



**TEACHERS DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLE AS CORRELATES OF STRESS
MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY
SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

The study examined Teachers' Demographic Variables as Correlates of Stress Management in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study consisted 6915 teachers in 267 Public Secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample size is 509 teachers randomly drawn from the population. The study adopted stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Instruments for data collection were teachers' demographic variables and one questionnaire structured by the researcher titled Teachers' Stress Management Questionnaire (SMQ). The instruments were subjected to face and construct validity by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha statistics and the average reliability coefficient showed 0.88 for Stress Management Questionnaire (SMQ). The questionnaires were administered by direct contact and collected on the spot. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer the research questions and also test the hypotheses 0.05 level of significance. After analyzing the data, the following findings were made ; the study showed a weak positive and significant relationship between male teachers and stress management and a moderate positive and significant relationship between female teachers and stress management in public secondary schools in Anambra State .Based on the findings, it was recommended that Ministry of Education should not consider teachers gender when employing teachers to any public secondary school but should organize seminars on stress management to help both male and female teachers manage their stress

Introduction

Education is a systematic process through which a child or an adult acquires knowledge, experience, skills and sound attitude. It makes an individual to be civilized, refined, cultured and sound in thinking through impactful teaching. Teaching is one of the helping professions in which practitioners are normally committed to giving their best for the welfare of those entrusted in their care. The work of a teacher is physically and mentally challenging. Teachers need to use a lot of energy in their daily activities in the classroom. This trend which is a routine for a teacher forwards a lot of stress to the teacher. Teachers have multiple roles to play in public secondary schools among which include running and controlling the classrooms through establishing the school's educational objectives, interpreting and communicating with the students for an improved academic achievement, personnel management and classroom teaching which in the process of carrying out these functions are stressful. Nevertheless, one major challenge facing teachers in secondary education in most public schools in Anambra State is not



the shortfalls in the number of teachers in schools as speculated; but the fact that teachers are overwhelmed with work and as a result of that, overstressed (Well & Hogan, 2016).

Stress has become a complex phenomenon that is usually associated with workplace. It is stated that stress is seen as the sum of physical and mental responses to an unacceptable disparity between real or imagined personal experience and personal expectations. Thus, Seiboth, (2015) defined stress as the non-specific response of the body to any demand. He further stated that stress is a person's adaptive response to a stimulus that places excessive psychological demands on that person. In other words, stress is a state of mind reflecting certain biochemical reactions in the human body and is projected by a sense of anxiety, tension and depression which is caused by such demands of environmental forces or internal forces that cannot be fulfilled by the resources available to the person. Stress occurs as a result of the body's response to any undesirable mental, physical, emotional, social or environmental demand among teachers in the schools. This magnitude of stress is determined by the environmental forces or an individual's operational style. Such environmental events, conditions, circumstances or stimuli that induce stress in schools are known as "stressors" and these could be physical or psychological. These situations as stated by Seiboth, could be fear, pain, anger, fatigue, emotional arousal, humiliation, frustration, loss of concentration, non-occurrence of an expected event, occurrence of an unexpected event, death separation of a loved one and unexpected success which require a change in the operational style. This definition indicates that stress is a response which includes both physical and mental components. The physical responses include a host of physiological changes which largely fall into both acute response and chronic response. Well and Hogan (2016) indicated that the vast majority of teachers' experience high level of stress in their schools, which can generate negative impact on both the teacher and the school. The body's digestive system may also be affected by stress, so it can create many illnesses like stomachache, nausea, and stomach upset. Stress is also considered as a cause of obesity and diabetes because of increased blood sugar. Long-term stress can lessen defenses in the body's immune system, so it makes the body more susceptible to infections. Moreover, stress also causes sleep disturbances, increases depression and can cause a mental breakdown (The American Institute of Stress, 2020). Secondly, stress impacts one's mood. Some characteristics in the mood to identify someone who is stressed are anxiety, restlessness, lack of motivation or focus, feeling overwhelmed, irritability or anger, and sadness or depression (Mayo Clinic, 2019).

Thirdly, stress influences behavior. A person who is stressed usually has some behaviors like overeating or under eating, angry outbursts, drug or alcohol misuse, tobacco use, and social withdrawal (Mayo Clinic, 2019).

Obikwulu (2020) observed that teachers' in public secondary school in Anambra State often stress that affects their ability to function effectively, sometimes to the extent of causing anxiety, restlessness and lack of motivation. Other common negative effects of teachers' stress include: reduction in work performance and output, inability to manage time or delegate functions, feeling of alienation and inadequacy, lack of motivation, increasing introversion, irritability with colleagues, unwillingness to cooperate, frequent irrational conflict at work, withdrawal from supportive relationships, loss of appetite for the occupation, frequent infection and accident proneness

It is important to understand the stress experienced by teachers in order to develop appropriate management. Stress management is the amelioration of stress, especially chronic stress. It is defined as the tools, strategies, or techniques that reduce stress and reduce the negative impacts stress has on your mental or physical well-being. A variety of techniques can be



used to manage stress. These include mental, emotional, and behavioral strategies. When stress management is used regularly and in response to stressful life events, we can optimize our well-being. Stress management comprises measures taken to cope with trying periods so that a state of psychological or physiological equilibrium is re-established and subsequently maintained (Oboegbulem, 2014). Stress management is said to refer to the wide spectrum of techniques and psychotherapies aimed at controlling a person's levels of stress, especially chronic stress, usually for the purpose of improving everyday functioning. The presence of stress at work is almost inevitable in all organizations but to manage it in a right way is so important. Brown (2015) stated that stress management is developing and maintaining good habits of nutrition and a balanced lifestyle including exercise. There is need to develop good habits of active and non-active leisure activities and recognize that these are legitimate and appropriate activities in the management of stress. Sucharitha and Shaik (2020) defined stress management as the proactive measures that individuals and organizations put in place to deal with stress before it affects employees. This therefore means that stress management is dealing with possible stressors before they become stress to organizational employees at individual level or at a group level. There are several variables of stress management phenomenon including work place counselling. Stress management as Petreanu et.al, (2020) observed is a wide area of techniques that focuses on ways in which stress can be mitigated in organizations of all sizes so as to minimize the negative outcomes of stress. Stress management therefore manifest in different ways depending on one organization to another. Orji and Makubu, (2020) opined that the manifestation of stress management can be in terms of flexible work schedule, work place counseling or even work place quality since such constructs, upon proper implementation may reduce stress. On the other hand, Manjunatha and Renukamurthy, (2017) opined that stress management is entirely dependent on individual organization and techniques used.

The need for stress management is necessary for teachers in public secondary schools. They often experience a phenomenon similar to culture shock. The corresponding stress that can follow has been termed "Reality Shock" is the type of stress beginning teachers often experience which is like burnout. Burnout is a syndrome of physical and emotional exhaustion involving the development of a negative self-concept, negative job attitudes, loss of concern and feeling for people (Dunham, 2016). There are a number of practices that counteract the negative effects of stress on the body. Although stress is often thought of as a subjective experience, levels of stress are readily measurable using various physiological tests. There are many techniques to manage stresses that life brings. Some of the following ways induce a lower than usual stress level, temporarily, to compensate the biological tissues involved; others face the stressor at a higher level of abstraction as articulated by Lehrer et al., (2017) thus: autogenic training, social activity, cognitive therapy, conflict resolution, cranial release technique, getting a hobby, meditation, mindfulness (psychology), deep breathing, yoga nidra, nootropics, reading novels, prayer, relaxation techniques, artistic expression, fractional relaxation, physical exercise, progressive relaxation, and spas. Others include: somatic training, spending time in nature, stress balls, natural medicine, clinically validated alternative treatments, time management, planning and decision making, listening to certain types of relaxing music, and spending quality time with pets..However, stress management may be attributed to teachers' demographic variables as they are gradually becoming important factors in stress management of teachers in public secondary schools (Well & Hogan, 2016).



Demographic variable is a contested term with multiple meanings often used in reflecting the perspectives and interest of different writers, researchers and policymakers (Karen, 2018). Demographic variables describe the characteristics which comprises the training and the attributes of the teacher. Demographic variables can also relate to the human population in terms of size, density, location, age, gender, race, occupation, qualification, experience, marital status and other statistics. No policy on education can be formulated to achieve its set goals in the secondary schools without identifying these variables: gender, age, marital status educational qualification, years of experience, income and gender as correlate of teachers' stress management in public secondary schools (Ogbonnaya, 2014). A number of demographic variable by individual differences may cause a teacher to be vulnerable to stress. The demographic variables specifically examined in the course of this study as correlates of teachers' stress management includes; gender and age,

Gender refers to the cultural difference expected of men and women according to sex. Gender is defined in terms of roles of males and females which sometimes may strictly apply to the sex of an individual. Gender roles are patterns of behaviour, attitudes and expectations associated with a particular sex- with being either a male or a females. Karen (2018) explained gender in relation to social and cultural roles of each sex rather than genetic. Age of the teachers connotes the number of years a teacher has lived. It is the chronological time frame someone has lived (Njoku, et.al 2020). Gender differences in teachers' job satisfaction have been identified as a possible variable accounting for individual differences in teaching practice (Karen, 2018). With the rapidly changing sex-ratio of school teacher, studies on the influence of gender on teacher's job satisfaction have become important. Male teachers tend to be dominating, exacting and exercised greater control, emphasized more to the group work and structured activities. Nasser and Naderi (2015) mentioned in their study that the female teachers generally possess the personality trait necessary to become an effective teacher to a higher degree than males did. They went further to state that the females are more supportive, expressive, nurturing, informal and open towards students, spend significantly greater proportion of time encouraging and allowing students participation, involve students in peer collaboration, believed in flexible teaching method, ask more referential questions, gave more compliments and use less directive form, shared authority and maintained control in the classroom in a way that keeps their relationships with students intact. Students are a little biased to female teachers, which may be related to variety of factors like empathic listening, better understanding and view of concern shown by them (Feldman , 2016).

In one of the recent study by Bodhe and Jankar (2015), students do not find sex of the teacher worth discrimination. A well dressed, clean and neat teacher produces good first impression, very well draws the attention of the students and facilitates the further process of learning (Willis *et al.*, 2016). Students who preferred male teacher remarked that males have better control of class and because of their commanding nature and strictness , they involved back benchers also. Students expect male teachers to be effective in their work but expect female teachers to spend time, building supportive relationships with students. Kierstead and his colleagues (Kierstead *et al.*, 2016) stated that male teachers earned better student evaluations if they demonstrated competence, but female teachers had to demonstrate both competence and warmth to obtain the same high ratings.

Age is traditionally an asset to an individual, a most accessible variable, which is added to a person's resume. In addition, the age differentiates the enthusiasm of individuals towards the



job (Msuya, 2016). However, newer recruits or young teachers tried to imitate senior teachers, they had an urge for improvement. They could very well make use of audio-visual aids, mikes and other techniques for improving their teaching capabilities. These were few positive points in favor of younger teachers. The experience increased as the age advanced. Age has an effect on the way teachers experience stress; younger teachers in the teaching profession present higher levels of stress (Byrne, 2016). So, the age groups affect the school teachers to perceive stress towards their work tasks. These discrepancies via age groups create a contrast in teacher's stress management towards their job.

Age can be referred to as the number of years that a person has lived. There are different types of ages such as chronological age, mental age, psychological age among others, but the study has focused on chronological age. Chronological age is a measure of the time that has passed since a person's birth. Pines and Aronson (2018) have reported that young teachers in the beginning of their career invest all their energy in order to achieve their initial objectives, while they have to simultaneously deal with a number of stressful and intense demands from their environment. Failing to decrease the gap between their goals and their materialization, this may have an adverse effect on their job and may lead them to decreased involvement and effort regarding their job. This consequence can be interpreted through the young teachers' difficulty to activate the appropriate stress managing in order to reduce the stress imposed by difficulties occurring in the job. Based on the fact that the success of the entire nation, educational system to be precise depends on the availability of competent, well trained, conscientious, healthy, efficient and highly motivated teachers, stress management among teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State for achievement of goals call for investigation. The researcher deemed it necessary to investigate demographic variables as correlates of teachers' stress management in public secondary schools in Anambra

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' demographic variables as correlates of teachers' stress management in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. establish the relationship between gender and teachers' stress management in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. determine the relationship between age and teachers' stress management in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between age and teachers' stress management in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What is the relationship between gender and teachers' stress management in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between age and teachers' stress management in Anambra State Public Secondary Schools
2. There is no significant relationship between gender and teachers' stress management in Anambra State Public Secondary Schools.



RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher adopted a correlational research design for this study. Nworgu (2015) stated that correlational research design shows the direction and magnitude of the relationship between or among variables in a given study. The area of the study was Anambra State. The population of the study consisted of 6195 teachers in the 267 public secondary schools in Anambra State.

The instruments for data collection were teachers' demographic variable, and a structured questionnaires by the researcher. The first instrument is titled "Teachers' Demographic Variable (TD) in part A, which contained information on the demographic variables of gender and age as in line with the study, purpose of the study, research questions and hypotheses one and two. The second instrument is titled Teachers' Stress Management Questionnaire (TSMQ). It is the part B. The clusters had a total of 15 items structured by the researcher from the reviewed literature eliciting information on teachers' stress management on a 4 point rating scales of measurement of this study include: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A) Disagree (D). Strongly Disagree. The instruments were subjected to face and construct validation. Three experts, two from Educational Management and one from Educational Measurement and Evaluation, Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus, Anambra State validated the instruments.

On the other hand, construct validation was conducted by the use of exploratory factor analysis through Principal Component Analysis Method.

The internal consistency of the instrument was established. Cronbach's Alpha of internal consistency and is deemed appropriate as the items do not have right or wrong answers. The reliability yielded coefficients indices of 0.87 for Teachers' Stress Management Questionnaire (TSMQ) which is considered adequate for the study

The instruments was administered to the respondent by the researcher with the help of six research assistants who were briefed on how to administer and retrieve the instruments. It was an on the spot hand delivery for the administration and collection of the instrument where the researcher and research assistant waited for the respondent to fill the Questionnaires and retrieve them immediately. The research questions were answered using Pearson product moment Correlation Coefficient while hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using test of significance of Pearson product moment Correlation Coefficient. In answering the research questions, the coefficient (r) and the size of the relationship was interpreted using Correlation Coefficient based on Schober *et al.*, (2018) as shown: .

± 0.00 to 0.09	=	Negligible relationship
± 0.10 to 0.39	=	weak relationship
± 0.40 to 0.69	=	Moderate relationship
± 0.70 to 0.89	=	Strong relationship
± 0.90 to 1.00	=	Very strong relationship

The decision rule was that null hypothesis be rejected wherever P value is less than or equals 0.05 ($P \leq 0.05$) and would not be rejected wherever P value is greater than 0.05 ($P > 0.05$)



PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The results are presented in line with the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between gender and teachers' stress management in public secondary school teachers' stress management in public secondary schools in Anambra State? **Table 1** Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on relationship between gender and teachers' stress management in public secondary schools in Anambra State

Gender		Gender	Stress management	
Male	Pearson Correlation	1	0.17**	Weak positive relationship
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.00.	
	N	140	140	
Female	Stress management	Pearson Correlation	0.17**	Moderate positive relationship
			1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00.	
		N	140	
		Pearson Correlation	1	
			0.51**	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	369	
	Stress management	Pearson Correlation	0.51**	
			1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	369	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Analysis from Table 1 showed a weak positive correlation between male teachers' and stress management and a moderate positive relationship between female teachers and stress management in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This deduction comes as a result of 'r' having values = 0.17 and 0.51 for male and female respectively. Hence, the study showed a weak positive correlation (relationship) between male and a moderate correlation of female and stress management in public secondary schools in Anambra State.



Research Question 2: What is the relationship between age and stress management in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient analysis on the extent of relationship between age and teachers' stress management in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Correlations					
Age			Age	Stress Management	Remark
20- 35	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1	0.55	0.01	Moderate positive Relationship
Stress Management	N	129	129	1	0.01.
36-45	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1	0.58	0.03..	Moderate positive Relationship
Stress Management	N	170	170	1	0.02..
46-65	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1.	0.63.	0.02.	Moderate positive Relationship
Stress Management	N	210	210	1	0.02..
			210	210	

. **. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Analysis from Table 2 showed a moderate positive correlation between all age groups and stress management in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This deduction comes as a result of 'r' having values of 0.55, 0.58 and 0.63 for age groups 20-35, 36-45 and 46-65 respectively. Hence, the study concluded a moderate positive correlation (relationship) between age and teachers' stress management in public secondary schools in Anambra State.



Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between gender and stress management in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Table 3: Test of Significance of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on the relationship between gender and stress management in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Gender		Gender	Stress management	Decision
Male	Pearson Correlation	1	0.17**	Significance
			0.00.	
		140	140	
	Stress management	Pearson Correlation	0.17**	
			1	
			0.00.	
Female	N	140	140	Significance
	Pearson Correlation	1	0.51**	
			0.00	
		367	367	
Stress management	Pearson Correlation	0.51**	1	Significance
		0.00		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
		367	367	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The result of the test of significance of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient from Table 3 above showed a significant relationship between gender and stress management in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State with $r = 0.85^{**}$ $n = 736$ and $P\text{-value} = 0.00$. Since $P\text{-value} 0.00$, and is less than 0.05, the study rejects the null hypothesis and do not reject the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between gender and stress management in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between age and stress management in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Table 4: Test of Significance of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on the relationship between age and stress management in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Correlations

Age		Age	Stress Management	Decision
20- 35	Pearson Correlation	1	0.55	Significance
			0.01	
		129	129	
	Stress Management	Pearson Correlation	0.55	
			1	
			0.01.	
36-45	N	129	129	Significance
	Pearson Correlation	1	0.58	
			0.03	
		170	170	
46-65	Stress Management	Pearson Correlation	0.58	Significance
			1	
			0.03	
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
		170	170	
Stress Management	Pearson Correlation	1.	0.63	Significance
			0.02.	
		210	210	
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
		210	210	



****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The result of the test of significance of Pearson-Moment Correlation Coefficient from Table 4 above showed a significant relationship between age and stress management in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State with $r = 0.55, 0.58, \text{ and } 0.63$ respectively, $N = 509$ and $p\text{-value} = 0.01, 0.03 \text{ and } 0.03$ respectively. Since $p\text{-values}$ are less than 0.05, the study rejects the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between gender and stress management in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Summary of the Findings

The study findings are summarized as follows:

- 1) The study showed a weak positive correlation between male teachers' and stress management and a moderate positive relationship between female teachers and stress management in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study also showed significant relationship between gender and Stress Management in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State
- 2) The study showed a moderate positive correlation between age and stress management in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study also showed a significant relationship between ages and Stress Management in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Discussion of findings

Relationship between teachers' gender and stress management in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Finding from the study showed a weak positive correlation between male teachers' and stress management and a moderate positive relationship between female teachers and stress management in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study also showed a significant relationship between gender and Stress Management in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State. This finding agreed with the findings of Farkas (2017) that stated that gender of teachers is found to be significant with the level of perceived occupational stress. Observations were that male had higher stress and anxiety than female. Also in accordance to Ohaka (2019) that discovered that, regular and effective exercise, relaxation and meditation, professional counselling and advise, change of lifestyle and medication are the identifiable ways of managing stress among female teachers, on the other hand the findings of this present study is in disagreement to that of Akomolafe (2018) which found no significant difference between occupational stress experienced by male and female secondary school teachers. This was true as the stress management for male teachers is different from that of the female counterpart. This implies that gender is a major determinant of stress management and the difference in gender contributes to how stress is managed among teachers in secondary schools

Relationship between teachers' age and stress management in public secondary schools in Anambra State

The study showed a moderate positive correlation between age and stress management in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study also showed a significant relationship between age and Stress Management in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State. The finding of this study is in agreement with Boma *et al.*, (2019) whose findings revealed that there



is a significant difference between the independent variable age and dependent variable (stress management) among cataloguers. The finding however disagreed with Mahmood *et al.*, (2018) whose data analysis revealed that significant negative relationship was found in responses of academic managers regarding impact of age and management experience on occupational stress. Findings also showed that there is a connection between age, management experience and the way stress is perceived. Teachers' performance also showed that age tended to affect teachers' directorial and decision-making performance, including stress management. That older teachers generally spent more years on the job, attended more seminars and participated in relevant professional discussions that exposed them to new techniques of managing stress. However, on the contrary, findings showed that age did not affect teachers stress management.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were drawn from the findings of this study:

1. Ministry of Education should not consider teachers gender when employing teachers to any public secondary school but should organize seminars on stress management to help both male and female teachers manage their stress.
2. Ministry of Education should organize workshop regularly for new teachers that will expose them to stress management since older teachers were found to be more effective in managing stress

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