

# ANALYSIS OF JOB STRESS AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS' VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL TEACHERS IN NORTH EAST, NIGERIA

Dankade, U.<sup>1</sup>, Bello, H.<sup>2</sup>, & Deba, A.<sup>3</sup>

Department of Vocational and Technical Education,  
Faculty of Education, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University,  
Bauchi, Nigeria

[farukdankade@gmail.com](mailto:farukdankade@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [ahmadualiyu@gmail.com](mailto:ahmadualiyu@gmail.com)<sup>2</sup>, [debaahmad0@gmail.com](mailto:debaahmad0@gmail.com)<sup>3</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

*The study assessed the factors associated with job stress among secondary schools vocational technical teachers in the North-east sub-region of Nigeria. Literatures were reviewed based on the objectives of the study. The design of the study was a survey; a structured questionnaire consisting of 30 items was used for data collection. 160 respondents were randomly sampled from 18 vocational secondary schools (three schools from each of the six states of the zone). The data for the study were collected and analyzed using frequency and percentage. Some of the findings of the study revealed that majority of the vocational secondary school teachers are faced with serious problem of job stress largely due to work overload, large class sizes, lack of motivation and students' indiscipline leading to poor job performance, anxiety, boredom and prostration. The study further suggested that better qualified staff be employed and more classrooms be provided to promote quality teaching and finally vocational technical teachers should be effectively motivated so that they would be encourage to remain in the profession.*

**Keywords:** *vocational technical teacher, job stress, overload and motivation*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Job stress is considered to be one of the leading work related health problems in the works of life, especially in developing countries where job stress had become the single greatest source of stress and strain among workers. Teacher's stress is a much talked of phenomena, however there is little consensus between different professional groups, that stress is a real phenomenon with a range of causal factors including individual vulnerability and systematic influences (Jackson, 2004). Job stress as complex phenomena is a very subjective experience: what may be a challenge for one person would be a stressor for another. It depends largely on one's background experience, temperament and environmental condition.

Job stress is that which derived specifically from conditions in work place, these may either cause stress initially or aggravate the stress already present due to other sources. People appear to be working longer hours more strenuously to meet expectation of job performance. Competition among workers is sharp, there is always someone else ready to "step into some ones shoes" should one be found wanting (Brewer & McMahan, 2004).

Stress may however be seen as having two dimensions. "First, there is experiential aspect, that leads to psychological state of body system distress or tension where an individual may have an unpleasant feeling. Then there is physiological aspect which can be perceived as in threatening situation the body responded with a "fight or flight" syndrome. According to Wong & Cheuk, (2005) stress is the general term applied to the pressure people felt in life. As a result of these pressures, employees develop various symptoms of stress that can harm their job performance. Hassan, (2007) considered Stress as an 'arousal reaction (positive or negative) to some job personal related stimulus.' The stimulus that causes stress is called a stressor. Stress is positive if it enable a person to perform or excel in a given situation or event. It is negative if there is excessive amount of stress that causes an individual to reduce performance. In another view Thoits, (2010) explained stress in terms of these three related concepts: Anxiety, Conflicts and Frustration. It is almost impossible to isolate these three concepts from stress. In many ways, teachers' stress has not much difference from other forms of stress.

There are some particular features which appear to make teaching more stressful than other professions. Hoffman & Woehr (2006) highlighted some common factors associated with job stress in teaching in our vocational and technical secondary schools such as long working hours of teaching and workshop practice, excessive office and managerial work load, pressures of students inspection, providing cover for teacher shortages and absents, indiscipline, unnecessary bureaucracy, etc.

Jackson (2004) reported that stress can produce both positive and negative result in teachers. Teachers tend to be affected by burnout (the extreme result of stress) more than any other public service professional. While, Bakare (2005), classified teaching as one of the most stressful profession compared to others such as police force, prison service, fire brigade, nursing, etc. the author further highlighted in a general perspective some number of stressors among Nigerian secondary school teachers in table 1. However, symptoms of stress in teachers include

anxiety and frustration at work and at home. When stress becomes too much for teachers, job performance begins to decline, in fact when stress reaches a breaking point, performance may become zero (Kyriacou, 2001).

**Table 1: Causes of Stress among TVE Teachers**

<b>Environmental Stressors</b>	<b>Organizational Stressors</b>	<b>Interpersonal Stressors</b>	<b>Private life Stressors</b>	<b>Personality Stressors</b>
i) Distance of workplace	i) Role conflicts	i) Personality conflict	i) Family problem or arguments	i) Type a personality
ii) Pollution of work environment	ii) Job ambiguity	ii) Mistrust	ii) Financial problem	ii) Intra-personal conflicts
iii) Excessive heat in work place	iii) Un productive work	iii) Lack of sport	iii) Neglect of personal concern	iii) Mental disorder
iv) Excessive noise	iv) Long meeting	iv) Office politics	iv) Poor Health	iv) Hypersensitivity
v) In adequacy of lighting, furniture	v) Lack of support	v) Physical quarrels	v) Pressure from friends	v) Hereditary traits
	vi) Office Politics	vi) Use of native		
	vii) Physical quarrel			
	viii) Use of native			

Vocational technical teachers get stress when they are not coping with their work load. According to UNESCO in Okorie (2001), vocational education is designed to prepare skilled workers for agriculture, commerce, home economics, trade and industrial occupations. This type of education is usually provided at the upper secondary level. Programmes of vocational education include general studies, practical training for the development of skills required by the chosen occupation. The emphasis is usually on practical training and is conducted mainly to prepare individual for gainful employment or for enrolment in advanced technical education programmes. Through vocational education and training, boys and girls as well as adults are trained to acquire saleable skills that are beneficial to them and to the society.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Teachers in vocational and technical secondary schools are often faced with varying degrees of both physical and mental challenges in their daily routines. However, every individual has a bearing limit, such that when exceeded may result into stress. Stressful lives have devastating effects on peoples' performance generally, and can lead to sicknesses that can kill or render it victims useless even when they remain alive. The effect of prolong stress may cause teachers to have negative attitude towards their students and teaching. Base on this background this study intends to assess some of the factors associated with job stress among secondary school vocational technical teachers within the north-east sub-region of Nigeria.

## **1.2 Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to assess the factors associated with job stress among the secondary school vocational technical teachers specifically, the study sought to:-

- i. Find out the extent to which job stress affect the performance of vocational technical teachers in their places of work.
- ii. Find out possible strategies for avoiding technical and vocational teachers' job stress.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

To achieve the objectives of the study the following research questions were formulated:

- i. What are the sources of job stress that vocational technical teachers experienced in their places of work?
- ii. To what extent does job stress affects the performance of vocational technical teachers in their place of work?
- iii. What are the possible strategies for avoiding technical and vocational teacher's job stress?

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The design of the study was a survey, which targets small group of people by selecting representative sample from the entire population. The data for the study was obtained using the questionnaire administrated to the vocational technical teachers in vocational technical Schools within the six states of the north-east sub-region of Nigeria (area of the study). The population of the study comprised of 342 teachers in the vocational secondary schools in north eastern sub-region of Nigeria. A total of 180 teachers were randomly chosen using the sample size determination table (Krejcie, and Morgan, 1970; Kotrlik and Higgins, 2001); 10 teachers from 3 vocational schools of the 6 States of the region were randomly selected to form the sample.

### **2.1 Instruments**

Data for this study were collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was made up of four sections (A, B, C and D). Section A of the questionnaire sought for personal information about the respondents, Section B, elicit information on various forms of job stress experienced by servicing vocational technical teachers while on doing their job, section C of the questionnaire sought for information on how job stresses affect the performance of servicing vocational technical teachers and section D sought for information regarding probable strategies for avoiding job stress among vocational technical teachers. The items in Section B and C, was structured using modified 4 points Likert scale of strongly agreed (SA) = 4 point, agreed (A) = 3 points, disagreed (D) = 2 points and strongly disagreed (SD) = 1 points. The reverse is the case for a negative statement.

The draft of the instrument was given to three experts from the faculty of technology education of the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi for face and content validation. Base on the comments, suggestions and inputs made by these experts, the instrument was further improved. In order to ascertain the instrument's reliability, a pilot study was carried out in three vocational schools outside the study area: the vocational secondary schools centered are located in Doma, Lafia, and Wamba in Nasarawa State. A test-retest reliability coefficient method with two weeks interval was given during the pilot study. Initially, 36 items questionnaire was designed prior to the pilot study. However, only 30 of the items were found to be reliable using Pearson product moment correlation formula. Based on the computation made; the 30 items were found to be reliable with a reliability coefficient value of 0.83. Instrument with reliability values between 0.6 - 0.9 can be considered reliable (Sidhu, 2005; Zwick et al., 2008).

## 2.2 Data Analysis

Data collected for the main study was analyzed using mean and t-test analysis. The mean was used to analysis research question 1 and 2. On the other hand, the t-test was used to test the null hypothesis in this study.

## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1 Research Question 1

Table 2 shows the results of the means responses of the forms of jobs stress that are exhibited by vocational technical teachers. Twelve items on the table are all agreed by the respondents as factors that lead to stress except in item three which indicated that teachers lack absolute freedom to enforce classroom discipline.

**Table 2: Means responses of vocational technical teachers on the sources of job stress experienced in their places of work.**

S/N	Statements	Mean	Remarks
1	There is large number of student intake with stumpy back ground in our school	3.01	Agreed
2	Provision of instructional materials is inadequate in our school	3.34	Agreed
3	Teachers lack absolute freedom to enforce discipline among students	1.93	Disagreed
4	Economic predicament affect teachers' retraining & development rate	3.24	Agreed
5	Delay in teachers' promotion is common that can lead to prostration	3.30	Agreed
6	Incidence of unethical practices influence students' behavior in our school	3.22	Agreed
7	Teachers are working for many hours due to excessive work load in our school	2.90	Agreed
8	Teachers are faced with pressure due to extra curricula activities in our school	3.02	Agreed
9	Teachers are occupied with too many schedule of duties due to their shortage in number in our school	3.00	Agreed
10	Teachers and school are poorly managed in terms of welfare and infrastructures respectively	3.05	Agreed
11	There is high moral decadence among the students in our school	3.10	Agreed
12	Teachers have low self-esteem in the face of students in our school	3.04	Agreed

### 3.2 Research Question 2

Table 3 revealed the extent to which job stress affects the performance of vocational technical teachers in the zone, i.e., teachers become seriously sick when they are over stressed, and their productivity is reduced with the exception of item six which indicated disagreement, i.e., teachers quit out from teaching profession for greener posture due to overstress.

**Table 3: Means response of respondents on the effect of job stress on the performance of vocational technical teachers.**

S/N	Statements	Mean	Remarks
1	Teachers become seriously sick when they are over stressed in our school	2.91	Agreed
2	Stress reduces teachers productivity	3.28	Agreed
3	Teachers become demoralized due to excessive stress in our school	3.24	Agreed
4	Frequent absenteeism is a popular attitude of our teachers when stressed	3.50	Agreed
5	Too much stressed leads to anxiety and boredom	2.94	Agreed
6	Stressed teachers quit out for greener posture.	2.01	Disagreed
7	Stressed teachers lost interest in the teaching profession	3.40	Agreed
8	Job stress leads to mental distress	3.32	Agreed
9	Teachers become aggressive when they are over stressed.	2.92	Agreed
10	Job stress sometimes affect family relationship of teachers	3.20	Agreed

### 3.3 Research Question 3:

The result of Table 4 shows that all the respondents agreed with the items as proper solutions to avoiding excessive stress of the vocational technical teachers in their places of work. Some of which include: Reducing teachers' work load, regular supervision of instructions, provision of inceptive measures and in-service training to increase the teachers' knowledgebase.

**Table 4: Mean Responses of vocational technical teacher on possible ways to avoid excessive stress in their work**

S/N	Statements	Mean	Remarks
1	Teachers work load be reduce to avoid over stressed	2.94	Agreed
2	Teachers be encourage to increase their productivity	3.18	Agreed
3	Teachers be encourage to absorb at their job through regular supervision	3.15	Agreed
4	Frequent absenteeism of teachers from work be checked and address.	3.04	Agreed
5	Too much stressed that could lead to anxiety and boredom should be avoided	3.94	Agreed
6	Proper motivation and inceptive be provided to retain teachers.	3.25	Agreed
7	Large number of students in class be reduce for teaching effectiveness and control	3.40	Agreed
8	Improved Teachers' condition of service, through prompt payment of their entitlements and in-service to increase their knowledge base.	3.27	Agreed

#### **4. FINDINGS**

The findings of the study were as follows:

- i. Majority of the respondents agreed with the statements that various form of job stress such as: Sickness, Boredom, Anxiety, Frustration, Indiscipline, etc., are exhibited by vocational technical teachers while on the job.
- ii. Job stress affect the performance of the vocational technical teachers in the zone as a result of: Lack of good welfare, infrastructures, self-esteem, interest and demoralization, aggressiveness and mental distress.
- iii. All the respondents agreed that reducing workload, class sizes, and proper supervision, and motivation would among others served as solutions to overcome the job stress among the vocational technical teachers.

#### **5. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

Research question one was posed to find out the views of respondents on the various forms of job stress exhibited by vocational technical teachers in their place of work. The first finding of this study indicated that majority of the respondents agreed that Sickness, Boredom, Anxiety, and Indiscipline are exhibited by vocational technical teachers while on the job. The incidences of high moral decadence among students make them to look down upon their teachers, which also translate to low self-esteem among the teachers.

This finding is in agreement with that of Wong & Cheuk (2005) who reported some common factors associated with job stress in teaching in the vocational and technical secondary schools such as prolong duration of working hours of teaching and workshop practice, excessive office and managerial activities among others. This also relates with Hoffman, & Woehr (2006) and cooper (2001) who reported work load as the biggest source of stress to teachers. Some teachers become aggressive when over stressed and are likely to lost interest in the job. This affects their performance and provoked them to quit out from teaching profession for greener posture (Brewer & McMahan, 2004).

On the views of respondents regarding the courses of various forms of job stress, the second finding of this study indicated that large number of students' intake makes it difficult to manage the classes also, lack of good welfare and self-esteem leading to demoralization, aggressiveness and mental distress is common. These coupled with the inadequate provision of instructional facilities for effective teaching to take place. As a result of these aforementioned factors, job stress therefore, affects performance of the vocational technical teachers in the zone. It indirectly, also affects the students' interest and level of understanding during the teaching and learning processes. The findings of Salami, (2011) agreed with this position, that work overload is associated with class size and inadequate instructional materials. The was the view of the majority of the respondents and agreed with the fact that teachers lack absolute freedom of

enforcing classroom discipline due to indiscipline among students in some of the vocational technical secondary school investigated in this study.

Some of the vocational technical teachers were examined with poor economic stability as a result of low salary income, delay in promotion, etc., and this has seriously affects their job performance. Kokkinos (2007) cited in the literature reported frequent changes in the teachers' schedule of duties as a means of causing job stress. Lastly, the respondents view also, agreed with the fact that job stress affects life of teachers' and their relationships with their family leading to having inadequate time for the teachers to visit or attend domestic problems; this is also consistent with the report of Lue et al., (2010) that many teachers have negative effects on their own family life as a result of job stress.

In an attempt to find a lasting solution to the issue of job stress as its affect the performance of vocational technical teachers in secondary schools, the third research question was raised. The third finding of the study responded to this, indicating that all the respondents agreed with the facts that reducing teachers' workload, class sizes, and embarking on proper supervision of instruction, and motivation would among others served as solutions to overcome the job stress. These were clearly outlined under the recommendations of this study.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

From the results obtained in this study it may be concluded that majority of the vocational technical teachers are faced with problems such as: Sickness, Boredom, Anxiety, Indiscipline and frustration causing them lots of stress. This occur as a results of over load, large class sizes, inadequate instructional materials, poor teachers condition of service, too many schedule of duties and low self-esteem, this however, lead to serious setback in the discharge of their assigned duties and responsibilities. Until and unless proper measures are put in place the problems of vocational teachers over stress in our vocational technical schools would continue to prostrate quality instruction.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, the following (recommendations) were made: -

- i. Government should build more classrooms in all the vocational schools to reduce the class size to avoid stressing teachers while in class.
- ii. Workload of each vocational technical teacher regarding teaching and workshop practice should be moderated and compensated adequately, in other word; government should employ more Teachers to tackle the issue of workload.
- iii. Adequate instructional facilities for teaching should be provided in all the vocational schools to reduce the task of improvisation thereby promoting effective teaching and workshop practices.
- iv. Hazard allowance, in-service training, loans, etc.; be provided as incentive to vocational technical teachers to motivate them remained active in the service.

- v. The teachers' condition of service should be reviewed to attract the best brain into the teaching profession.

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