

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRESS AND SELF-EFFICACY ON POST PRIMARY
SCHOOL TEACHERS IN ADO-EKITI**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between stress and self-efficacy on post primary school teachers within Ado-Ekiti metropolis. Opinions of 415 teachers were randomly sampled using a battery of test- Teacher Stress Inventory and Self-Efficacy Scale. One hypothesis was generated for the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the generated hypothesis. Results revealed that there was a significant negative relationship between self-efficacy and perceived job stress among post primary school teachers { $r(413) = -.85; P < .05$ }. The implications of the findings were discussed. It was recommended that stakeholders in educational sector should employ more teachers to reduce teachers work load and thereby promoting teachers' efficacy.

Keywords: Self-efficacy, Stress, Teachers

INTRODUCTION

Teachers occupy a central position in the educational system of Nigeria, because of this the National Policy on Education admits: "no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers". However, there is a wide gap between policy formulation and policy implementation. This gap has resulted to disheartening consequences and unwarranted failure.

The major problem with production of teachers has to do with getting persons of the right personality traits, calibre, orientation, less vulnerable to stress, highly efficacious and emotional intelligence to be interested in teaching, opting for it and getting committed to it, rather than those who want it as a last resort or stepping stone to other more lucrative jobs. Despite all efforts to recruit and retain qualified secondary school teachers by various governments (federal and state) the teaching profession is replete with teachers who lack job satisfaction, career commitment and organizational commitment (Adeyemo, 2001; Nwagwu & Salami, 1999; as cited in Adeyemo, 2007).

There is growing concern among educators about teachers' mental health. Job-related stress is an important factor in teachers' motivation and retention. Teaching once was considered a rather routine job; however, within the last decade it has become an increasingly complex profession for regular as well as special education teachers (Fimian & Blanton, 1987). Issues such as litigation, liability, accountability, tenure, unions, along with increasingly diverse responsibilities and fast changing ideas have made teaching more stressful. Consequently, there is a soaring interest in studying the relationship between stress and self-efficacy in recent times. Studies have shown that stress is strongly related to self-efficacy (Ross & Normah 2008). Relatedly, using the organizational frustration scale, Jex and Gudanowski (1992) examined the role of self-efficacy beliefs and work stress. They found that individual's efficacy beliefs were significantly correlated with level of organizational frustration, indicating that those with less belief in their abilities at their job suffered more frustration than those with high efficacy beliefs.

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Like other forms of occupational stress, teaching can have serious implications for the healthy functioning of the individual as well as for the organization in which the individual serves. At a personal level, teaching related stress can affect a teacher's health, well-being, and performance (Larchick & Chance, 2004). From an organizational perspective, it translates to unproductive employee behaviour such as alienation, apathy and absenteeism (Gugliemi and Tatrow, 1998 as cited in Tsai, et al, 2006). More so, teachers are not immune to stress (Larchick et al, 2004). But the relationship between work-demand of a highly technological complex society and personal life-stressors and pressures has contributed to an increasing teacher crisis in schools (Emener, 1988). Societal dynamics and increased public demand on education have produced adverse stressful classroom situation that have led to increased emotional and physical disabilities among teachers (Emener, 1988; as cited in Larchick and Chance, 2004).

In order to accomplish the educational philosophy, mission and clients charter, the teachers have to work hard and give full devotion towards this career (Ross and Normah, 2008). It is therefore not surprising that teachers nowadays are more stressful due to their obligations towards educational needs, school authorities and parents' expectations. Stress reduces and lowers an individual's level of self-efficacy (Jarvis, 2002). With this, there is no doubt that teachers' efficacy is a very important factor for the improvement of education in every part of the world (Berman, Mc Laughlin, Bass, Pauly and Zellman, 1997; as cited in Cheung, 2008). This is a matter of paramount interest to all teachers, because it is one way by which teachers advance their level of performance, meet up work schedules and obtain their various work incentives such as career advancement, pay rise and promotion. Rizvi and Elliot (2005) believe that teachers' efficacy is an important dimension of teacher professionalism, together with other dimensions such as teacher practice, leadership and collaboration. When teachers are highly efficacious, their students are found to have a high level of academic achievement, autonomy and motivation, and a firm belief in their own efficacy (Lin, Gorrell, and Taylor, 2002; Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2001). Teachers who are efficacious are more likely to stay in their teaching careers, spend more time teaching, contribute greater efforts in classroom planning and organization and demonstrate greater enthusiasm for teaching. In addition, highly efficacious teachers are more responsive to the needs of students (Cheung, 2008). Higher self-efficacy reduces stress level as a cognitive vulnerability factor (Jarvis, 2002).

This study, therefore, aims at contributing to knowledge and to establish the relationship between stress and self-efficacy; to compare between levels of stress and self-efficacy with genders; and to determine the factors influencing teaching among teachers in secondary schools within Ado-Ekiti. It is also hoped that the information to be derived from the results of this study will assist the teachers and organizations in enhancing the work behaviours of the teachers thus stemming the tide of high turnover in the teaching profession. Although, over the years, several attempts have been made to solve these problems, they still remain unsolved. Studying the teachers affective characteristics however, seems to be one promising area of research that has potential for providing answers or shedding some light on the stigma (Adeyemo, 2006). Cheung (2008) noted that highly efficacious teachers are less stressful which serve as a vehicle through which the teachers' professional skills and qualifications could work to produce effective outcomes in their schools. Also observed is the fact that teachers who have high sense of efficacy visualize success scenarios that provide positive guides and supports for that performance. Those who doubt their self-efficacy visualize failure scenarios and weigh many things that can go wrong. It is difficult to achieve much due to physical and psychological factors like stress, anxiety, low self-efficacy, depression and frightening self doubt.

Furthermore, research over the years has portrayed post-primary school teachers to be more stressful which tend to appear due to emotional and fatigue manifestation as a result of heavy work load and low self-efficacy. A decrease in teachers work load was seen to be the most effective action that could be taken by schools or government to reduce teachers stress and as well increase their self-efficacy. It is based on these problems that this study seeks to find the relationship between stress and self-efficacy of teachers in post-primary schools in Ado-Ekiti and also to determine whether there is any relationship between stress and self-efficacy among secondary school teachers in Ado-Ekiti.

Methodology

Research Design

This study is an ex post facto research type in which the researcher is not interested in manipulating independent variables. 415 post primary school teachers in Ado-Ekiti participated in this study, which consist of 253 male (61.0%) and 123(39.0%) female (61.0%) teachers with average age of 37.59 years. The sample also made up of 113 single respondents (27.2%), 281 married respondents (67.7%) and 21 respondents who were divorced (5.1%). The sample was drawn from seven schools within Ado-Ekiti metropolis, using stratified sampling technique. Participants were selected based on some social variables such as sex, marital status, age and teaching experience.

According to information from the Teaching Service Board and the Ministry of Education, there are over 2,500 Secondary School teachers within Ado-Ekiti Metropolis. Brog and Gall (1979); Gay (1992) as cited in Larchick and Chance (2004) indicated that a sample of 10% of the population is sufficient for a survey research. Therefore, the 415 participants meet your requirements for the study.

Sampling Method

A stratified sampling method was employed to two predetermined schools in each of the 15 locations of the study before the actual respondents were sampled through simple random sampling technique.

Instruments

The instruments used for this study are the Self-Efficacy Scale (SES) and Teachers Stress Inventory (TSI).

Self-Efficacy Scale (SES)

The scale consists of 10 items. It was developed in 1995 by Schwarzer, Schmitz, & Daytner in German, while the English version was in 1999 (Schwarzer, Schmitz, and Daytner, 1999). The scale was developed to measure teacher self-efficacy. The self-efficacy scale is designed to measure the social component of self-efficacy from both interpersonal and intrapersonal perspectives. The instrument consists of 10 items. For each item there is a four choice response of Likert type, namely, Not at all true = 1, Barely true = 2, Moderately true = 3, Exactly true = 4. The score of each of the 10 items are summed to give a total score. The score on this scale reflects the strength of an individual's self-efficacy belief. Scores higher than the norms indicate adequate and high social self-efficacy while scores lower than the norms indicate inadequate or poor or low self-efficacy. Thus, the higher the score, the greater is the individual's sense of self-efficacy. The Self-Efficacy scale was tested and found reliable at .86 and with the validity of .43 from the pilot study conducted

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Teachers Stress Inventory (TSI)

This is a psychological test developed by Fimian (1985) and adopted for use by Ross and Normah, (2008). The teacher stress inventory is easily hand-scored. It consists of 10 stress subscales namely: time management, work-related stressors, professional distress investment, emotional manifestations, gastronomical manifestations; each subscale being composed of three or eight items.

Teachers Stress Inventory (TSI) is composed of 40 stress related questions and takes about 25 minutes to complete. It is self-administered with simple directions for completion provided on the form. The respondents completed the inventory by ticking the appropriate answer on the 1 to 5 rating scale. It was administered on an anonymous basis.

The scale consists of 10 subscales. The 10 subscales comprise 40 items. Teachers who participated in this research rated each item on 5 – point scale ranging from 1 to 5. Namely; No Stress = 1 represent Disagree Strongly, Mild Stress = 2 represent Disagree Moderately, Moderate Stress = 3, Much Stress = 4 and Extreme Stress = 5 represent Agree Strongly. Each score will be summed. The score lower or below 100 is Mild Stress, scores between 100 –149 is Moderate Stress and the score of 150 and above shows High or Extreme Stress. The higher the scores, the higher the stress and the lower the scores the lesser the stress. The Teacher Stress Inventory was tested and found reliable at .81 and the validity of .42.

Procedure for data collection

Twenty post primary schools in Ado-Ekiti metropolis were selected for this study through stratified sampling method. Twenty one (21) participants were sampled in each of the twenty (20) secondary schools selected for the study. Participants were selected through simple random sampling method into sub-group of predetermined gender, age, marital status, and teaching experience. The questionnaires were administered to participants while some staff members of the respective schools assisted in the collection.

Method of Data Analysis

The generated hypotheses were tested using Pearson r correlation and independent t-test. The biodata information were analysed using simple frequency and percentage. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 18 was used to ensure accuracy.

RESULTS

Hypothesis One states that there will be a significant the relationship between self-efficacy and job stress among post primary school teachers

Table 1: Summary of Pearson r correlation showing the relationship between self-efficacy and job stress among post primary school teachers

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	r	p
Self-efficacy	415	22.15	7.07	413	-.85	< .01
Job stress	415	102.29	43.29			

Table 1 showed that there is a significant negative relationship between self-efficacy and job stress among post primary school teachers in Ado-Ekiti {r (413)= -.85; P < .05}. This means that teachers who have high self-efficacy have low level of job stress, and teachers with low level of self-efficacy will have high level of job stress. Thus, hypothesis one which stated that there will be a significant relationship between self-efficacy and job stress among post primary school teachers is confirmed.

DISCUSSION

Hypothesis one found out that there is a significant relationship between stress and self-efficacy among secondary school teachers. This is in line with the findings of Hughes (1987) who found significant predictive association between stress and the specific variables related to personality type, demographics, and perceptions of the self. The result of the study shows that teacher time management stress and work-related stress have significant positive correlations with self-efficacy respectively. Emotional manifestation of stress has significant weak correlation with teaching performance. It appears that when a teacher is able to manage his/her time and handle the work-related stressors very well, their teaching performance is better. On the other hand, when it involves their emotion, the teachers' performance would be affected, particularly for the female teachers. Feeling insecure, vulnerable, unable to cope, depressed and anxious were found to influence the female teachers' performance (Ross and Normah, 2008).

Teachers who have low self-efficiency are bound to find it difficult in coping with stress. This explains why teachers come in and go out of the teaching profession randomly. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported that approximately 8% of teachers transfer to a different school each year and another 7% leave the profession altogether. Among the reasons given for such decisions by both groups of teachers were their dissatisfactions with pay and benefits, lack of support from administrators, and a sense that overall working conditions were not positive (NCES, 2004). The costs of teacher attrition range from disrupted continuity of the instructional program, to a constant need to mentor and assist new teachers, to the resources and time that educational administrator spend to recruit and attempt to retain new hires. Findings here justify the Cognitive Appraisal theory of stress developed by Lazarus and Folkman which emphasizes two ways of stress. The theory suggests that an individual's stress comes from the environment and the individual. This shows that there exists a relationship between stress and self-efficacy. There are different levels of self-efficacy between people, which may influence how they feel and how they behave under certain circumstances. A low sense of self-efficacy tends to be associated with depression, stress, anxiety and low self-esteem. These individuals harbour pessimistic thoughts about their accomplishments and personal developments (Schwarzer, 1992). Those who have higher level of self-efficacy have greater motivation, a self-perception of competence, and are more optimistic in their approach to a variety of settings.

Ross and Normah (2008) found that self-efficacy has significant positive correlation with stress particularly time management stress and work-related stress. But also report weak negative correlation with emotional manifestation. Psychological responses and emotional reactions to situations play an important role in self-efficacy. Moods, emotional states, physical reactions, and stress level can all impact how a person feels about their personal abilities in a particular situation. A person who becomes extremely nervous before speaking in public may develop a weak sense of self-efficacy in these situations. However, Bandura also notes "it is not the sheer intensity of emotion but rather how they are perceived and interpreted (Bandura, 1994). By learning how to minimize stress and elevate mood when facing difficult or challenging tasks, people can improve their sense of self-efficacy. Apart from factors which predispose teachers to stress this could lead to low or high level of self-efficacy. The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study.

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Developing meaningful solutions for the problem of teacher stress and self-efficacy is more complex than it may appear. It involves change in human attitudes and behaviour, a type of change very difficult to bring about, even when an individual's job satisfaction and physical health are at stake. It is one thing to list stressors and possible solutions; it is another thing to act on what we already know to be in our best interest. A "holistic approach" to the problem of teacher stress and self-efficacy recognize the complexity of this problem. Mind and body are viewed as interconnected. Thoughts, feelings, and physiological responses are related. Each of us is seen as ultimately responsible for our health and happiness because we make numerous decisions each day that influence to a large extent what we will become, both emotionally and physically.

The holistic approach assumes that problems will be resolved most effectively when they are approached on several fronts simultaneously. Consequently, teachers need a diverse set of skills and understandings related to stress management and self-efficacy enhancement. These skills and understandings can be defined and taught. Osipow (1990), in discussing a general orientation to the improvement of occupational mental health, suggests: We should use a "deliberate psychological education" approach (Sprinthall, 1972) to explicitly teach people some of the principles of affective work attitudes that might reduce job stress that is induced internally. In other words, giving people a greater awareness of the sources of their control over their work environment would be potentially helpful.

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