



Workload Stressors And Health Status Of Secondary School Teachers In South-East Senatorial District Of Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the workload stressors and health status of secondary school teachers in South-East Senatorial District of Rivers State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey research design was used. The population for the study consisted of all the 1,647 senior secondary school teachers in South-East Senatorial District of Rivers State with a sample size of 270. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Data was analyzed using, mean, and standard deviation. The finding of the study showed that the grand mean = 2.56 was lesser than the criterion mean of 3.0 which indicates that the level of stress experienced by secondary school teachers had a low influence on their health. The workload stressors found include: number of subjected allocated to each teacher, large class size, number of classes given to teachers to teach, assessment and writing weekly lesson plan. The result also showed a significant difference between gender and stress level as the p-value = 0.01 was lesser than 0.05. It was concluded that, the secondary school teachers in South-East Senatorial District of Rivers State experienced low level of stress which has a low influence on their health. It was recommended that the school administrators' device means of creating and maintaining optimal stress levels.

Keywords: health status, workload stressors, secondary school, teachers

INTRODUCTION

Stress can emanate from different sources among teachers. The extensive nature of the teaching job and the central role played by teaching personnel in creating an atmosphere that fosters learning among students can enhance stress among them. Baraza and Simatwa (2016) showed from their study that 10.9% of teachers' stress level was due to employment factors specifically, workload was found to have a high influence on teachers' stress. Felteo (2015) revealed three major sources of stressors which include student, assessment and time. Students factors such as student attitude and unpredictability of having to deal with disruptive students; school based assessment system, not enough resources, pressure from administration, constant expectations of immediate results and reports, and ever increasing administrative task demands. In the vein, Zedan (2012) identified some workload stressors among teachers which include overloaded class rooms, disdain of pupils for class assignments, long teaching hours, overloaded study program and integration of pupils with special needs. Likewise, Olaitan, Oyerinde, Obiyemi and Kayode (2010) revealed that the teachers' major sources of stress were curriculum, marking, pupils, supervision / teaching, and teaching environment.

However, it was reported from the study of Anbu (2015) that, female secondary school teachers have more stress than the male secondary school teachers. The reason is that female teachers apart from guiding the school students, they have to look after their family members, they are not able to allocate equal weight to working as well as to the family, and hence this results in stress. Generally, the teaching job is not without stress though, the conditions under which the teachers carry out their duty

can either aggravate or alleviate stress related outcomes which can have serious consequences on the mental, psychological and physical health of teachers (Adeoye, 2002). It is based on this background that this study examined the workload stressors and health status of secondary school teachers in South-East Senatorial District of Rivers State.

Research Questions

This study provided answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of stress experienced by secondary school teachers in South-East Senatorial District of Rivers State?
2. What is the influence of stress on the health status of secondary school teachers in South-East Senatorial District of Rivers State?
3. What is the difference in stress level based on gender of secondary school teachers in South-East Senatorial District of Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses postulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between stress level and gender of secondary school teachers in South-East Senatorial District of Rivers State.
2. There is no significant relationship between stress level and health status of secondary school teachers in South-East Senatorial District of Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey design was adopted as the research design for this study. The population for this study comprised of all the 1,647 senior secondary school teachers in South-East Senatorial District of Rivers State (Rivers State Senior Secondary Schools Board, 2019). The simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 270 teachers which is about 16% of the total population. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled, “Workload stressors and Health Status Questionnaire (WSHSQ) among secondary school teachers”. The researcher employed the help of two research assistants in the administration of the questionnaire to the respondents. Introduction of self and purpose of the study was made by the researcher, questions asked were answered and willing respondents were administered the questionnaire for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 23.0. The analysis was based on 257 because not all copies of the questionnaire were retrieved due to the time frame hence the return rate was 95.1%. Data were presented using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation while inferential statistics such as z-test and Chi-square at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

The results of the study are presented in table 1-3 below:

Table 1: Level of stress experienced by secondary school teachers

SN	Items	Positive F(%)	Negative F(%)	Total
1	Upset by something happening unexpectedly	184(71.6)	73(28.4)	257(100)
2	Unable to control the important things in your life	124(48.2)	133(51.8)	257(100)
3	Nervous and stressed	152(59.1)	105(40.9)	257(100)
4	Could not cope with all the things that you had to do	147(57.2)	110(42.8)	257(100)
5	Angered because of things that happened that were outside your control	150(58.4)	107(41.6)	257(100)
6	Thinking about things that you have to accomplish	203(79.0)	54(21.0)	257(100)
7	Difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them	119(46.3)	138(53.7)	257(100)
8	Dealt successfully with day-to-day problems and annoyances	181(70.4)	76(29.6)	257(100)
9	Effectively coping with important changes that were occurring in your life?	222(86.4)	35(13.6)	257(100)
10	Confident about your ability to handle your personal problems	213(82.9)	44(17.1)	257(100)
11	Things were going your way	170(66.1)	87(33.9)	257(100)
12	Dealt successfully with irritating life hassles	182(70.8)	75(29.2)	257(100)
13	Able to control the way you spend your time	208(80.9)	49(19.1)	257(100)
	Average	173(67.3)	84(32.7)	257(100)

Table 1 shows the level of stress experienced by the respondents. The finding of the study showed that the secondary school teachers experienced low level of stress as shown in the average that, only 84(32.7%) reacted negatively to stressful situations while 173(67.3%) were positive about it.

Table 2: Workload stressors among secondary school teachers

Items	Mean	Std
Too many number of subjects	3.87	.93
Large class size	3.81	1.05
Teaching too many classes	3.74	.99
Assessment (test and examination) of students is one major stressful event	3.57	1.13
Writing weekly lesson plan is stressful for me	4.63	1.15
The workload given to me is a major source of stress for me as a teacher	4.04	1.06
Grand mean/std	3.94	1.15

Table 2 revealed the workload stressors among secondary school teachers on a 5 point Likert Scale. The result showed that the grand mean = 3.94 is greater than the criterion mean = 3.0 which indicates that there are workload stressors among secondary school teachers. Such factors include: number of subjects allocated to each teacher, large class size, number of classes given to teachers to teach, assessment and writing weekly lesson plan.

Table 3: Influence of stress on the health status of secondary school teachers

SN	Items	Mean	Std Dev.
1	I experience increased heart rate because of the stress I face at work	2.45	1.21
2	I always feel tired (fatigue) easily because of the excessive workload on me as a teacher	2.56	1.23
3	I never had hypertension before I starting teaching but now I experience it due to the stress I always pass through in my working place	2.53	1.17
4	I experience stomach ulcer because of the long hours I spend in moving from one class to the other to teach without having enough time to sit down and eat	2.58	1.09
5	I have carpal tunnel syndrome because of the numerous writing activities both on book and board	2.67	1.21
	Grand mean/std	2.56	1.18

Table 3 showed the influence of stress on the health status of the respondents. The result revealed that the grand mean = 2.56 is lesser than the criterion mean = 3.0 which indicates that the level of stress experienced by secondary school teachers had a low influence on their health.

Table 4: Z-test results showing the significant difference between gender and stress level among secondary school teachers in South-East Senatorial District

Group	N	Mean	SD	Df	Z-cal	p-value	Decision
Female	166	1.15	0.36	255	1.28	0.01	Rejected
Male	91	1.09	0.30				

*Significant. $p < 0.05$

Table 4 revealed the z-test analysis of significant difference between stress level and gender of secondary school teachers. The result of the study showed a significant difference as the p-value = 0.01 is lesser than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between stress level and gender of secondary school teachers in South-East Senatorial District of Rivers State is rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The finding of the study showed that the secondary school teachers experienced low level of stress as shown in the average that, 84(32.7%) reacted negatively to stressful situations while 173(67.3%) were positive about it. This finding was not expected as it was conceived that teaching was a stressful work. The finding of this study is in line with that of Beckley (2011) which showed that, over 30% of teachers considered teaching to be stressful. The finding of this study is similar to that of Hadi, Naing, Daud, Nordin and Sulong (2009) where the prevalence of stress was reported as thirty four percent. The finding of this study corroborates that of Shbeir (2009) who noted that, stress can manifest itself in either a positive or negative way and that stress is an unpleasant negative feeling that result from a heavy workload and work environment that affects or hamper the work environment. The finding of this study is different from the study of Sprenger (2011) which showed that, one hundred percent of teachers interviewed for the study reported that the teaching profession is stressful, with seventy-two percent describing the profession as extremely or very stressful. The finding of this study is also at variance with that of Boyland (2011) which showed that, a large majority of teachers were experiencing moderate to high levels of job stress. In addition, most of the experienced teachers indicate more stress now than in previous years. The finding of this study also negates that of Gebrekirstos (2015) which showed that, all the secondary school teachers experienced a high level of occupational stress. The variation found between the previous studies and the present one might be due to the variations in the study area and the population studied there is the possibility that the teachers in the different studies were not exposed to the same working condition.

Stress is a major factor that influenced the teachers' health status. The result of this study showed that the work related factors responsible for stressful experiences among secondary school teachers include: workload, number of subjects allocated to each teacher, large class size, number of classes given to teachers to teach, assessment and writing weekly lesson plan. This finding is not surprising because a large number of studies show that teachers are exposed to a workload that results particularly in stress. The finding of this study is in keeping with that of Baraza, Simatwa, and Gogo (2016) which showed that, there are several occupational stressors for teachers which include: job overload, job control, role ambiguity and conflict, pressures of the teacher's role, inadequate resources, and poor working conditions. The finding of this study is also in keeping with that of Montgomery and Rupp (2005) which revealed that the main sources of teacher stress stem from maintaining discipline in the classroom, general time pressures, workload demands, large amounts of change, assessments and being exposed to generally poor working conditions. The finding of this study is also similar to that of Ngari, Ndungu, Mwonya, Ngumi, Mumiukha, Chepchieng and Kariuki (2013) which showed that, more than half of the respondents recorded high levels of stress resulting from their school workload and other responsibilities. The similarity found between the previous studies and present study might be due to the fact that teaching irrespective of where it is carried out has some roles embedded in it which contribute to stress.

The finding of this study showed that there was a significant difference in stress level based on gender of secondary school teachers. 26(15.7%) of the females experienced high level of stress whereas 9(9.9%) of male teachers experience high level of stress. The finding of this study gives credence to that of Antoniou, Ploumpi, and Ntalla (2013) where it was found that, female teachers experience more stress and lower personal accomplishment than men due to their gender roles both in the family and society. The finding of this study corroborates that of Anbu (2015) who noted that, the female secondary school teachers have more stress than the male secondary school teachers. The reason is that female teachers apart from guiding the terminal stage school students, have to look after their family members, they were not able to allocate equal weight age to working as well as family environment, hence this result in enhanced stress level. The problems of teachers particularly females seem compounded because of the sex-role stereotyping in which power and independence are not traditionally assigned to the Nigerian women. However, the findings of this study is contrary to that of Tashi (2014) which showed that male teachers faced more stress than their counterparts. The variation in the study area and population might be implicated for the divergence in the two studies.

The findings of this study showed that the level of stress experienced by secondary school teachers had a low relationship with their health and the tested hypothesis showed that, there was no significant relationship between stress level and health status of secondary school teachers. The finding of this study is in tandem with that of Dankade, Bello and Deba (2016) which showed that, secondary school

teachers expressed some level of stress and were faced with problems such as: sickness, boredom, anxiety, indiscipline and frustration causing them lots of stress. The finding of this study is not in agreement with that of Samad, Hashim, Moin and Abdullah (2010) which showed that there was a significant association between stress levels and mental health status. This divergent might be due to the variations in the study area and sample size used in the different studies.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that, the secondary school teachers in South-East Senatorial District of Rivers State experienced low level of stress and the workload stressors include: workload, number of subjected allocated to each teacher, large class size, number of classes given to teachers to teach, assessment and writing weekly lesson plan. However, there was no significant relationship between stress level and health status of secondary school teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the outcome of the study:

1. School administrators should device techniques of creating and maintaining optimal stress levels among teachers for purposes of improving and maintaining their performance.
2. The government should give allowance to teachers for their health and medical upkeep this will help them cater for any health issue arising due to stress in their job.
3. The government should employ more teachers to ensure that, a teacher is not given a work overload due to insufficient number of teachers in the school.

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