

PRINCIPALS' STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES AS CORRELATES OF TEACHERS' TASK PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

Teachers propel teaching and learning in the school. This study investigated principals' stress management techniques as correlates of teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 266 principals in 266 public secondary schools in Anambra State. Census sampling procedure was used for the study. The instruments for data collection were two sets of structured questionnaires by the researcher tagged; "Principals' Stress Management Techniques' Questionnaire (PSMTQ)" and "Teachers' Task Performance Questionnaire (TTPQ)". The face validity of the instruments was established by three experts. The construct validity was established using Principal Component Analysis Approach. The internal consistency of the instruments was determined using Cronbach Alpha procedure. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) and test of significance of correlation was used to analyze the collected data. Findings revealed that there is a low positive relationship between principals' choosing priority stress management technique, and teachers' task performance but they are not significantly related. The result of the study also indicated that there is a moderate positive and significant relationship between principals' time management stress management technique and teachers' task performance. The study also showed that principals' communication stress management technique is positively and significantly related and teachers' task performance. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that Principals should not be rigid in choosing actions according to predetermined priorities, they should be flexible and make changes if the need arises to ensure that school goals are achieved. Principals should educate staff and students on the importance of time management and ensure that the school time table is available to guide all the school activities to avoid time wasters and stress for enhanced and sustained teaching and learning.

Principals should ensure that there is effective communication in the school and organize regular trainings for staff and students on the effects of stress

Keywords: Stress, Stress Management, Teachers' Task Performance.

Introduction

Educational is the bedrock of national development and a vital instrument for manpower and society development. Ejide (2021) stressed that education is the key to socio-economic and political development. Education can be obtained formally or informally. Secondary education is one of the levels of formal education. Principals as head in secondary schools oversee all the activities concerning the set educational objectives. Teachers are among the staff in secondary schools. Ohamobi in Obikeze et al. (2019) defined teachers as classroom managers who has acquired knowledge on principles and practice of teaching from any recognized institutions. Teachers perform a lot of tasks. Teachers help to shape the future of young learners. Teachers provide them education and knowledge. They are like an encouraging factor, confident boosts and moral supports for students through social interaction, communication and learning. They perform a lot of tasks in the school, in and outside the classroom. Hwang et al., (2017) opined that teachers' task performance are the actions they perform in schools in order to achieve educational goals. This study defined teachers' task performance as an act of executing an assigned task which is geared towards the achievement of educational goals and objectives. Pezaro (2022) maintained that the task which teachers are supposed to perform in schools include; curriculum implementation, delivery of instruction, resource providing, classroom management, conducting assessments, motivating students, participating in extracurricular activities. It is pertinent for principals to apply the management technique that foster teachers' motivation and by extension enhance their performance, similarly, if inappropriate technique is utilized, stress may arise. Teachers cannot achieve much in the classroom and in the school in general if the work environment is dominated by stress.

Stress is a word used to describe the emotional state of a person. It is a universal phenomenon. Different people have defined stress in various ways depending on the situation relating to the stress. Yasmin et al. (2022) opined that stress is a biological term which refers to the consequences of the failure of a human or animal body to respond appropriately to emotional or physical threats to the organism, whether actual or imagined. It can also be defined as the strain from the conflict between one's external environment and one's self, leading to emotional and physical pressure. Stress is a psychological process which results from the interaction of the individual with the environment and results in disturbances caused to the psychological and social systems, depending on the individual's characteristics (Akhlaq in Chukwu et al., 2017).

There are various stress management techniques. Stress management techniques are method or ways of handling stress. Panigrahi (2018) suggested the following stress management techniques for principals; reduction of working hours, educating employees to develop a balance between work and life, use of technology, adopting effective communication, handling security fears, choosing priority, having good retirement plans for staff, job security, diversity in the workplace. Stress management technique could also be direct action, positive palliative, embarking on development programmes, working with professionals, classroom management, orientation among others. Working with professional teachers and other staff can go a long way in helping principals to manage stress in the school. Sahoo (2016) maintained that stress

managing techniques in an organisation includes; managing time, managing workload, managing change, managing people and managing conflict Yasmin et al. (2022) opined that stress management techniques include; confronting the stressor, time management, healthy living, team management, maintaining cordial relationship with the staff, employing qualified and experienced staff, use of assistants, adopting problem solving methods, changing the source of stress, proper planning, humour and positive thinking. This work examined choosing priority, time management and communication stress management techniques.

Choosing priority involves selecting between or among various alternatives. It is weighing the issues at hand in order to decide the most pressing ones and attend to them first while leaving the others at a later time. The principals welcome all sorts of issues in the school which could come from students, teaching staff, non teaching staff, parents and even the Ministry of Education. Sometimes conflicts from interpersonal relationship among teachers, conflict as a result of sharing or workload or other activities that might come up among teachers. Principals should access the issues and discern appropriately emergent ones needing immediate attention to avoid further stress.

Time management has to do with the way activities are handled in relation to the available time. In other words, it is the manner time is managed. Time is one of the resources which should be carefully managed for effective actualisation of pre-determined goals. Time management is the ability to schedule time in order to complete a task within a given time frame (Oladipo & Oladejo, 2018). Time management is the ability to schedule time in order to complete a task within a given time frame (Cyril, 2015). Principals have many tasks that need to be accomplished within a limited time. A critical analysis of people's daily activities shows that in one way or the other time was not managed properly. Since time cannot be manipulated or substituted with other resources, there is every need for principals not to waste the available time on issues that are less important while leaving the important ones.

Communication involves the sharing of information between a person and another or among a group of persons through different means. Ekufu and Anetoh (2022) defined communication as the process of exchanging ideas, receiving and understanding messages with one another through various means. Osuala in Nwalado (2016) opined that it is the transmission of information, which involves the inter-change and opinion which can take many forms like face-face conversation, telephone calls, letters, reports, tabulation. Communication is the process of conveying information from one person or from a group of persons, department or organisation to another through the post, telephone, radio, message of service or by other means which include transmission of one memorandum to another, reports, instructions, minutes of meetings, management decisions, invoices, orders, estimates, drawings. Manafa et al. (2021) stressed that communication is the life-wire of an organisation and any principal who wants to prevent a disappointing situation, conflict or disorder must communicate because it is the epitome of effective administration.

Elujekwute et al. (2021) observed a decline in the task performance of teachers. This is evidenced from their late coming to school, absenteeism, leaving the school premises before school dismissal, negligence of duty, inability to cover the curriculum content, late submission of students examination scores teaching without adequate instructional materials among others in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Statement of the problem

The decline in the task performance of teachers observed by the researchers is worrisome owing to the fact that teachers are the life-wire of teaching and learning. The decline is evidenced by the negative behaviour of teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State. They come to school late, leave without permission most times, absent themselves from school with flimsy excuses, fail to have up to date lesson plan and note, many do not cover the curriculum content and teach without proper instructional materials. The researchers are worried because if the task performance of teachers is not enhanced, the academic and the positive general learning outcome students are supposed to acquire will be a shadow of the expectation. This invariably would affect individuals and the society in general negatively. It is very important that the cause of decline in teachers' task performance be examined and solution proffered to ensure a positive headway in teaching and learning in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The statement of the problem of this study is therefore posed as a question: Could the negative behaviours of teachers witnessed by the researchers in public secondary schools in Anambra State be as a result of inadequate educational facilities, negative learning attitude of students, Principals leadership style, stress in relation to their tasks and the way Principals handle them among others? It is against this scenery that this study examined principals' stress management techniques as they relate to teachers' task performance in Anambra State's public secondary schools.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine Principals' stress management techniques as correlates of teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the extent of the relationship between choosing priority stress management and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. examine the extent of the relationship between time management and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. ascertain the extent of the relationship between communication stress management and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the extent of the relationship between choosing priority stress management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What is the extent of the relationship between time management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
3. What is the extent of the relationship between communication stress management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses further guided the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between choosing priority stress management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. There is no significant relationship between time management stress management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. There is no significant relationship between communication stress management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Method

Correlational research design was adopted for this study. The population for this study consisted of 266 principals in the 266 public secondary schools in the six education zones of Anambra State (Department of Planning Research and Statistics, Post Primary Schools Service Commission [PPSSC], Awka 2023). All the principals were used for the study; hence, census sampling technique was used for the study. The study was guided by three research questions and three null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significant. The two instruments for data collection were structured questionnaire by the researchers titled; "Principals' Stress Management Techniques' Questionnaire (PSMTQ)" and "Teachers' Task Performance Questionnaire (TTPQ)".

The first instrument – "Principals' Stress Management Techniques' Questionnaire (PASMTQ)", was structured by the researcher. This instrument has two sections. Section A contains the personal information of the respondents while Section B has five Clusters, I-V to elicit data on Principals' stress management techniques. Cluster I contains 10 items on choosing priority technique, Cluster II contains 10 items on time management technique, Cluster III contains 10 items on communication technique. The items are placed on a 4-point rating scale for the responses which were employed thus; Very Great Extent (VGE), Great Extent (GE), Low Extent (LE), Very Low Extent (VLE) with the scoring of 4 points, 3 points, 2 points and 1 point respectively.

The second instrument – TTPQ contains 20 items which elicited data on teachers' task performance. The items on this instrument were placed on a 4-point rating scale for the responses of Very Great Extent (VGE), Great Extent (GE), Low Extent (LE), Very Low Extent (VLE) with the scoring of 4 points, 3 points, 2 points and 1 point respectively. The items on the instruments were used to answer the three research questions by the respondents and elicit data for analysis for the study.

The face validity of the instruments were established by three experts. The construct validity of the instruments were also established using Principal Component Analysis approach. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) as a measure of sampling adequacy of the instruments gave a value of 0.76. The higher value of this result which is greater than 0.500 indicated that the number of respondents in the study were large enough to perform the Principal Component Analysis (PCA). The internal consistency of the instruments was established using Cronbach Alpha procedure. The average reliability of the instrument yielded coefficient of 0.81. The instruments were administered to the respondents through a direct approach. 248 instruments out of 266 instruments administered were returned (93% return rate) Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used to analyze the research questions while test of significance of correlation (r) was used to test the null hypotheses. The analysis was carried

out using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Questions 1

What is the extent of the relationship between choosing priority stress management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: Pearson (r) of the extent of the relationship between choosing priority stress management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Sources of variation	N	Choosing priority stress management technique	Teachers' task performance	Remark
Choosing priority stress management technique	248	1.000	0.326 ^{xx}	Low positive relationship
Teachers' task performance	248	0.326 ^{xx}	1.000	

^{xx}Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As shown in Table 1, the Pearson's (r) of the relationship between principals' choosing priority stress management technique and teacher's task performance was 0.326 which revealed a low positive relationship (r = 0.326, N = 256). This revealed that there was a low positive relationship between principals' choosing priority stress management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions 2

What is the extent of the relationship between time management stress management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: Pearson (r) of the extent of the relationship between time management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Sources of variation	N	Time management stress management technique	Teachers' task performance	Remark
Time management technique	248	1.000	0.599 ^{xx}	Moderate positive relationship
Teachers' task performance	248	0.599 ^{xx}	1.000	

^{xx}Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 depicted that the Pearson's (r) of the relationship between principals' time management stress management technique and teacher's task performance was 0.599 which displayed a moderate positive relationship ($r = 0.699$, $N = 256$). This revealed that there was a moderate positive relationship between principals' time management stress management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions 3

What is the extent of the relationship between communication stress management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 3: Pearson (r) of the extent of the relationship between communication stress management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Sources of variation	N	Communication stress management technique	Teachers' task performance	Remark
Communication stress management technique	248	1.000	0.487 ^{xx}	Moderate positive relationship
Teachers' task performance	248	0.487 ^{xx}	1.000	

^{xx} Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Pearson (r) displayed on Table 3 revealed that the relationship between principals' communication stress management technique and teacher's task performance was 0.487 which indicated a moderate positive relationship ($r = 0.487$, $N = 256$). This suggested that there was a moderate positive relationship between principals' communication stress management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between choosing priority stress management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 1: Test of significance of Pearson's correlation of choosing priority stress management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Sources of variation	N	Coefficient (r)	r^2	p-value	Remark
choosing priority stress management technique	248	0.326	0.106	0.062	Not Significant

Teachers’ task performance 248

Result from Table 4, revealed that p-value of 0.062 was greater than 0.05 level of significance which indicated that the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between principals’ choosing priority stress management technique and teachers’ task performance was not rejected ($r, 256 = 0.326, p= 0.062$). Despite that, there is no significant relationship between principals’ choosing priority stress management technique and teachers’ task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between time management stress management technique and teachers’ task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 5: Test of significance of Pearson’s correlation of time management technique and teachers’ task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Sources of variation	N	Coefficient (r)	r ²	p-value	Remark
Time management technique	248	0.599	0.358	0.000	Significant
Teachers’ task performance	248				

As displayed in Table 5, the p-value of 0.000 was less than 0.05 level of significance which meant that the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between principals’ time management stress management technique and teachers’ task performance was rejected ($r, 256 = 0.599, p= 0.000$). More so, there is a significant relationship between principals’ time management stress management technique and teachers’ task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant relationship between communication stress management technique and teachers’ task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 6: Test of significance of Pearson’s correlation of communication stress management technique and teachers’ task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Sources of variation	N	Coefficient (r)	r ²	p-value	Remark
communication stress management technique	248	0.487	0.237	0.000	Significant

Teachers' task 248
performance

Findings from Table 6 indicated that p-value of 0.000 was less than 0.05 alpha level which indicated that the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between principals' communication stress management technique and teachers' task performance was rejected ($r, 256 = 0.487, p = 0.000$). However, there is a significant relationship between principals' communication stress management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Discussion of findings

Results of the study indicated that there is a low positive relationship between principals' choosing priority stress management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The test of hypothesis 1 indicated that the p-value of 0.062 was greater than 0.05 level of significance which meant that the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between principals' choosing priority stress management technique and teachers' task performance was not rejected. Thus, there is no significant relationship between principals' choosing priority stress management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This showed that making a scale of preference or making a list of activities and adhering to them to reduce stress might be good but it is not a determinant of teachers' task performance. It might not be necessary for principals to adhere strictly to the planned activities in their order of priority because unplanned activities might come up which if not handled immediately might result to serious stress that could hinder the task performance of teachers. This finding does not support the findings of Dankade et al. (2016) which revealed that one of the causes of poor task performance of teachers is work overload resulting from non adherence to set priorities.

Results of the work indicated that there is a moderate positive relationship between principals' time management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The test of hypothesis 2 revealed that the p-value of 0.000 was less than 0.05 level of significance which meant that the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between principals' time management technique and teachers' task performance was rejected. Hence, there is a significant relationship between principals' time management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This depicted that if proper time management technique is maintained by principals in the school, teachers task performance would continuously be enhanced. The school time table should guide all the school activities to avoid time wasters and stress so that teachers will perform their task very well evidenced through enhanced and sustained learning output. This finding agrees with the findings of Chukwu and Ezepue (2017) who found out that proper time management reduces stress and enhances productivity. However, the findings from Momoh et al. (2021) revealed that work stress has no significant impact on teachers task performance in government secondary schools in Jos North Local Government Area. The disparity in the results might be due to the difference in the geographical location of the studies.

The study's findings revealed that there is a moderate positive relationship between principals' communication stress management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Hypothesis three was tested, and it was discovered that there is a link between principals' communication stress management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between principals' communication stress management technique and teachers' task performance was rejected. This means that the importance of communication in reducing stress and enhancing teachers' task performance cannot be over emphasized. All the activities that need to be carried out in the school should be duly communicated to the people involved beforehand to avoid stress, mistake and low task performance especially by teachers because they play vital roles in instructional delivery and achieving of educational goals. This finding supports Liberman (2019) and Finkle (2022) who maintained that effective communication reduces stress and enhances performance in an organization.

Conclusion

The result of this study indicated that there is a low positive relationship between principals' choosing priority stress management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State but they are not significantly related. This meant that choosing priority stress management technique is not a strong determinant of teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The result of the study also indicated that there is a moderate positive and significant relationship between principals' time management stress management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. It was revealed from study that there is a link between principals' communication stress management technique and teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State because they are positively and significantly related. Hence it is a strong determinant of teachers' task performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

In conclusion, setting priority and choosing the most pressing need or activity first before others even if it was not listed originally, proper management of time and effective communication in the school would help to reduce stress for teachers. Reduction and proper management of stress in the school by Principals would help to make teachers to continue to channel their efforts to school activities willingly and peacefully for the achievement of the predetermined educational goals.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Principals should not be rigid in choosing actions according to predetermined priorities, they should be flexible and make changes if the need arises to ensure that school goals are achieved.
2. Principals should educate staff and students on the importance of time management and ensure that the school time table is available to guide all the school activities to avoid time wasters and stress for enhanced and sustained teaching and learning.

3. There should be adequate communication in the school through the use of notice board, social media and face to face in the school to ensure that teachers are aware of changes and requirements at any given point in time. Principals should ensure that students, teachers and non-teaching staff are well informed about the effects of stress through regular training programmes which might be sponsored by well meaning individuals, groups or stake holders in education in order to maintain a balance between work and healthy life.

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