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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB STRESS AND PRINCIPALS' JOB PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the relationship between job stress and principals' job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State. Four research questions were raised for the study while four hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of all the 266 secondary school principals in the 266 public secondary schools in Anambra State. No sampling was done as the population is small. Job Stress Questionnaire (JSQ) and Principals' Job Performance Questionnaire (PJPQ) were used to collect data. The reliabilities of the validated JSQ and PJPQ were established using Cronbach alpha statistics. Coefficients of 0.84 and 0.78 were respectively obtained for JSQ and PJPQ. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient and p-value of correlation. The findings of the study revealed that a high negative and non-significant relationship existed between principals' work overload and their job performance in secondary schools. It was recommended among others that government should reduce the work overload on principals so as enhance their job performance.

Keywords: Job stress, principals, job performance and secondary schools.

Introduction

Principals play vital roles in the school that are geared towards the achievement of institutional goals. The manner or the behavioural pattern the principal uses while directing teachers to perform tasks is integral to the achievement of institutional goals. More than ever, it is expected of school principals to deftly manage their school finances, ensure excellence in the curricular and co-curricular activities of the school, manage staff and students while meeting sundry societal expectations. That is to say that the Job performance of principals is quite vital.

Principals' job performance refers to the value that a principals adds to an institution within a particular period that is tailored towards the attainment of institutional goals and

objectives. It implies principals' activities that contribute to the organizational value. It further describes the identification of the basic areas of teachers' as well as students' needs and attending to them accordingly. Job performance is defined as the degree to which a combination of duties (such as instructional supervision, staff personnel administration, student-personnel administration) are performed by school heads (Agu and Oputa, 2021). Statutorily, some of the jobs that are performed by principals in secondary schools include: Staff personnel administration, student-personnel administration, instructional supervision and budget planning. In vast majority of cases, this calls for high professional and societal expectations. Consequently, in a bid to meet these loft expectations, principals may experience job stress.

Job stress is an emotional feeling that is as a result of being subjected to intense pressure arising from work overload. Job stress or work-related stress, is a facet of stress that is experienced by an employee or a group of workers within their working environment (Mohamed, 2018). It is instructive to note that job stressors include: work overload, role conflict (conflict due to job expectations), low coworker support, and imbalance between work and personal life (Mackey *et al*. 2017). In the current study, work overload, role conflict (conflict due to job expectations), low coworker support, and imbalance between work and personal life would be considered as indicators of job stress.

Work overload refers to the amount of tasks that are undertaken by an individual within specific time constraints. Work overload is one of the key stressor agents (Khajuria and Nayak, 2018). In other words, work overload has the capacity of constituting a huge job stress to a principal. Work overload captures the quantity of tasks that are expected to be handled by a staff of an institution at a particular time. Work overload is seen as a stressor that is connected to the quantity and quality of work that must be performed under certain time constraints (Mackey et al., 2017). This is to say that when a principal has several jobs to be done within a limited time, job stress becomes the logical consequence as there is little time to do so much. Overload is said to be quantitative in the face of discrepancies between the amount of work and the time available; and qualitative when, regardless of time, there is a feeling of incapacity to perform the work (Singh and Sharma, 2017). Instructively, workload may predispose a principal to role conflict.

Role conflict refers to a situation where the job description of a staff is not properly defined. Job stressors related to

role conflicts entail the indeterminacy of work and the imprecision between the tasks and roles performed (Hongxia, *et al*. 2014). Role conflict entails the improper definition of the duties expected to be undertaken by a staff within a specified period of time. This becomes manifest when the bid for a worker to perform a task makes it difficult to perform another task concurrently. Lending credence to the afore-mentioned, Jin *et al*. (2017) noted that conflict ensues when the requirements and duties of a function are not well prescribed or when a worker is pressured to perform two or more roles simultaneously, especially where the fulfillment of one makes it difficult or unfeasible to perform the other. Apparently, this conflict engenders a dissonance between job expectations and job requirements. Conflict can be occasioned by low co-worker support.

Low coworker support refers to the poor physical, social or even moral aid provided by co-worker(s) within an organization. It captures the relationships of support and social recognition among workers, which are vital to the management of tensions (Hongxia et al., 2014). Thus, the loss of their support could culminate in job stress. This is because, the social support provided by colleagues or supervisors has a moderating influence in moments of threat while improving a co-worker's capacity to cope with different work situations (Dawson, O'Brien and Beehr, 2016). Put differently, co-workers' support provides a soothing feeling to a worker within organization. It involves physical, psychological and social that are capable of attenuating demands and stimulating the development of workers (Adil and Baig, 2018). Low worker support could be a precursor to work-life balance.

Work-life imbalance refers to a situation where a worker's job substantially interferes with other aspects of their personal life. In other words, a worker that is experiencing the afore-mentioned devotes a considerable amount of time to their work that they barely have time to spare for their personal life. This constitutes job stress to the worker; permeating social contexts and causing interpersonal conflicts in various situations (Repetti and Wang, 2017) within or outside the work environment. A principal that is vulnerable to work-life imbalance is bound to engage in a never-ending conflict with their subordinates. The work-life imbalance negatively affects general well-being as well as job performance in a negative sense (Laeeque, 2014).

It must be emphasized that secondary education cannot be a veritable tool for achieving national development where the principals' job performance is unsatisfactory. This unsatisfactorily state of affairs is a huge

source of worry to relevant stakeholders in the secondary educational system. Principals evade their statutory duties for other financial engagements as observed by researcher in some secondary schools in Anambra State. For better understanding of the principals' job performance, it is vital to identify the factors that contribute to principals' job performance. So far, there seems to be paucity of researches conducted in Anambra State, ascertaining the relationship between job stress and principals' job performance in secondary school; hence the current study.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to ascertain the relationship between job stress and principals' job performance in secondary school in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

1. the relationship between principals' work overload and their job performance.
2. the relationship between principals' role conflict and their job performance.
3. the relationship between principals' co-worker support and their job performance.
4. the relationship between principals' work-life balance and their job performance.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between the relationship between principals' work overload and their job performance.
2. There is no significant relationship between principals' role conflict and their job performance.
3. There is no significant relationship between principals' co-worker support and their job performance.
4. There is no significant relationship between principals' work-life balance and their job performance.

Literature Review

Job performance is arguably one of the most important independent variables of interest to educators, businessmen, government and society. Amaefule, Michael and Umeh (2024) defined job performance as the duties carried out by staff of a school so as to achieve predetermined goals. Job performance captures the result of statutory duties undertaken by staff at a given time in a school in fulfillment of institutional goals. By implication, it is the ability of the workforce of a school

to combine relevant inputs for the attainment of institutional goals. In secondary schools, principals' job performance is a necessity for the achievement of the goals of the school. Principals' job performance could differ with their job stress.

Job stress is an employee's adverse physical and emotional reaction to job requirements that are rather inconsistent with their competence and needs (Vasan, 2018). Buttressing this point, Vasan (2018) stated that job stress is caused by sundry viz: unclear job tasks, lack of professional development, lack of promotion, and job insecurity. Principals' job stress is a professional stress experienced by a principals in the line of duty (Mohamed, 2018). For instance, a principal that is saddled with juggling the responsibilities of building structures in the school, training teachers, supervising instruction as well as ensuring the admission of suitably qualified students within a stipulated period of time is likely to be stressed. The stresses principals encounter could contribute to their job performance positively or negatively. For instance, while Amoako *et al*. (2017) and Muis (2021) found a significant positive relationship between job stress and job performance, Adenuga (2021) and Agu (2021) found that job stress negatively correlated with job performance. The afore-mentioned contradictions regarding job stress could be traceable to the disparity in the self-efficacies of principals as well as their job performance. Work overload, role conflict (conflict due to job expectations), low coworker support, and imbalance between work and personal life constitute principals' job stress.

Several studies have been reviewed on job stress and job performance. For instance, Imbur et al. (2023) examined the impact of occupational stress on employees' performance in the banking industry within Makurdi metropolis and found that occupational stress significantly influenced job performance was accepted. Similarly, Akah *et al*. (2022) investigated the influence of occupational stress on the job performance of academic staff in universities in Nigeria and found that the prediction of workload was negatively non-significant on the job performance of academics. Going further, Asaloei *et al*. (2020) examined the relationship work-related stress and job performance of teachers working in primary schools of Boven Digoel district, Indonesia and found that a significant negative relationship existed between work-related stress and job performance of teachers working in primary schools. Again, Wushe and Shenje (2019) investigated the relationship between occupational stress and employee job performance and indicated that a

negative relationship existed between increase in occupational stress and job performance. More so, Kitole *et al*. (2019) anchoring on the Michigan model-work stress attempted to establish the effect of work stress on employee performance in the public sector in Kenya and found a strong positive relationship between work stress and employee performance. Additionally, Lan, Qu, Liu and Qin (2018) examined the relationship between young university teachers' occupational stress and performance and found that university young teachers' occupational stress was positively related to occupational performance. Finally, Wangui, Ombui and Iravo (2016) established the effects of work-related stress on teachers' performance in public secondary schools in Kenya and found that work-related stress had a significant negative relationship and effects on teachers' performance in public secondary schools. A cursory look at the reviewed studies revealed that none of the studies gave prominence to principals' job stress and job performance in Anambra State. Again, none of the studies specifically focused on the four dimensions of work overload, role conflict (conflict due to job expectations), low coworker support, and imbalance between work and personal life. The bid to fill these gaps informed the current study.

Research Method

Research Design: The study employed correlational research design. According to Megan (2018), correlation research design facilitates the comprehension of the complex relationship between two variables and can allow predictions.

Population, Sample and Sampling Technique: The population of the study consisted of all the 266 secondary school principals in the 266 public secondary schools in Anambra State. No sampling was done as the population is of manageable size.

Procedure: Job Stress Questionnaire (JSQ) and Principals' Job Performance Questionnaire (PJPQ) were used for data collection for the study. JSQ was adapted from New Job Stress Scale (NJSS) by Leite *et al*. (2021) (See Appendix, D1, Page --- for details. Some statements in JSQ were re-worded while some others were expunged to suit the purpose of the study. JSQ was divided into four sub-scales of work-overload, role expectation conflict, co-worker support and work-life balance with six, three, four and three items respectively. JSQ contains a total of 14 items. The response format ranged from Never (N), Rarely (R), Sometimes (S), Frequently (F) and Always (A) with numerical indices of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively. For PJPQ, it was adapted from Halim and Sefer (2013) task performance scale. Some items that were not considered relevant to this study were expunged. A

total of 16 items were used to measure the job performance of the respondents in the mode of four-point rating scale of: Strongly Agree (SA=5), Agree (A=4), Undecided (U=3), Disagree (D=2), and Strongly Disagree (SD=1). The PJPQ has 18 items. The validated JSQ and PJPQ were subjected to reliability using Cronbach alpha Statistics. The the internal consistency of the items in the JSQ and PJPQ were ascertained to obtain reliability indices of 0.84 and 0.78 respectively for JSQ and PJPQ. The researcher with the help of seven research assistants who were co-postgraduate students ensured that the administration of the JSQ and PJPQ to the participants was done within the period of two weeks. Within the period indicated, the researcher made follow-up contact with the research assistants through phone calls and e-mail to ensure that the administration and retrieval of ASQ and JSQ were done in line with the briefing given to research assistants. Out of the 544 ASQ and JSQ that were administered, 510 were retrieved and used for analysis. This indicates 93.75% return rate and 6.25% loss.

Data Analysis: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was employed in answering the research questions by finding the relationship between the two variables. In taking decisions in research questions, Nwana (2007) recommendations were used. Thus, the correlation coefficient (r) with scores:

±0.00 – 0.19 = Very low relationship

±0.20 – 0.39 = Low relationship

±0.40 – 0.59 = Moderate relationship

±0.60 – 0.79 = High relationship

±0.80 – 0.10 = Very high relationship.

Testing of hypotheses was done with p-value of correlation at 0.05 alpha level. In taking decisions regarding the hypotheses, a null hypothesis was rejected if the probability value (p-value) is less than or equal to significant value of 0.05; if otherwise (p>0.05), the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Presentation of Results

Table 1: Pearson r on Relationship between Principals' Work Overload and their Job Performance.

Source of Variation	N	r	p-value	Remark
Principals' Work Overload Teachers' Job Performance	214	-0.706	0.07	Not Sig.

Data in Table 1 show that there is a high negative relationship existing between principals' work overload and their job performance. This is evident by the size of Pearson's Correlation Coefficient r, which is -0.706. Furthermore, the analysis in Table 1 shows that there is no significant relationship between principals' work overload and their job performance. The calculated r (-0.706) has *p*-value >0.05. The null hypothesis one is therefore not rejected.

Table 2: Pearson r on Relationship between Principals' Role Conflict and their Job Performance

Source of Variation	N	r	p-value	Remark
Principals' Role Conflict Teachers' Job Performance	214	-0.518	0.19	Not Sig.

Data in Table 2 show that there is a moderately negative relationship existing between principals' role conflict and their job performance. This is evident by the size of Pearson's Correlation Coefficient r, which is -0.518. More so, the analysis in Table 2 shows that there is no significant relationship between principals' role conflict and their job performance. The calculated r (-0.518) has *p*-value >0.05. The null hypothesis two is therefore not rejected.

Table 3: Pearson r on Relationship between Principals' Co-Worker Support and their Job Performance

Source of Variation	N	r	p-value	Remark
Principals' Co-Worker Support	214	0.605	0.04	Significant
Teachers' Job Performance				

Data in Table 3 show that there is a high positive relationship existing between principals' co-worker support and their job performance. This is evident by the size of Pearson's Correlation Coefficient r, which is 0.605. Additionally, the analysis in Table 3 shows that there is a significant relationship between principals' co-worker support and their job performance. The calculated r (0.605) has *p*-value <0.05. The null hypothesis three is therefore rejected.

Table 4: Pearson r on Relationship between Principals' Work-Life Balance and their Job Performance

Source of Variation	N	r	p-value	Remark
Principals' Work-Life Balance	214	0.491	0.00	Significant
Teachers' Job Performance				

Data in Table 4 show that there is a moderate positive relationship existing between principals' work-life balance and their job performance. This is evident by the size of Pearson's Correlation Coefficient r, which is 0.491. Again, the analysis in Table 4 shows that there is a significant relationship between principals' work-life balance and their job performance. The calculated r (0.491) has *p*-value <0.05. The null hypothesis four is therefore rejected.

Discussion

The finding of the study revealed that a high negative and non-significant relationship existed between principals' work overload and their job performance

in secondary schools. This means that more burdened principals are with work, the lesser their tendency to perform well in their jobs. In other words, work overload gets in the way of principals' administrative effectiveness. The findings of the current study are consistent with those of Akah *et al*. (2022) that the prediction of workload was negatively non-significant on the job performance of academics. Put differently, workload immensely contributes to the poor job performance of educators. Further corroborating the findings of the current study, Asaloei *et al*. (2020) found that a significant negative relationship existed between work-related stress and job performance of teachers working in primary schools.

The finding of the study revealed that a high negative and non-significant relationship existed between principals' role conflict and their job performance in secondary schools. This means that more principals engage in role conflict, the lesser their tendency to perform well in their jobs. This shows that involvement in role conflict as an index of work stress dissipates the time and energy that should have been expended in other statutory duties such as instructional supervision. The finding of the study is in alignment with Wushe and Shenje (2019) who indicated that a negative relationship existed between increase in occupational stress and job performance. Apparently, a stressed workforce is bound to under-perform. Contradicting the findings of the current study, Kitole *et al*. (2019) found a strong positive relationship between work stress and employee performance. This is however surprising given that workers, in vast majority of cases, do not thrive under stress. The contradiction could be as a result of differences in sample characteristics in the disparate areas of study.

The finding of the study revealed that a high positive and significant relationship existed between principals' co-worker support and their job performance in secondary schools. This means that the more staff support the principals get in the discharge of their statutory duties, the less stressed they are and the greater the tendency to perform well in their jobs. In other words, co-worker support results in optimum job performance among principals. This is traceable to the fact that the support and commitment of staff members make for efficiency while reducing the job stress that would have arisen when there is low or lack of co-worker support. Consistent with the finding of the study, Lan *et al*. (2018) found that university young teachers' occupational stress was positively related to occupational performance. This trend could be attributed to the age of the respondents who seem quite energetic to carry out their duties.

The finding of the study revealed that a moderate positive and significant relationship existed between principals' work-life balance and their job performance. This shows that when principals are able to conveniently balance their personal lives with their work, their performance is enhanced. Thus, a balance between work and personal life makes for administrative effectiveness to the extent that matters of job stress are addressed to the point that it ceases to take its toll on job performance among principals in secondary schools. Agreeing with the finding of the current study, Imbur *et al*. (2023) that occupational stress positively and significantly influenced job performance. However, the finding of the study is contrasted with that of Wangui *et al*. (2016) that work-related stress have a significant negative relationship and effects on teachers' performance in public secondary schools. This goes to show that the more stressed one is, the less likely the chances that they perform well in their jobs. The contrast could be traceable to the peculiarity of the subjects in the disparate areas of study.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that principals' job stress negatively related with their job performance in secondary schools. In other words, the more the job stress, the lesser the tendency of principals' optimum job performance.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of the study, several recommendations were made which include:

1. Principals should work towards reducing their work overload by delegating some of their duties to their vice principals so as to reduce their work overload while enhancing their job performance.
2. Principals should make conscious efforts towards attending conferences organized by Ministry of Education on management of role conflict with a view to enhancing principals' job performance.
3. Principals in Anambra State should continually take advantage of co-worker support to enhance their job performance in secondary schools.
4. Principals in Anambra State should strike a balance between their work and life. This is with a view to ensuring that their job performance is optimized.

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