

# THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLEDGE

## Job Stress and Coping Strategies of Female Teachers in Public Secondary Schools in Aniocha North L.G.A of Delta State, Nigeria

**Anaenyeonu, Ifeoma .M.**

Research Fellow, Department of Institute of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

**Ikuelogbon Olamire James**

Research Fellow, Department of Institute of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

**Obiano Dinah Ifeinaya**

Ph.D. Student, Department of Educational Management  
Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Enugu, Nigeria

### **Abstract**

*This study is descriptive survey research carried out to ascertain job related stress among female teachers in public secondary schools in Aniocha North L.G.A. of Delta state. A sample of 100 female teachers was used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a 24-item questionnaire. The research questions were answered using mean scores and standard deviations. The findings revealed that the level of stress among female teachers is significantly high which make them often engaged in some coping behaviours. Also, it was revealed that there are some factors causing stress among female teachers. Likewise, the study revealed some strategies that could be adopted to reduce job related stress among female teachers. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that female teachers should dedicate more time to sport activities, there should be expertise such as counselors in the schools so as to assists anyone going through stressful situations in the schools. Government should make provision sporting and recreational centers in the school and that school authorities should ensure that the work assigned everyone is minimal enough so as to reduce stress among the female teachers.*

**Keywords:** Job stress, coping strategies, female teachers

### **1. Introduction**

The concept of job/occupation stress has been a great concern for the past decades among employees and employers in different governmental and non-governmental organizations including schools, but little attention have been paid to it by these organizations. Job related stress refers to stress cause by or made worse by work. It occurs when a person perceives the work environment in such a way that his or her reaction involves feelings of an inability to cope (Health and Safety Authority, 2006). Work related stress occurs when there is a mismatch between the demands of the job and the resources and capabilities of the individual work to meet those demands (Blaud, Kenyon and Lekhi, 2007).

Stress as a concept has become a word not only used in physics, medicine, psychology and management sciences but also in educational sector. This can be attributed to the fact that as academic female teachers carry out their day-to-day activities, they do come to experience opportunities or threats they perceive so critical that they feel they might not be able to handle or deal with effectively (Bamisaiye, 2003). This situation may create a feeling of physical, psychological, mental, emotional and sometimes spiritual tension that threatens their ability to cope with these challenges, problems or opportunities associated with the job. The signs and symptoms of stress are personal. The symptoms could be internal or external as the case may be.

Stress as conceptualized by Uzoka (2005) is pressure from an adverse force or influence that imposes unusual demand on an organism. He went on to explain that stress occurs when there are demands on the person which tax or exceed the person's adjustive resources. Stress is a biological phenomenon experienced by people when faced with adverse conditions. The stimuli that cause stress are called stressor stimuli or stressors. Stress that is peculiar to working mothers are often classifies under societal, home, organizational and role-related stress (Oboegbulem 2002). Ezeilo (2005) observed that severe stress in the Nigerian workforce seems to be the rule rather than exception. Like any other person changes and vicissitudes of life are stressful. Societal stress as far as female teachers are concerned results from pressure put on them by members of their families, community and others in the societal to be like others, or at least change their economic and social status (Kinman and Wray, 2013). There seems to be numerous common causes of job (teaching) related stress including lack of free time, job environment problem, high workloads, low salary, unrealistic deadlines, job insecurity, lack of clarity of role, and a sense of feeling undervalued, among others (Adebisi, 2011). Although a high level of stress has been observed among academic staff generally, but there seems to be a strong evidence to believe that female teachers could represent a particularly vulnerable occupational group.

However, teaching is a stressful occupation; as a result, teacher stress may be described in terms of those uncomfortable agitations which workers in this profession often experience (Oboegbulem, 2002). Such experiences may result, particularly from aspect of their jobs which may cause them fear or anxiety, discomfort, anger or depression, as well as other associated psychological disorders. Oboegbulem asserts that, among the white-collar occupational groups, teachers are the most exposed to job-related stress. Also, it has been found that stress does reduce job efficiency and effectiveness in any occupation. In fact, this assertion is truer in the teaching profession than in any other ((Adebiyi, 2011). Blasé (2004) observed that teacher stress affects not only the quality of the teaching staff, but also both individual and group performance in the classroom. This indicated that for us to achieve teaching efficiency and effectiveness there is need to address this issue of stress in the secondary schools.

In this regards, female teachers (working mothers) refers to those mothers who took teaching as their professional career; they engage in teaching students at all levels of education. Female teachers (working mothers) play many roles, and want to be their best in all of them; indeed, the roles of mother, worker and partner require nothing less than their best. Working mothers are sometimes busy, and often find that the unpredictability of parenting, especially parenting small children, leads to additional stress. If a working mother is preoccupied and stressed, she may be less efficient at her job and possibly prone to mistakes that need correcting or a slow rate of productivity (Lee, 2002). If her child is feeling stressed and out-of-sorts, there is more potential for further conflicts, hurt feelings and difficulty during the day. When stress persists among female teachers, there is a tendency for an occurrence of fatigue, breakdown in human perceptual machines, or even damages to the body systems, which may result in mental physical failure (Uzoka, 2005). Ofoegbu and Nwadiani (2006) found that the level of stress among academic female teachers in secondary schools was high. Therefore, it seems that stress is a major factor hindering teacher productivity in the secondary schools.

However, Oboegbulem (2004) stipulated that some teachers diverse certain coping behaviours to address stressful situations. Coping has been defined as the behavioral and cognitive efforts a person uses to manage the demands of a stressful situation (Chang and Strunk, 2011). Mearns and Chain (2003) define coping as the person's cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage the internal and external demands in the person-environment transaction. Coping refers to the thoughts and acts people use to meet the internal and external demands of a stressful situation. In times of stress, an individual normally engages in certain coping strategies to handle the stressful situations and their associated emotions In this study, coping is referred to as the cognitive and behavioral efforts used by an individual to handle difficulties and stress at work.

Stress is a major issue that has seriously affected staff of institutions in Nigeria. Stress in among staff can have negative consequences if not properly controlled (Smith, 2002). According to Bamisaiye (2003) the ability to deal with it can mean the difference between success and failure. Therefore, Job stress can have a substantial negative effect on physical and emotional health. However, the way a person perceives a situation will determine whether it will be stressful or not and even the outcome of stress. Accordingly, any physical environment like a noisy classroom or the continuous need for change of status seems to be stressful. The study is therefore an attempt to ascertain job stress and coping strategies of female teachers in public secondary in Delta State.

### *1.1. Statement of the Problem*

Job stress has been a great concern for the past decades among employees and employers in different governmental and non-governmental organizations including teaching profession. Stress, from whatever perspective one looks at it, is an environmental problem manifested by a state of dis-equilibrium in an individual as he responds to demands made on him or her. It is said to occur when one finds that his capabilities and resources cannot adequately meet the demands imposed by the environment. In most cases one is not clear about the reasons of stress even though one is experiencing it. Also, it should be understood that the stress of an individual worker in an organization not only affects the institution concerned but also the products (students) of such institution. However, teaching been a stressful occupation, it seems that there is high level of stress among academic teachers in the secondary schools. Likewise, female teachers (working mothers) are sometimes notoriously busy, and often find that the unpredictability of parenting, especially parenting small children, leads to additional stress. Moreover, it seems that there are some factors causing stress and stressful situations among female teachers in the secondary schools. It is against these indices that the researcher deemed it necessary to ascertain job stress and coping strategies of female teachers in public secondary schools in Aniocha North L.G.A of Delta state.

### *1.2. Purpose of the Study*

The main purpose of this study is to ascertain job stress and coping strategies of female teachers (working mothers) in public secondary schools in Aniocha North L.G.A of Delta state. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- Determine the level of job related stress among female teachers in the Aniocha North L.G.A;
- Find out the causes of job related stress among female teachers in the L.G.A;
- Proffer solutions to job related stress among female teachers in the L.G.A.

### *1.3. Research Question*

The following research questions guided the study:

- What are the perceived levels of job related stress among female teachers in the L.G.A?
- What are the Causes of job related stress among female teachers in the L.G.A?
- What are the possible solutions to job related stress among female teachers in the L.G.A?

## 2. Methodology

The study was carried out in Aniocha North L.G.A of Delta state. Aniocha North is located in the coastal area, that is, the oil region of Delta state with total number of 30 secondary schools. Aniocha North is chosen for this study because of the observed persistent of job stress among secondary school teachers in the L.G.A and this informed the researcher's choice of carrying out this study there. The population of this study comprises all the 250 female teachers' of public senior secondary schools in the Local Government Area L.G.A. Source: Statistic and Research Unit of Delta State ministry of education Asaba, 2011/2012 Data. (See appendix B). The sample size of the study is 100. The sample size was selected using simple random technique, and this was done through balloting. That is, three (3) female teachers were sampled respectively from each secondary school to ascertain their job stress and coping strategies divers to address stressful situations in the Local Government Area. The instrument is a structured questionnaire titled, Questionnaire on Job Stress and Coping Strategies of Female Teachers (QJSCSFT). The instrument (QJSCSFT) was subjected to face validation by two experts, one in guidance and counseling one in Measurement and Evaluation, all from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the internal consistency and overall reliability Coefficient of 0.84 was obtained. A total of 100 copies of the questionnaires were administered on the subjects by the researchers. The data collected were analyzed using percentage mean scores and Standard Deviation (SD) were employed in answering the four research questions. Therefore, the mean score which determined the acceptance level was 2.50 to 3.49 and above, while scores from 0.49 to 2.49 were considered unaccepted.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Research Question One

- What are the perceived levels of job related stress among female teachers in the L.G.A?

The data for answering the above research question are presented on table 1 below.

S/N	ITEMS	$\bar{X}$	SD	RMK
1	I am stressed whenever work load is too much	2.75	0.68	A
2	Combination of my work demands and child bearing is stressful	3.42	0.62	A
3	Whenever I am stressed, i don't usually relate with my husband	3.22	0,57	A
4	Stress make me to achieve far below more work than usual (hard work)	2.87	0.64	A
5	Stress usually make it difficult for me to concentrate on what one is doing	2.77	0.62	A
6	I usually experience fair and tie in my body when going through stressful situation	3.24	1.12	A
	Overall mean	2.67	0.62	A

*Table 1: Mean Responses of Female Teachers on Perceived Levels of Job Related Stress among Female Teachers in Aniocha North Local Government (N = 100)*

Result of data analysis presented on table 1 shown an overwhelming support that the level of stress among female teachers (working mothers) is significant as all the respondents agree in all the items in this cluster. The grand mean for the responses is 3.26 and SD of 0.62 on a 4-point scale. The grand mean is above 2.5 decision rule; therefore it shows that stress exist among female teachers in Aniocha North Local Government of Delta state.

### 3.2. Research Question Two

- What are the Causes of job related stress among female teachers in the L.G.A?

The data for answering the above research question are presented on table 2 below.

S/N	ITEMS	$\bar{X}$	SD	RMK
(7)	Combination of work demands with child bearing	3.58	1.13	A
(8)	Compilation of students' results	3.24	1.12	A
(9)	Students indiscipline	3.26	0.44	A
(10)	Child rearing and other home assignments	3.19	0.34	A
(11)	Make overload (work overload)	3.35	0.34	A
(12)	Doing official things that are against my judgment	2.6	1.20	A
	Cluster mean	3.26	0.62	A

Table 2: Mean Responses of Female Teachers on Causes of Job Related Stress Among Female Teachers in Aniocha North Local Government (N = 100)

Result of data analysis presented on table 2 shows that combination of work demands with child bearing , compilation of students' results, students indiscipline, child rearing and other home assignments, Make overload (work overload) and Make overload (work overload) are causes of stress for female teachers (working mothers) in Aniocha L.G.A of Delta State as indicated in their mean responses. On the 4-point scale grand mean responses is 2.67 which is above the 2.5 decision rule and hence it can be concluded that these are stressor for working mothers.

### 3.3. Research Question Three

- What are the possible solutions to job related stress among female teachers in the L.G.A?

The data for answering the above research question are presented on table 3 below.

S/N	ITEMS	$\bar{X}$	SD	RMK
(19)	Dedicating more time to religious activities and prayers	3.65	0.64	A
(20)	Engaging in sporting activities and exercises to keep fit	2.67	0.62	A
(21)	Seeking counsel from experienced and expertise counselor	2.86	0.64	A
(22)	Talking positively to self/positive thinking	2.76	0.58	A
(23)	Balanced diet and adequate Sleep	3.24	0.58	A
(24)	Removing oneself from the stressful situation	2.67	0.62	A
	GRAND MEAN	2.87	0.62	A

Table 3: Mean Responses of Female Teachers on Possible Solution to Job Related Stress among Female Teachers in Aniocha North Local Government (N = 100)

Result of data analysis presented on table 3 showed an overwhelming support that all the items in the cluster can actually help in remedial stress among female teachers (working mothers) as all the respondents agree in all the items in this cluster. The grand mean for the responses is 3.26 and SD of 0.62 on a 4-point scale. The grand mean is above 2.5 decision rule; therefore it shows that these strategies suggested in the cluster could actually serve as therapy for reducing stress among female teachers (working mothers) in Aniocha North Local Government of Delta state.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1. Perceived Level of Job Related Stress among Female Teachers in Aniocha North L.G.A.

The results obtained from research question 1 revealed that the level of stress among female teachers (working mothers) is significantly high.

This results is consonant with the study of Kantas (2001) reported that female teachers experience higher levels of stress and greater job dissatisfaction that usually comes from negative classroom conditions, pupils' behaviour and the work and family interaction. Also, the study concur with the work of Anup and Sharma (2006) who submitted that female teachers have been found to experience more stress than their male counterparts.

#### 4.2. The Causes of Job Related Stress among Female Teachers in Aniocha North L.G.A.

The results obtained from research question 2 revealed that the causes of stress among female teachers include combination of work demands with child bearing, compilation of students' results, students' indiscipline, and child rearing and other home assignments.

The findings is in agreement with the work of Oghenetega (2014) who reported that the cause of job stress among female teachers in higher institutions include: too much work load, combining work demand with child bearing, rearing, student indiscipline marking and compilation of students results, fear of being laid off and overtime working hours.

#### 4.3. The Possible Solution to Job Stress among Working Mothers in Aniocha North L.G.A.

The results obtained from research question 3 revealed that the possible solutions to job related stress among female teachers include dedicating more time to religious activities and prayers, seeking counsel from experienced and expertise counselor, talking positively to self/positive thinking and balanced diet and adequate Sleep.

The findings are consistent with the findings of the study by Patrick (2012) who also asserted that some of the most effective ways of coping with stress including talk about the problem with a trusted one use of relaxation techniques, exercising, positive thinking, withdrawing from the sources, and keeping busy.

### 5. Conclusion

Stress is a major issue that has seriously affected staff of institutions in Nigeria. Stress in among staff can have negative consequences if not properly controlled. Job stress has been a great concern for the past decades among employees and employers in different governmental and non-governmental organizations including teaching profession. Therefore, the study concluded that the level of stress among female teachers is significantly high. Causes of stress among female teachers include combination of work demands with child bearing, compilation of students' results, students' indiscipline, and child rearing and other home assignments. Coping behaviours often utilize by female teachers include avoiding domestic work at home, Chewing gum, Isolation of oneself from colleagues, Getting angry and yelling at someone. Possible solutions to job related stress among female teachers include dedicating more time to religious activities and prayers, seeking counsel from experienced and expertise counselor, talking positively to self/positive thinking and balanced diet and adequate Sleep.

### 6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- Female teachers should dedicate more time to sport activities, seeking counsel from experienced and expertise counselor, talking positively to self/positive thinking and balanced diet and adequate Sleep so as to remedial stressors among them and in return improve their performance at work.
- Government should make provision sporting and recreational centers in the schools.
- There should be expert counselors in the schools so as to assist any female teacher going through stressful situations in the schools.
- School authorities should ensure that the work assigned everyone is minimal enough so as to reduce stress among the female teachers.

### 7. References

- i. Abolarin E. E. (1997). A cross-ethnic comparison of support network in widowhood in Nigeria. *Unpublished Ph.d. Thesis* Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Ilorin.
- ii. Adebisi, D. (2011). Prevalence of Stress among University of Ado-Ekiti Lecturers. (*Unpublished Thesis*).
- iii. Adeoye, E.A. (1991): "Correlates of job stress among university professors in Nigeria," *The Nigerian Journal of Guidance and Counseling*, 4 (1&2), 117 – 126.
- iv. Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo, 1 – 13 may). Burns, S.L. and Burns , K (1996), *The Medical Basis of Stress, Depression, Anxiety, Sleepproblems, and Drug Use*, 2nd ed, New York : Pergamon Press.
- v. Azelama, J. (2005), Administration of Nigerian Tertiary Institutions. Benin City: Ever Blessed Publishers.
- vi. Bamisaiye, E.A. (1993), "Coping with Crisis, Stress and Tension in Higher Educational Institutions" (A paper presented at the 1st Annual Conference of the school of Education,
- vii. Billings, G. (2004). Seven steps for creating a satisfying retirement. Retrieved August 7 2004 from <http://www.retireplanabout.com>
- viii. Cooper, Carry and Straw, Alison (1998), *Successful Stress Management*, London: Paul
- ix. Denga, D.O. (1996). Human engineering for high productivity in industrial and other work organizations. Calabar: Rapid Educational Publishers Limited.
- x. Elezua, C. C. (1998). Counselling for retirement. *The Counsellor*, 16, 1, 6-10. Industrial Training Fund (ITF, 2004). *Life in retirement*. Jos: Center for Excellence Press.
- xi. Ezeilo, N.B. & Chukwu, C. (2005), Stress in the Undergraduate. In Bernice Ezeilo Ed. Enugu: SNAAP Press Ltd.
- xii. Fadia, V. (1995), *Stress Management*. Torrance, C. A.: Homestead Publishing Co., Inc.
- xiii. Famojuro, E. D. (2003), "Stress and Sex Differences in the Work Place", *Nigerian Journal of Counselling and Development*, 2(1): 1-7.
- xiv. King, J. C and Peart, M. J (2001), *Teachers in Canada: Their Work and Quality of Life*. Ottawa: BCTF: Research Reports

- xv. Kinman, G. and Wray, S. (2013). *Higher Stress: A survey of stress and well-being among staff in higher Education*, University and College Union.2012 Occupational Stress Survey.
- xvi. Kolawole, S. A. & Mallum, A. Y. (August, 2004). Retirement counselling: Challenges, opportunities and coping strategies. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON), Maiduguri, Nigeria.
- xvii. Lazarus, R.S. (1991). Psychological stress in the workplace. *Journal of Social Behaviour and Personality*, 6, 1– 13.
- xviii. Lee, David (2002), "Employee Stress and Performance", *HumanNature@Work*.
- xix. Marceau, G. (1998). *Retirement strategies*. Retrieved July 22, 2003 from <http://www.marketingoptions.com/c.gm143.htm>
- xx. Mbotto, A. A. (2004). *Pension administration in Nigeria schemeformation and management*: Calabar. Clear Line Publishers.
- xxi. Mgbenkemdi, E.H. (2003). Coping Strategies, Marital Conflict and Depression Among Parents Living with Mentally Retarded Children. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, ESUT.
- xxii. Mirella, H. G. (2003). "Stress in the Workplace", *Management Magazine*, 7 (August): 19 –21.
- xxiii. Mmaduakomam, A.E. (2000). Occupational stress counselling for workers survival. Enugu: Academic Publishing Company.
- xxiv. Nworgu, B.G. (2006). *Educational research: basic issues and methodology*. (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Nsukka: University Trust Publishers.
- xxv. Obiora, N., Ifeka, E. O., and Ejedafiru, E.F. (2013). Harnessing Information and Communication Technology for 21st Century Library Education in Nigeria. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 13(2), 70-74.
- xxvi. Oboegbulam, A.I. (2002), *Teacher Stress Management*. Lagos: Vista Books Limited
- xxvii. Ode, T. A. (2000). Counselling needs of adolescents. Paper presented at the Department of Guidance and counselling Delta State University Seminar (DELSU), Abraka, Nigeria.
- xxviii. Odebunmi, A. (2001). *Understanding behaviour problems: An introduction Abeokuta*: Gbemi-Sodipo Press Limited.
- xxix. Ofoegbu, F. and Nwandiani, M. (2006). Level of perceived stress among lecturers in Nigeria Universities. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 33 (1), 66-74.
- xxx. Okafor, J.O. (2004). Comparative Assessment of Symptoms of Depression Among Secondary School Teachers. *Health and Movement Education Journal* 1. (1), 37-43.
- xxxi. Okorodudu, R. I. (2000). Counselling for retirement in an unstable Nigerian economy: *The counselor*, 161, 88-96.
- xxxii. Olusakin, A. M. (2004). Post-retirement life styles of some Nigerians and the counselling implication. *The counselor*, 17, 1.
- xxxiii. Omeje, O. (2000). Marital conflict, coping strategies, age and psychopathology among battered women in three Eastern Nigeria State. *Ph.D Thesis, U.N.*
- xxxiv. Omoresemi, A. A. (2001). *Retirement: A real transition*. Kano: Abibos Educational Services Publication.
- xxxv. Omorogie, E. O. (2001), "An analysis of job stress and some related variables on job performance of school administrators in Delta State of Nigeria (*Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Faculty of Education, Delta State University, Abraka*).
- xxxvi. Oniye, A. O. (2001). Problems associated with retirement and implications for productive adult life. *Nigeria Journal of Gender and Development* 2 (1) 55-64.
- xxxvii. Oniye, A. O. (2004). Marital and family counselling. In A. I. Idowu (Ed). *Guidance and counselling in education (cite all the pages)* Ilorin: Indemac Publishers Nigeria Limited.
- xxxviii. Ozioko, R. E. And Nwabueze, A. U. (2010). Justification for Reform in Library and Information Science Education in Nigeria Universities. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)- ISSN 1522-0222*.
- xxxix. Rowley, R. (2000). Is higher education ready for knowledge management? *The International Journal of Educational Management*, 14, 325–333.
- xl. Se Coetzee & S Rothmann (2005) Occupational stress, organizational
- xli. Ubangha, M. B. & Akinyemi, B. A. (August, 2004). The relation of retirement planning to retirement anxiety among teachers. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of Counselling Association of Nigeria.
- xlii. Uzoka, F. A. (2005), *The Family, Family Induced Stress and Family Therapy in Family Stress Management*. Bernice Ezeilo Ed. Enugu: SNAAP Press Ltd.