



Evaluation of occupational stress among principals and teachers of public senior secondary schools in Katagum zone of Bauchi state

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate occupational stress among principals and teachers of public senior secondary schools in Katagum Zone of Bauchi State. The area studied consisted of 52 public senior secondary schools under the jurisdiction of Katagum Zonal Education Office Azare. The population consisted of 902 academic staff out of which 850 represented teaching staff and 52 principals. Through a stratified simple random sampling, 269 principals and teachers of public senior secondary schools were served with a literature-based self-developed questionnaire. The questionnaire was earlier subjected to pilot testing and was discovered to be valid with internal consistency and reliability. The questionnaire comprises six each of research questions and hypotheses and consisted of two sections; Section A and Section B. Section A is the general section meant for gathering demographic data. Section B is divided into clusters namely Cluster B1, B2, B3, B4, B5 and B6. Clusters B1 to B3 were for principals. Clusters B4 to B6 were for teachers. Each of the clusters consisted of 10 items or variables meant to elicit information on the causes and effects of occupational stress among the subjects studied. A 4-point Likert Scale was deployed among the items contained in each cluster. 268 completed questionnaires were eventually retrieved (52 principals and 216 teachers). A framework of cross-section analysis was deployed using descriptive and inferential statistics tools embodied in IBM SPSS Version 20. It was discovered that the overall mental stress for principals stood at 3.22; while, that of teachers stood at 3.07. On the other hand, the overall mean of physical stress for principals stood at 2.80, while that of teachers stood at 2.81. Therefore, the overall means relative to mental and physical stress for both principals and teachers have surpassed the mean yardstick of 2.5. Since the respective p-values have surpassed the alpha level of 0.05 (t), the findings revealed that there was no significant difference between principals and teachers on both mental and physical stress variables. Therefore, stress variables constituted sources of mental and physical stress to both principals and teachers under the area studied. Based on correlation analysis, all the relationships between the variables indicated the existence of a significant linear relationship. All the variables recorded moderate strength of association except those of principals from both urban and rural public senior secondary schools recorded a high correlation coefficient (0.71) under the physical and stress symptoms.

Keywords: Katagum, turned principalship, handled

Introduction

In our daily routines, we encounter situations and experiences that can upset us and may cause serious consequences to one's physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being and ultimately require solutions. This preceding disclosure refers to the term stress. Accordingly, Selye (1978) [12] defined stress as any external events or internal drive that threatens to upset the individual equilibrium. On the other hand, stress is viewed as a psycho-physiological process that emanated from the interaction of an individual with the environment and results in disturbances thereby impairing the physiological, psychological and social systems depending upon individual characteristics and psychological processes (Akhlag, Amjad, Mehmood, Hassan, and Malik (2010) [1]. Besides, stress comes from several aspects of life such as development and social changes, financial and accommodation problems, work demands and the specific demands of academia (Bursari, 2011) [4].

Occupational stress is considered a major contributor responsible for work-related health problems in places of work especially in the developing countries where job stress

is the single greatest source of stress and strain among categories of workers (Dankande, Bello and Deba, 2016) [5]. The authors further believed that occupational stress as a complex phenomenon is a very subjective experience, which may not be a challenge to one person or a stressor to another. In other words, stress may be positive or negative. Positive stress serves as a catalyst leading to the achievement of goals and success in life, while negative stress impairs productivity.

The school system is characterized by several activities requiring an effective management system from a school administrator known as the principal and knowledge imparting by teachers. The schedules of managing schools by principals is most demanding because of the need for effective supervision of adolescents in secondary schools since they are susceptible to bad habits which commence during this age (Behrens, Lear and Price, 2013) [3]. In conducting the administrative responsibilities, the principal may experience an overwhelming workload in addition to pressure from modern life which can lead to physical and emotional imbalance referred to as stress (Harden, 1999) [7]. In another dimension, principals have several roles to play in secondary schools such as running and controlling the

schools through establishing the school’s educational objectives, interpreting and communicating educational policies, personnel management, management of physical facilities and equipment, supervision of school curriculum, evaluation and even actual classroom teaching (Alasomuka, 2019) [2]. Therefore, it can be inferred that as a result of overwhelming workload pressures, principals, in turn, express anger and frustration that adversely impacts educational outcomes hence leading to occupational related stress. Complicating this, the high expectation of parents and unscheduled huge data demand from supervising ministry has exerted substantial pressure from principals of secondary schools. Besides, over the years secondary school principals have been faced with larger schools, complex, and consequently more bureaucratic processes (Robert and Nyenwe, 2013) [11]. Thus, stressful work situations impair the successful administration of secondary schools by principals.

On the part of teachers, teaching as a profession is believed that all other professions take their roots and survival from the said profession (Hanif, 2004) [6]. Thus, the profession could be highly demanding involving highly intellectual activities during these activities stress may be inevitable. However, in the past decades, researchers have shown that all over the world, the teaching profession is a stressful occupation at all levels from the elementary to university level (Parry, Kumar and Awasthi, 2016) [10]. Moreover, reports have shown that level of teachers’ stress has increased both nationally and internationally (McIntyre, 2015) [8]. Teachers’ stress emanated from external and internal work environments which have moderating and mediating effect on the level of stress an individual feel in carrying out his/her work. Moreover, the consequences of the identified stressors were psychological, behavioural and physiological (Ojeka, Rachel and Georgina 2019) [9].

The intricacies of school safety, public relations, reforms in the curriculum, supervision of student activities among others have created a schedule that appears to spread outside the normal work hours of principals in public schools. The time needed for working with teachers, students, school community, supervising ministry, reviewing curriculum have turned principalship into a job with high demands resulting in occupational stress. To realize good quality education for development, there is the need to ensure that principals in secondary schools who are the administrators of schools and teachers who are fundamentally the inculcators of knowledge are well motivated, remain healthy and achievement of satisfactory job performance with stress-causing agents are reduced to a minimum. Therefore, this study seeks to evaluate sources and effects of occupational stress (particularly negative stress) among principals and teachers of senior public secondary schools in the Katagum zone of Bauchi State.

Objectives of the study

This study focuses on the evaluation of occupational sources of stress and its effects among principals and teachers of public secondary schools in Katagum Zone of Bauchi State. Therefore, the study seeks the following:

1. To determine the significant difference between principals and teachers in mental occupational stress in public senior secondary schools in the Katagum zone.
2. To determine the significant difference between principals and teachers in physical occupational stress in public senior secondary schools in the Katagum zone.

Methodology

The study used a literature-based self-developed questionnaire titled: Evaluation of Occupational stress among principals and teachers of public secondary schools in Katagum Zone of Bauchi State. A letter of introduction was presented by the researcher to principals before data collection with the assurance that the responses will be handled confidentially and used strictly for the study only. The literature-based self-administered questionnaire is an efficient data collection mechanism meant to ensure relevancy and consistency of the information obtained as the responses are objective, standardized and comparable (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, and Griffin, 2010) [13].

The questionnaire consisted of two sections namely Section A and Section B. Section A is the general section meant for gathering data on the name of public secondary school, local government location and nature of the location, designation or status of the respondents. Section B is divided into clusters namely Cluster B1, B2, B3, B4, B5 and B6. Clusters B1 to B3 are for principals in public senior secondary schools. Clusters B4 to B6 are for teachers in the same public secondary schools under the jurisdiction of Katagum Zonal Education Office, Azare. Each of the clusters consisted of 10 items or variables meant to elicit information on the causes and effects of occupational stress among the subjects studied. In total, there were 60 items meant to elicit information on the causes and effects of occupational stress among the subjects studied. Furthermore, 4-point Likert Scale (SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, SD-Strongly Disagree and D-Disagree) was deployed among the items contained in each cluster. In the light of the foregoing, the cause of occupational stress was considered as an independent variable, while the effect of occupational stress was considered as a dependent variable. This in turn forms the platform for cross-sectional studies between the principals and teachers in urban and rural areas based on causes and effects of occupational stress.

Results

Question 1: Is there any difference between principals and teachers in mental occupational stress in public senior secondary schools in Katagum Zone?

Table 1: Independent t-test result on mental occupational stress between principals and teachers.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Test of means		
				t	df	Sig(2tail)
Mental occupational stress (MOS)						
1. Principals	52	3.15	0.51	(0.1)	58	0.38
2. Teachers	216	3.25	0.52			

Source: Data generated by IBM SPSS version 20 (2021)

From table 1, on the variable mental occupational stress for principals and teachers under the area studied, the mean of principals ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 0.51$) was not significantly different from the mean of Teachers. Therefore, no significant difference was discovered since the p-value of 0.38 is higher than alpha level of 0.05 ($t = 0.38$, $p > 0.05$). It implies both principals and teachers generally experienced higher levels of mental occupational stress.

Question 2: Is there any difference between principals and teachers in physical_occupational stress in public senior secondary schools in Katagum Zone of Bauchi State?

Table 2: Independent t-test result on physical occupational stress between principals and teachers

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Test of means		
				t	df	Sig(2tail)
Physical occupational stress (POS)						
1. Principals	52	2.81	0.46	(0.03)	58	0.36
2. Teachers	216	2.84	0.47			

Source: Data generated by IBM SPSS version 20 (2021)

Table 2 shows the outcome of the independent t-test result compared between all the principals and teachers under the area studied. From Table 2, on the variable physical occupational stress for principals and teachers under the area studied, the mean of principals ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 0.46$) was not significantly different from the mean of Teachers ($M = 2.84$, $SD = 0.47$). Therefore, no significant difference was discovered since the p-value of 0.36 is higher than alpha level of 0.05 ($t = 0.36$, $p > 0.05$). It implies both principals and teachers generally experienced a higher level of physical occupational stress.

Discussion

The objectives of the study in research question one was postured to discern if there was any difference in mental occupational stress between all principals and teachers under the jurisdiction of Katagum Zonal Education office Azare. From the analysis of inferential statistics using t-test, no significant difference was discovered since the p-value of 0.38 is higher than the alpha level of 0.05 ($t = 0.38$, $p > 0.05$). It implies all the principals and teachers generally experienced higher levels of mental occupational stress.

The objective of the research in question two was postulated to discover if there were any differences in physical occupational stress among principals and teachers in the area studied, Table 2 revealed that the means for principals was not significantly different from the means of teachers following the t-test. Therefore, no significant difference was discovered. It implies both principals and teachers generally experienced a higher level of physical occupational stress.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate occupational stress among principals and teachers of public senior secondary schools in Katagum Zone of Bauchi State. To achieve the foregoing, six research questions and hypotheses were formulated. The study used a literature-based self-developed questionnaire distributed to a sample of 269 principals and teachers of senior public secondary schools under the jurisdiction of the Katagum Zonal Education office.

The research result revealed inadequate funding, lack of health support facilities, fear and uncertainty were the

topmost sources of mental stress to principals. In another perspective, the sources of physical stress to principals were student’s indiscipline, staff indiscipline, work overload, impromptu travelling to Headquarters, supervision of school facilities, organizing PTA meetings, and meeting with Ministry officials. Following the incidence of mental and physical stress on principals, the identified physical symptoms were muscle pain and fatigue. The mental symptoms on the other hand were headache, anxiety, restlessness, and sleep deprivation.

To the teachers, the identified sources of mental stress were lack of implementation of promotion, poor condition of service, family instability, poor leadership from principals, lack of job satisfaction, lack of health support, poor staff relation, gossips among members of staff, and noisy staffroom. The physical sources of stress on the same teachers on the other hand were, work overload, a long distance from home, classroom congestion, lack of adequate school facilities, maintenance of students’ discipline, poor maintenance of school infrastructure, and impromptu travelling to Ministry of Education Bauchi. The corresponding physical and mental symptoms for teachers were headache, anxiety, restlessness, anger, sleep deprivation, and low energy.

The outcome of data analyzed revealed that both principals and teachers under the area studied experienced both mental and physical stress with corresponding symptoms of stress in effect. Against the foregoing, it is imperative to recommend measures that will ameliorate the incidence of stress among principals and teachers of public senior secondary schools in Bauchi State.

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