

WORK STRESS AND TEACHER JOB PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated work stress and teacher job performance in secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Two research questions were raised and one hypothesis was formulated for the study at 0.05 level of significance. The descriptive and correlational survey design was adopted for this study. The target population for this study comprised teachers across secondary schools in Ekiti State. Out of which a total of 300 teachers were sampled through multi-stage sampling procedure. Two research instruments (Questionnaire) were designed for this study. Face and content validity, while the Cronbach's alpha was used to test the reliability coefficient of 0.91 was obtained. The findings from the study revealed that the level of job performance of teachers in secondary schools in Ekiti State was low with weighted mean of 2.11, various stress variables have significant negative effect on teacher job performance Workload ($\bar{x}=3.41$), Lack of Resources ($\bar{x}=3.34$) and Overcrowded Classroom ($\bar{x}=3.21$) with overall weighted mean of 3.32. There is significant joint contribution work stress variables (Workload, Lack of Resources, and Overcrowded Classroom) to teacher job performance in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria with ($F(3) = 1782.747$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.768$ $P < 0.05$) It was concluded that the level of level of teacher job performance was low; work stress variables have negative effect on teacher job performance, and there was a significant joint contribution of work stress variables and teacher job performance in public secondary schools in Ekiti State. It was recommended that there should be reduction in the tasks given to a teacher per time to reduce workload; and there should be more classrooms and ensure that the students- teacher ratio is reduced to 30:1 to avoid overcrowded classroom in the school; and there should be provision of adequate resources.

Keywords: Work Stress, resources, Overcrowded Classroom, Teachers Job Performance, public secondary schools, Ekiti State Nigeria

Background to the Study

Teacher job performance has been one major indicator of educational quality in a state and a country. However, the gradual declining in the performance of teachers has been a major outcry of stakeholders as impact of it is seen in the poor academic performance of students in the senior school certificate examination (SSCE). However, it has been observed that low teacher job performance can be as a result of stress.

Stress is an inevitable part of human life and is increasingly recognized as a factor influencing workplace productivity and efficiency (Mittal *et al.*, 2022). In educational settings, teachers are mainly susceptible to stress owing to the multifaceted demands of their roles, including administrative tasks, lesson preparation, student

performance monitoring, and classroom management. Research has established that chronic stress can negatively affect not only teachers' well-being but also their professional performance, leading to decreased motivation, job satisfaction, and teaching effectiveness (Kyriacou, 2001; Antoniou *et al.*, 2023).

Teaching business studies at the junior secondary school level requires a significant amount of mental and physical effort. This subject often demands practical demonstrations, theoretical explanations, and real-world applications, which can be overwhelming when combined with other institutional expectations. According to Ajayi and Ekundayo (2010), the lack of adequate resources and overcrowded classrooms prevalent in many Nigerian schools exacerbate teachers' stress levels, making it challenging to meet educational objectives.

The specific challenges faced by teachers in Ekiti State, which include restricted access to professional development opportunities and inadequate infrastructure, further compound the stress associated with their roles. Ololube (2013) highlighted that teachers in urban Nigerian schools often contend with high student-teacher ratios and administrative bottlenecks, which hinder their ability to perform optimally. These stressors not only affect the delivery of business studies content but also contribute to a high rate of teacher burnout and attrition.

Moreover, the impact of stress on teacher performance is not limited to their classroom duties. Stress has been linked to reduced cognitive functioning and emotional stability, which are critical for effective teaching (Whitting *et al.*, 2021). Teachers under stress may struggle with planning lessons, managing time effectively, and maintaining a positive classroom environment. This has significant implications for student learning outcomes and overall school performance.

In light of these challenges, understanding the specific ways stress affects teachers' performance in business studies is fundamental for developing targeted interventions. The study strives to discover the impact of stress on teacher's performance in junior secondary schools in Makurdi Metropolis, providing insights into how stress management strategies can be implemented to enhance teaching quality and student success. Owusu (2021) identified excessive workload, student misbehavior, and administrative demands as significant stressors for teachers in secondary schools, while Akpe (2018) described teacher stress as a physical and psychological response to demanding events. Amu (2022) explored workplace stress, revealing that acute, chronic, and episodic stress due to heavy workloads negatively impacts worker motivation and performance. In the Nigerian context, Fadare *et al.* (2024) found that inadequate resources, overcrowded classrooms, and poor remuneration were common

stressors for teachers, leading to difficulties in lesson planning, student discipline, and curriculum achievement. Ozoemena *et al.* (2021) further emphasized that chronic stress in teachers reduced their enthusiasm and led to poor academic outcomes, suggesting the need for stress management and better working conditions.

In many educational contexts, teachers operate under conditions that exacerbate stress. Overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching materials, and irregular salary payments are common issues, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria (Ololube, 2013). Teachers in junior secondary schools are particularly vulnerable, as they often deal with students transitioning from primary education and struggling with both academic and social challenges. These stressors contribute to high fatigue levels, burnout, also reduced schooling effectiveness (Agyapong *et al.*, 2022).

Stress in educational settings is not limited to individual teachers but also affects institutional performance. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional model of stress highlights how prolonged contact with stressors lacking satisfactory handling devices leads to harmful consequences. For example, teachers under chronic stress may struggle with classroom management, leading to increased student misbehavior and disruptions. Additionally, high-stress levels can result in teacher absenteeism, further disrupting the educational process and affecting student learning outcomes (Sharma & Gupta, 2023).

Research also indicates that stress among teachers is influenced by broader systemic issues, including educational policies and school leaders (Dlamini *et al.*, 2024). Poorly designed policies, coupled with a lack of professional development opportunities, often leave teachers inadequately prepared to handle the dynamic challenges of their roles. According to Ajayi and Ekundayo (2010), providing adequate training, resources, and a supportive work environment can substantially diminish stress levels and enhance teacher performance.

Despite global research, there is a gap in empirical studies focusing on the specific stressors faced by teachers in Nigerian junior secondary schools. Understanding stress in educational settings is essential for identifying effective interventions. By tackling the fundamental causes of stress, including excessive workload, insufficient resources, and inadequate institutional support, schools may cultivate conditions that enhance teacher well-being and elevate educational performance. This study seeks to fill this gap by investigating the stressors encountered by these teachers in Ekiti State and their impact on performance. This study therefore investigates the impact of work stress on teacher job performance in public secondary schools in Ekiti State

Statement of the Problem

Teachers play a key role in shaping the academic success and personal development of students. However, their ability to perform these responsibilities effectively is increasingly hindered by high level of stress. Stress in the teaching career has become a growing concern due to the adverse effects it has on teachers' productivity, health, and job satisfaction. In public secondary schools, where teachers are expected to manage large classes, meet curriculum demands, and address diverse student needs, the pressures can become overwhelming. These challenges are particularly evident in the teaching of subjects like Mathematics, English, Business Studies, and Basic Science, a subject that requires both theoretical knowledge and practical application.

In Ekiti State, the working conditions for teachers are further complicated by infrastructural inadequacies, insufficient teaching materials, and administrative burdens. It has been observed that many teachers in Nigerian schools operate in environments that are not conducive to optimal performance. Poor remuneration, irregular salary payments, and limited opportunities for professional development exacerbate their stress levels, leaving many teachers demotivated and unable to perform at their best. Teachers experiencing chronic stress may struggle with lesson preparation, classroom management, and effective communication with students. This often results in a decline in teaching quality, which directly affects student learning outcomes. It has also been observed that stress can impair cognitive functioning and decision-making, critical components of effective teaching. Consequently, the ability of teachers to meet curriculum goals and deliver engaging lessons is compromised.

Although, there is an increasing amount of studies on stress within the teaching profession, however, there is a paucity of attention on the impact of stress on Basic Science teachers at the public secondary schools in Ekiti State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of managing work stress on teacher job performance in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study were to:

- i. determine the level of teacher job performance in public secondary school in Ekiti State;
- ii. find out the extent to which various work stress variables influence teacher job performance in public secondary school in Ekiti State
- iii. examine coping strategies that can be adopted to manage work stress among teachers in public secondary school in Ekiti State.

Research Question

This research question guided the study:

How do stress variables affect teacher job performance in areas such as lesson planning, classroom management, and teaching effectiveness?

Hypothesis

None of the work stress variables will jointly contribute to teacher job performance in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The researcher adopted descriptive survey research design and the correlation type of it. The researcher describes the observed phenomena based on identified characteristics and explores possible correlations among two or more phenomena. This design is therefore, considered appropriate because it enables the researcher to critically examine the events, attitudes and ideas with the aim of providing information about the phenomena being studied.

The population of the study comprised all public secondary school teachers in Ekiti State. The total number of respondents sampled for this study is 300 teachers. The study was predicated on the multi-stage sampling procedure to select the sample from the population

Two self-designed instruments were used for this study and was tagged “Work Stress Questionnaire” (WSQ) and “Teacher Job performance Questionnaire” (TJPQ). A four-point Likert scale was used to score the questionnaire. On the perception of respondents, they will be asked to indicate to what extent they agree or disagree with the statement by ticking the appropriate column (✓) thus, the rating of each item is as follows: Strongly Agree (4) Agree (3) Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1) as they respond to each question.

The instrument was validated through face and content validity, and reliability of the instrument were subjected to pilot test. Validity was found to be 86.7 level of significant.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The research question was answered using percentage score and frequency counts. Hypotheses were tested using Multiple Regression analysis. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1 showed that the weighted mean of stress as a result of workload is 3.41 which is above the average mean of 2.50, this shows that stress of workload have negative effect on teacher job performance. The table also revealed that the weighted average mean of stress variable of lack of resources is 3.34 which is above the average mean of 2.50, this implies that stress as a result of lack of resources have significant effect on teacher job performance. The weighted mean of the third variable of stress which is overcrowded classroom have weighted average mean of 3.21 which is above the average mean of 2.50, this shows that stress of overcrowded classroom have negative effect on teacher job performance. The overall weighted mean was 3.32 which is above the average mean of 2.50. Therefore, all the variables of stress (Workload, lack of resources, and overcrowded classroom) have negative effect on teacher job performance.

Testing of Hypotheses

None of the work stress variables will jointly contribute to teacher job performance in public secondary schools in Ekiti State.

Table 1: How Stress variables influence teacher job performance

S/N	A: Workload	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	The amount of work I have to complete affects my ability to perform effectively as a teacher.	194 64.7%	75 25.0%	7 2.3%	1 0.3%	3.603	Accept
2	I often feel overwhelmed by the number of tasks I need to complete within a short timeframe.	192 64.0%	42 14.0%	26 8.7%	40 13.3%	3.440	Accept
3	My job performance suffers due to the high workload I experience.	170 27.0%	137 45.7%	5 1.7%	55 18.3%	3.243	Accept
4	I find it challenging to maintain a work-life balance because of my teaching responsibilities.	127 42.3%	123 41.0%	46 15.3%	4 1.3%	3.070	Accept
5	The stress from my workload negatively impacts my enthusiasm for teaching.	95 31.7%	141 47.0%	54 18.0%	10 3.3%	3.703	Accept
Weighted Average Mean: 3.41							
B: Lack of Resources							
1	The lack of teaching materials and resources hinders my ability to deliver quality instruction.	139 46.3%	147 49.0%	11 3.7%	3 1.0%	3.460	Accept
2	I feel that inadequate resources limit my effectiveness in the classroom.	147 49.0%	145 48.3%	7 2.3%	1 0.3%	3.493	Accept
3	My job performance is affected because I do not have access to necessary educational tools.	127 42.3%	123 41.0%	46 15.3%	4 1.3%	3.070	Accept
4	I often find myself improvising due to the lack of resources available to me.	192 64.0%	42 14.0%	26 8.7%	40 13.3%	3.440	Accept
5	Insufficient resources lead to increased stress and decreased job satisfaction.	170 27.0%	137 45.7%	5 1.7%	55 18.3%	3.243	Accept
Weighted Average Mean: 3.34							

C: Overcrowded Classroom							
1	The size of my classroom makes it difficult for me to provide individual attention to students.	187 62.3%	108 36.0%	4 1.3%	1 0.3%	3.518	Agreed
2	Large class sizes contribute to my feelings of stress and burnout.	165 55.0%	90 30.0%	10 3.3%	35 11.7%	3.407	Agreed
3	I believe that managing a large classroom negatively impacts my teaching performance.	139 46.3%	147 49.0%	11 3.7%	3 1.0%	3.460	Agreed
4	The challenges of teaching in a large classroom reduce my effectiveness as an educator.	147 49.0%	145 48.3%	7 2.3%	1 0.3%	3.493	Agreed
5	I feel that large class sizes hinder my ability to create a positive learning environment.	160 53.3%	80 26.7%	12 4.0%	48 16.0%	2.170	Agreed
Weighted Average Mean: 3.21							
Overall Weighted Average Mean: 3.32							

Table 2 shows the joint contribution of stress variables of workload, lack of resources, and overcrowded classroom to teacher job performance in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The table indicates that there is significant joint contribution of workload, lack of resources, and overcrowded classroom to teacher job performance in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. ($F(3) = 1782.747$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.768$ $P < 0.05$), in public secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria. This implies that, the combination of workload, lack of resources, and overcrowded classroom will jointly predict the teacher job performance in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Thus the hypothesis is rejected.

Table 2: Regression Analysis showing joint contribution of Regression coefficient of Stress Variables (Workload, Lack of Resources and Overcrowded Classroom)

ANOVA						
Model	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Remark
Regression	38035.788	3	5307.158	1782.747	.000 ^b	
Residual	1254.873	296	1.021			Sig
Total	39290.660	299				

$R = 0.748^a$

$R \text{ Square} = 0.768$

Adjusted $R \text{ Square} = 0.768$

Std. Error of the Estimate = 1.21510

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Teachers

b. Predictors: (Constant), Other Welfare Packages, Administrative Duties Workload, ExtraCurricularActivities1, Salaries, Class Size

Discussion of Findings

The result of the study revealed that the level of teacher job performance in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria is low. This is in alignment with the submission of Atanda (2011), who found that the level of teachers job performance is very low. In Addition to this, the findings are also in agreement with the findings of

Ololube (2013) who found that the level of teachers job performance in public secondary schools was low due to some overcrowded classroom.

The result of the study found that there was significant relationship between workload involvement and academic outcome of students. This was in alignment with the submission of Akpe (2018) who also found out that there was significant relationship between stress workload and teachers job performance.

The result of the study found that the extent to which remuneration influence teachers performance is high and it has significant effect on their performance in secondary schools in Oyo State. This is in agreement with the findings of Amu (2023) who found that workload and remuneration has significant contribution to the academic outcome of students in public secondary schools. In the same vain, this was in alignment with the submission of Emunemu (2018) who submitted that remuneration has a significant effect on the professional performance of teachers.

The result of the study found that the extent other welfare packages influence the performance of teachers in Secondary Schools in Oyo State is high and it has high significant contribution to their performance. This is in agreement with the findings of Ekundayo (2019) who found that there was significant relationship between other welfare packages such as compensation, allowances and bonuses and the performance of teachers in secondary schools. Similarly, Ekundayo (2019) also submitted in his findings that there was significant relationship between welfare packages in terms of motivation and the performance of teachers.

Conclusion

Based on the findings from the study, the following conclusion was derived: All the stress variables (workload, lack of resources, and overcrowded classroom) have negative effect on teacher job performance in Ekiti State. There is significant joint contribution Stress of workload, lack of resources, and overcrowded classroom) to teacher job performance in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Work stress variables jointly contributed to teacher job performance in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends that:

1. There should be a reduction in the tasks given to teachers per time to reduce workload.
2. There should be more classrooms and the students- teacher ratio should be reduced to 30:1 to avoid overcrowded classrooms in the school.

3. Teachers should ensure that time to rest to avoid burnout
4. Adequate resources should be made available in the school to manage and reduce work stress.

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