

An Examination of Work Related Stress and Job Performance among Secondary School Principals

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Abstract

The study investigated work-related stress and job-performance of secondary school principals in Delta State. the design was the expost facto. Population consisted of public secondary schools principals and teachers. The total number of the public secondary school are four hundred and sixty-two (462) and all principals were the sample used for the study but three hundred and thirteen (313) were randomly selected form the twenty-five local government areas of Delta state. Questionnaire was the instrument for the study which was validated for content and language Reliability for two instrument yield a reliability co-efficient of .82 and .70 using the spearman Brown product moment formula by employing split reliability method. The data was analyzed using frequency, percentages and person product moment correlation, testing for significance at 0.5. The findings revealed that most of the secondary school principals experienced moderate and high stress. The job performance levels of the principals were of good and very good levels. There was a significant relationship between the work-related stress level and job performance of the school principals. The study recommended appropriate policy changes by the Ministry Education to alleviate work-related stress. Organising workshops and seminars on stress management for secondary school principal. There should be regular transfer for principals. This will help in reducing stress that could be inherent in one environment and improve performance since changes sometimes have positive effects.

Keywords: Work-related stress, job performance, secondary school, principals, public schools.

Introduction

Secondary education is the next level of education after the foundational level of primary education. This level of education is the preparation stage of education that guide every child into his carrier prospect in the future. Secondary education level in Nigeria is a critical stage in the country's education system, preparing students for post-secondary education or the work-force. The chief administrator and academic leader of a secondary is referred to as a principal. The principal is responsible for the daily school operations, academic programmes and managing the staff and students.

Secondary school Principals play a pivotal role in shaping the educational landscape in supervising of the students. Also the school principal is involved in the lives of the teachers and the broader school community. The school principals have the overall responsibility of the schools in ensuring good balance academic programmes staff and students' progress and discipline, adequate and proper supervision of work as well as effective leadership.

The school principals operates in environment that are bedeviled by a multitude of problems; a few of which include overcrowding of students beyond normal capacities, problems with school plans, un-equipped and inadequate teachers to cope with the workload, students with poor academic background, poor funding that affects management, students negative attitude towards learning and parental ambivalence towards the educational well-being of their children. Other problems include poor attitude of teachers towards work and the school principals' personal problems, role conflicts, societal problems and pressures, domestic worries and so on. As opened by

(Alasomuka (2019) a conducive working environment can be created by principal and be enjoyed by students, teaching and non-teaching staff. But on the other hand, un-conducive school environment may cause stress to the school principals as stated by Alasomuka (2019). A school administrator can experience stress if the environment is not conducive therefore school environment must be well organized and made conducive for the school principals to perform the daily work as it relate to teachers, students and visitors to the school.

School principals have a lot of responsibilities placed on them. These expectations are many and they vary. As school managers, they are at least regarded as those supervising the delivery lines and activities of individuals within the school system. The school administrator must ensure that teachers get the appropriate professional development According to Kalkan (2020) the school administrator must give recognition in ensuring human capital development by providing support for teachers. These are the roles the school administrator play in curriculum and instructional practices. Thessin and Louis (2020) stated that the school principals' role is to continue to evolve and be well versed in curriculum and instructional practices.

In recent times, there are changes in other school, which has increased complexity and dimension for the school principals. The school principals is involved in collaborating with other stakeholders such as the community to access resources from the immediate environment and school culture (Nurdick et al, 2019). Furthermore, the school principals are seen as those whole examples transcend their precepts at work and play inside the office/school. They show example in patience, amiability, kindness, considerations and genuineness of interest in the problems of staff and students. The multiple roles played by secondary school principals from administrative duties, to running and controlling students and staff affairs, managing of facilities, supervision of instructions and classroom management and communicating educational policies.

All these can be viewed against the background that roles of the school principals have changed overtime. It has been charged and overloaded with expectations to the point at which if the school principals were to meet them all, they would risk the burn out which is affecting so many. As Ajayi (1995) pointed out, makes the school administrator valuable to stress which could be mild or major depending on environmental factors as well as the personality of the individual executive. This then is termed work-related stress of the school administrator.

Stress has been defined by various authors and in several perspectives and as it relates to work. Stress occurs when the demands of a situation are seen to be greater than the individual's ability to cope with such demands. Stress is the adverse reactions which could be psychological and physical which occurs in an individual as a result of not being able to cope with the demand on him or her (Cole 2016). When an individual is under pressure and the inability to deal with such pressure and reactions to the pressure is said to be stress as opined (Khan & Khan, 2015). How an individual reacts or perceives a situation will determine where the situation is stress producing or a threat to his ability to cope. Stress has become a serious issue to contemporary school principals due to frequent changes in the administrative responsibilities. In adjusting to new responsibilities in a changing environment, the job performance of school principals could be affected. Stress can be either helpful or harmful to job performance depending upon the amount of it. It should be noted that manageable level of stress is needed for job performance. As observed by Zizinga (2012). Stress could positively affect the performance of professionals at work. Pressures of heavy workloads and deadlines act as positive pressure which enhances the quality of their work and the satisfaction professionals get from job performance, Decroon et al (2014) in the findings of their study noted that moderate level of stress lead to higher employees' performance. In the early stage, job stress can 'rev-up' the body and enhance performance in workplace. However if this condition is allowed

to unchecked and the body is revved up further, this performance ultimately declines. Stress affects job performance positively enhancing the individual performance but too much stress decreases performance and may have harmful effect to the individual. They have been good number of researches and job-stress and job performance relationship. Sulliran and Bhagut (2016) reported that moderated level of stress stimulate the body and increase the ability of individual which lead to better performance of their tasks and more intensely and more rapidly.

The administration of schools in Nigeria in the early years of educational development was not as complex as they are now. Since the expansion of education in Nigeria, the administration of school has assumed wider responsibilities and managerial complexity. The rapid expansion of the school population in a rapidly development country like Nigeria has increased the school principals administrative task of student personnel, staff personnel, physical facilities finance and business management, school and community. On daily basis, the school administrative are involved with managing the activities of the school. These includes student continual staff control and effective executive of professional duties, effective utilization of available human and material resources. All these could improve administrative demand on the principal.

Considering the unique position occupied by the school administrator and implication of work-related stress for employees work performance through employees dissatisfaction lowered productivity and lowered emotional and physical health of the employees, thus this research become necessary. Hence the problem of this study is to what extent is work-related stress affecting the job performance of secondary school principals in Delta State.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to find out the relationship between the work-related stress and job performance of secondary school principals in Delta State. Specifically, the study:

1. Investigated the sources of stress that influenced the secondary school principals' job performance.
2. Investigated the levels of secondary school principals work related stress
3. Investigated the levels of job performance of secondary school principals.
4. Investigated the relationship between work-related stress levels of secondary school principals.

Research Questions

The following research question were raised to guide this study.

1. What are the sources of work related stress that influence secondary school principal's job performance?
2. What are the work related stress levels that influence principal's Job performance?
3. What are the job-performance levels of secondary school principals in secondary schools?
4. What is the summary of work-related stress and job performance levels of secondary school principals?
5. What is the relationship between work-related stress and job performance of level secondary school principals?

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant relationship between the stress levels and job performance levels among secondary school principals in Delta State.

Methods

The design of the study was Expost-Facto. Expost-facto research design involves trying to work backward to establish causes after the fact. According to (Flick 2018) expost-facto design more explicitly as a research in which independent variables or variables have already occurred and the independent variable or variables are studied in retrospect for their possible relationships to and effect on dependent variable or variables. Populations of the study consisted of four hundred and six-two (462) secondary school principals and teachers in Delta State in the public secondary schools. The sample of three hundred and fifty eight was got through stratified random sampling using a list obtain school list of Delta State (deltastatemobse.net). The researcher used two sets of structured questionnaire titled:

- a. School Principals' stress questionnaire (SASQ) made up of forty-two items
- b. Teachers' assessment of school Principals' job performance questionnaire (TASAJ PQ) made up of twenty-eight items.

The questionnaire was administered on respondents with the help of trained research assistants. The questionnaire comprised of two parts 'A' and 'B' section A addressed the demographic information of the respondents while section B sought to obtain information on work-related stress of school administrator and the other on assessment of job-performance answered by teachers. The research instrument was validated by specialist in the area of educational management. The test re-test technique of assessing reliability of instrument was used. The two instrument yielded a reliability co-efficient of 88 and 70 respectively which was found to be reliable and adequate to conduct the investigation. The data was analyzed by the use of frequency, simple percentages and Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics.

Results

Research question one

What are the sources of work-related stress that influence the secondary school administrators' job performance? In order to answer the above research question, a list of specific sources of stress were provided and the respondents were requested to indicate on four point scale, the number that best reflected the degree to which the particular statement was a source of stress at work.

Rating Scale

Not Stressful = 1

Mildly Stressful = 2

Moderately Stressful = 3

Highly Stressful = 4

Frequency and Percentage were used to analyze the data. Item in which more than 59% or above 151 of the respondents indicated not stressful was considered as not a source of stress. Any item where more than 50% of respondents indicate it as mildly stressful, moderately stressful and highly stressful was considered as a source of stress.

S/N	School Administrators' possible sources/causes of work - related stress.	2	3	4	'		Rank Order
	Shortage of funds to run the school	69(22%)	145(46%)	93(30%)	309	98	1 st
2	Inadequate school infrastructure facilities	49(15%)	125(40%)	130(42%)	304	97	2 nd
3	Attitude of staff towards their official duties	56(18%)	116(37%)	132(42%)	304	97	2 nd

4	Lack of instructional materials for effective teaching and learning	80(26%)	137(34%)	92(28%)	301	96	4 th
5	Hectic and difficult tasks	92(28%)	148(47%)	59(19%)	300	95	5 th
6	Heavy work load	94(30%)	117(37%)	89(28%)	300	95	5 th
7	Economic and financial problems	72(23%)	150(47%)	78(25%)	300	95	5 th
8	The burden of supervisory school activities	96(30%)	143(46%)	60(19%)	299	95	5 th
9	Non-availability of subvention to maintain /renovate existing facilities	126(40%)	120 (38%)	52(16%)	298	94	9 th
10	Pressure from teachers	67(21%)	138(44%)	92(29%)	297	94	9 th
11	Student's poor attitude to work	78(25%)	136(43%)	82(26%)	296	94	9 th
12	Having to manage understaffed school	98(31%)	143(46%)	52(17%)	294	94	9 th
13	The level of indiscipline among staff	84(27%)	136(43%)	74(24%)	294	94	9 th
14	Lack of tables/chairs offices/ for teachers	101 (32%)	101(32%)	91(21%)	293	93	14 th
15	Long working hours	106(34%)	130(41%)	56(18%)	292		14 th
16	Inconsistency in the educational policies	94(30%)	126(40%)	72(23%)	292	93	14 th
17	Work with deadline from superiors	75(24%)	139(44%)	78(25%)	292	93	14 th
18	Inability to meet the demands of students	71(23%)	108(34%)	111(35%)	290	92	18 th
19	Students' poor performance external examination in	87(28%)	144(46%)	58(18%)	289	92	18 th
20	Lack of office accommodation/staffroom for teachers	122(39%)	117(37%)	47(15%)	286	91	20 th
21	Unhealthy work environment	82(20%)	127(41%)	77(24%)	286	91	20 th
22	Administrative routine	92(29%)	121(39%)	72(24%)	285	91	20 th
23	Keeping other official records	135(43%)	105(34%)	45 (14%)	285	91	20 th
24	Conflicting demand/roles between work and family,	97(31%)	145(46%)	41(13%)	283	90	24 th
25	The problem of examination malpractice among students	79(25%)	96(31%)	107(34%)	282	90	24 th
26	Poor social image	107(34%)	122(39%)	52(16%)	281	89	26 th
27	Problems of curriculum implementation	109(35%)	123 (39%)	47(15%)	279	89	26 th
28	Visit to school by inspectors and supervisors from Ministry of Education	94(30%)	135(43%)	51 (16%)	279	89	26 th
29	Visit of the Commissioner of Education to your school	81(26%)	128(41%)	70(22%)	279	89	26 th
30	Poor promotion opportunities for teachers	80(26%)	120(38%)	78(25%)	278	88	30 th
31	The impression that the school academic unsatisfactory achievements are	99(32%)	108(34%)	70(22%)	277	88	30 th
32	Administrative duties conflicting with family responsibility	90(29%)	117(37%)	70(22%)	277	88	30 th
33	The expectation of rendering proper accountability	94(31%)	133(43%)	46(15%)	277	88	30 th
34	Changes in school system	104(33%)	118(38%)	53(17%)	275	88	30 th
35	Conducting of external examination	77(24%)	115(37%)	81(26%)	274	87	35 th
36	Irregular. payment of salary/allowances	116(37%)	99(31%)	50(16%)	265	8-1	36 th
37	Problems of staff involvement in examination malpractice	64(20%)	104(33%)	97(31%)	265	84	36 th
38	Time for receiving visitors	89(28%)	127(40%)	49(16%)	265	84	36 th
39	Conducting of internal examination	104(33%)	112(36%)	46(15%)	264	84	36 th
40	Holding P.T.A. meetings	114(36%)	91(29%)	58(18%)	263	83	40 th
41	Holding staff meetings	127(40%)	85(27%)	43(14%)	255	81	41 th
42	Attending meetings, seminars/ conferences	82(26%)	118(37%)	53(17%)	253	80	42 nd

To answer this question, the various tasks which are sources of stress to the school administrators were analysed using frequency, percentages and put in rank order, to show the various tasks and their stress level. The result revealed that the stressor of shortage of fund to run the school ranked the highest with percentage of 98. This was followed by inadequate school infrastructure/facilities and attitude of staff towards their official duties with 97%. Following closely is the lack of instructional materials for effective teaching and learning. At the bottom of the rank order, as source of stress in the 42nd position, is the attending of meetings, seminars and conference with 80%.

Research question two

What are the work-related producing stress levels that influence the secondary school administrator's job performance?

In order to answer the above research question, a list of specific sources of stress were provided and the respondents were requested to indicate on four point scale the number that best reflected the degree to which the particular statement was a source of stress at work. Rating scale:

Not stressful = 1

Mildly stressful = 2

Moderately stressful = 3

Highly stressful = 4

Frequency and percentage were used to analyze the data as presented in table one.

Table 2: Frequency and percentages of school Principal's work-related stress levels

Work-Related Stress Levels	Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative
Not stressful	9	2.9	2.9
Mildly stressful	49	15.9	18.6
Moderately stressful	125	40.9	58.5
Highly stressful	130	41.5	100
Total	313	100	

Table 2 reported frequency and percentage of school Principals' stress levels. The table showed that nine (9) school Principals were not stressed representing 2.9%. Mildly stressed school Principals were 49(15.7%), 125(40.9%) were moderately stressed while the highest number of 130 (41.5%) were highly stressed.

Research question three

What are the levels of job performance of secondary school Principals?

To answer the above research question a list of specific jobs performed by school principals were provided and the respondents were requested to indicate on four point scale the number that best reflected the degree to which the particular statement described the job performance of the school principal Rating scale:

Poor performance = 1

Fair performance = 2

Good performance = 3

Very good performance = 4

Frequencies and percentages were employed to analyze the data as presented on table 3.

Table 3: Frequency and Percentages of School principals Job Performance levels.

Job Performance quality	Frequency	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Poor performance	23	7.3	7.3
Fair performance	71	22.7	30.3
Good performance	108	34.5	64.5
Very good performance	111	35.5	100
Total	313	100	

Presented on table 3 are the frequencies and percentages of school Principals jobs performance had the lowest frequency of 23 (7.3%), 71 school principals had fair performance which represented (22.7%), 108(34.5%) were of good performance while the highest frequency of 111 (35.5%) had very good performance.

Research question four

What is the summary of work-related stress and job-performance levels of secondary school Principals?

Table 4: Summary of work-related stress and job performance of secondary school principals.

Levels		Not stressful	Mildly stressful	Moderately stressful	Highly stressful	Total
Poor	Count	2	7	10	4	23
	% within job performance	8.7%	30.4%	43.5%	17.4%	100%
	% with work-related stress	22.2%	14.3%	8.0%	31.1%	7.3%
Fair	Count	1	18	33	19	71
	% within job performance	1.4%	25.4%	46.5%	26.8%	100%
	% with work-related stress	11.1%	36.7%	26.4%	14.6%	22.7%
Good	Count	1	17	38	52	108
	% within job performance	9%	15.7%	35.2%	49.5%	100%
	% with work-related stress	11.1%	34.5%	30.4%	40.0%	34.5%
Very good	Count	5	7	44	55	111
	% within job performance	4.5%	6.3%	39.6%	49.5%	100%
	% with work-related stress	55.6%	14.3%	35.2%	42.3%	34.5%
Total	Count	9	49	125	130	313
	% within job performance	2.9%	15.7%	39.7%	41.5%	100%
	% with work-related stress	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 4 shows a summary of how work-related stress levels influenced the job performance of school principals in secondary schools giving the counts and percentages of the work-related stress and the job performance levels.

Hypothesis one

There is no significant relationship between work related stress and job performance levels of secondary school principals.

Table 4: Relationship between work-related stress and job performance of secondary school principals.

Variables	X	SD	Calculated value	Critical Value
Work related stress	115.01	19.13		
			0.151	.113
Job Performance	91.17	11.7		

$P < .05$; $df = 113$

Table 4 shows the Pearson Product Moment Correlation between work related stress and job performance of secondary school principals. The mean scores for work related stress is 115.01 and the mean score for job

performance is 91.17. The calculated **P** is 0.151 and the critical **P** is .113. The critical **P** is less than the calculated **P**, therefore there is a significant relationship between work related stress and job performance of secondary school principals.

Discussion of Findings

Research questions two sought to find out the levels of stress experienced by school principals in the course of their job performance. A total of forty two sources of stress were identified which pointed out to the fact that the sources of stress are numerous. Frequency and percentage statistics were employed to identify the levels of the stress of school principals. The study revealed that nine (9) representing 2.9% of the school principals worked without experiencing stress in the performance of their work, forty-nine (49) 15.9% and one hundred and 25 (125) 40.9% experienced mild and moderate stress in the performance of their administrative duty as school principals. This finding agrees with the report of Decroon *et al* (2014) who reported that moderate level of stress lead to higher employee performance. Also, Sullian and Bhaght (2016) reported that moderate level of stress stimulate the body and increases their ability and lead to better performance of their tasks more intensely and more rapidly. One hundred and thirty (130) 41.5% school principals experienced high stress in the performance of their administrative duties. The study also revealed that the level of work-related stress experienced by secondary school principals in their job performance to be a high and moderate stress. This finding is in agreement with Alasomuka (2019) that school Principals in Rivers state experience high level of stress which were physical, tiredness, emotional strain, and mental fatigue.

Research question three determined the job performance levels of secondary school principals. This study revealed that about 70% of the secondary school principals had good and very quality job performance. This further showed that stress did not interfere with the quality of their job performance. Despite the high level of stress, their job performance was still high. Only 7.3% of the school administrator had poor performance. This is buttressed by Zizinga (2012) who stated that stress could positively affect the job performance of professionals at work. In his opinion, the positive effect of pressures in some cases may result in pressures and demands that may cause stress which introduces positive performance. Another example to him is where deadlines are used to motivate people who seem bored or unmotivated. This example is very ideal in school situations where school principals are given deadlines in enrollment of students in examinations, sending assessment report and other reports to the board or Ministry of Education.

Research question four and hypothesis one sought to find out the relationship between work related stress and job performance of secondary school principals. The analysis of data revealed that there was a significant relationship between work related stress and job performance of secondary school principals. This finding is in agreement with the study of Alasomuka (2019) which revealed that stress in appropriate amount is necessary to maximize productivity, though he reported that school principals were of the view that too much stress could affect their administrative duty output.

The result of the hypothesis showed that there was a significant between work related stress and job performance levels among secondary school principals. The result revealed that few school principals fell within the No-Stress and Mild-Stress levels. The same goes for job performance among school principals. It is observed that majority of the school principals fell within moderate and high stress levels and at the same time majority of the school principals fell within good and very good performance quality.

The findings of this study agrees with Decroonet *et al* (2014) and Sullivan & Bhaght (2016) that moderate stress help people to do their best in their job performance and stress has positive effect on job performance. It may not be possible to have a stress free environment, but it could be possible to to work towards attaining a comfortable relationship with the available or prevailing stress in the work environment. There is absolutely no doubt that the enormity of the task and professional responsibility of school principals gives them stress. One would expect school principals to experience more stress because of great diversity and variability, both human and material associated with their job. This situation notwithstanding the secondary school principals could perform his duties effectively and efficiently.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how work-related stress influence the job performance of secondary school principals in the Delta State of Nigeria. The study revealed that secondary school principals experience stress in the course of their job performance. Most of the school principals experience moderate and high stress. The school principals performed well in their jobs despite their levels of stress. The school principals had good and very good job performance and it could be said that the level of stress contributed to better job performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Evidence from the study showed that a high proportion of the school principals experienced very high stress level, therefore it is important that decision makers be aware of the alarming situation and the implications for job performance. Work related stress could be ameliorated through appropriate policy changes. In line with appropriate changes, work-related stress could be alienated if the ministry of Education of Education could shift the locus of control away from central office to school and local level in order to enhance school based decision making process.
2. School principals should be empowered to create a supportive and enabling school environment, which minimizes stress and fosters supportive relationships for themselves and teachers.
3. Furthermore, steps should be taken to alleviate administrative stress by manipulating factors in the work environment so that a good person environment fit can be established. Hence, there should be a comprehensive program which provides training in stress management and prevention at school.
4. The Ministry of Education should organize workshops and seminars for school principals on a regular basis. The workshop and seminars should include ways of managing stress both at individual and school levels.
5. School principals should be transferred on regular basis. This will help in reducing stress that could be inherent in one environment and boost their performance since change sometimes have positive effects.

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