique was used to select schools and teachers in Oredo Local Government Public Schools in Oredo Local Government Area. Ten schools and one hundred and sixty five teachers were selected from three hundred and fifty six (356) teachers for the study. On return rate, one hundred and forty two (142) questionnaires were completed and returned. This indicates that the rate of response is about 86%. This is considered high enough to make inference and as well generalization on the entire population.

Table 1: Data on distributed questionnaire

S/N	Name of Schools Sampled	Questionnaire Distributed		Questionnaire Returned		Questionnaire Not Returned	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Akenzua Secondary School	15	9.1	14	8.5	1	0.6
2	Emokpae primary School	15	9.1	13	7.8	2	1.2
3	Asoro Primary School	15	9.1	14	8.5	1	0.6
4	Agbado Primary School	15	9.1	13	7.8	2	1.2
5	Adesuwa Primary School	15	9.1	13	7.8	2	1.2
6	Emotan Primary School	20	12.1	17	10.3	3	1.8
7	Owina Primary School	10	6.1	9	5.5	1	0.6
8	Owegie Primary School	25	15.2	21	12.7	4	2.4
9	Oliha Primary School	20	12.1	15	9.1	5	3.0
10	Ebenezer Primary School	15	9.1	13	7.8	2	1.2
	Total	165	100	142	85.8	23	13.8

Source: Field Work 2015

Instrument

The major instrument for the study is the questionnaire entitled the impact of stress on workers performance. The choice of questionnaire is justified on the ground of the fact that it helps to provide quick data for the study which depends largely on opinions and perception of the respondents. 165 teachers were used for the study.

The questionnaire items in formulating the instrument were gathered after exhaustive review of the relevant literature. The questionnaire was designed to elicit the impact of job

stress on performance of teachers in public schools. It was subdivided into two parts constituting the background. Section A contains questions which seek information on demographic data of the respondents. Section B consists of relevant information on some of the causes of stress; and its impact on performance. Frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze data collected in the study tables. The data presented were analyzed to test the hypotheses postulated.

Validity of Instrument

The instrument (questionnaire) was subjected to screening by specialists and the instrument was only administered in the ten selected schools sampled.

Ho₁: Public school teachers in Oredo Local Government Area have high level of stress because of heavy work load.

Table II: Workload Impact on Stress

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	102	72
No	27	19
Undecided	13	9
Total	142	100

Source: Field Work 2015

Respondents were requested to simply answer Yes or No if heavy work load impacts on stress of public school teachers in Oredo Local Government Area or not. Table II above shows that 72% of the respondents answered yes as they agreed that heavy work load impacts on stress, 19% answered no while 13% were undecided. In view of the above analysis, hypothesis I that public school teachers in Oredo Local Government Area have high stress level because they have heavy work load is hereby accepted.

Ho₂: Public school teachers in Oredo Local Government Area are exposed to stress because of the repetitive nature of their job

Table III: Repetitive Nature of Teaching Impact on Stress

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage
To a great extent	16	11
To some extent	23	16
Don't know	24	17
Little extent	38	27
No effect	41	29
Total	142	100

Source: Field Work 2015

Table III above shows that 11% of the respondents stated that the repetitive nature of teaching impacts on stress to a great extent, 16% of the respondents think that the repetitive nature of teaching impacts on stress to some extent, 17% of the respondents do not know if the repetitive nature of teaching impacts on stress, 27% stated that the repetitive nature of teaching has just a little impact on stress, 29% stated that the repetitive nature of teaching has no effect and do not impact on stress. These responses imply that, the respondents do not

agree that the repetitive nature of teaching impact on stress. In view of the above analysis, the hypothesis 2 that public school teachers in Oredo Local Government Area are exposed to stress because of repetitive nature of their job is hereby rejected.

Ho₃: Low remuneration is responsible for Public School teachers' high level of stress.

Table IV: Low Remuneration Impact on Stress

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage
To a great extent	84	59
To some extent	25	18
Don't know	14	10
Little extent	10	7
No effect	9	6
Total	142	100

Source: Field Work 2015

From table iv above, 59% of the respondents agreed to a great extent that low salary impacts on stress, 18% agreed to some extent, 10% do not know if low salary impacts on stress, 7% agreed that low remuneration has little impact on stress, while 6% agreed that low salary do not have any effect on the impact of stress of teachers. The above analysis indicate that majority of the respondents agreed to a great extent that low remuneration impacts on stress of teachers in Oredo Local Government Area. In view of the above analysis, hypothesis 3 that low remuneration is responsible for public school teachers in Oredo Local Government Area high level of stress is hereby accepted.

Discussion of Result

The analysis of the three hypotheses reveal that majority of the respondents agreed with the hypotheses formulated to guide the study on the impact of stress on public school teachers in Oredo Local Government Area.

The result of hypothesis one shows that the respondents agreed that public school teachers in Oredo Local Government Area have high stress level because they have heavy workload, this finding which is encouraging, collaborates those of Dubrin (1996:97) and Jaffe, Segal and Jaffe-Gill (2001). This result indicates that public school teachers in Oredo Local Government Area have high stress level because they have heavy work load.

The second hypothesis seeks to find out whether public school teachers in Oredo Local Government Area are exposed to stress because of the repetitive nature of their job. The finding agrees with that of Franken Hauser (1991). However the study was at variance with the result of Kiecolt and Glaser et al (2002) who strictly limited their finding to the immune system as the cause of stress among teachers. The third concern of this study was to investigate whether low remuneration is responsible for public school teachers high level of stress. The findings confirmed Sargio and Kristin's (1995) result that low remuneration for teachers can also bring about stress among teachers.

In addition to the findings based on the three hypotheses, the null hypothesis on personal experience of stress on teachers reveal that 47%of the respondents agreed that they personally experience stress, 42% claim that they do not experience stress while 11% were

undecided. The result is in line with the work of Cooper (1998) who reported in his research work that there exists a strong relationship between preventive stress management and performance at work.

Implications of the study for Performance

The findings of this study has far reaching implications for all and sundry especially Ministry of Education in Nigeria. It is an eye opener for them to give top priority to public school teachers to ensure optimum productivity in the education sector. It is a lesson for the Ministry of Education and school principals to allocate fewer classes on every subject to teachers. The findings also reveal that the government should improve on teachers' remuneration for proper motivation.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions emerged: the first relates to the analysis of the effect of high level of stress on public school teachers because of heavy work load which revealed that there is a significant relationship between high stress level and heavy work load on teachers. The second conclusion drawn from this study is that repetitive nature of teaching does not impact on stress. The third conclusion from this study is that low remuneration of teachers' impacts on stress in public schools.

Recommendations

Since the findings of this study is bound to have great implication for impacting knowledge on students at the primary school level, educationists, principals, parents and the society at large, the information generated will be of significant value in changing the primary school structure, functions and policies as they relate to the study of impact of stress on public school teachers in Oredo Local Government Area in particular and Nigeria in general. Based on the findings, the study recommends that, government should improve the working conditions, understand the needs and feelings of teachers as this would lead to improved achievement and productivity in schools. Government should improve working conditions of teachers by providing them with better and prompt pay. Teachers should be provided with moderate class number for teaching. Government should put in place programmes for recognizing and rewarding teachers. Since the study has revealed that teaching is a stressful profession, effects of stress need to be monitored, because they impact not only the teacher, but the society at large.

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