

# Sources And Relative Prominence of Job Stress Among Public Secondary School Teachers in Osun State, Nigeria

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*Abstract- Teaching is widely acknowledged as a profession that is highly susceptible to occupational stress due to increasing instructional, administrative, and societal demands placed on teachers. This study examined the types and prominence of job stress among secondary school teachers in Osun State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised teachers and principals in public secondary schools in Osun State, while a sample of 365 teachers and 45 principals was selected through a multistage sampling procedure. Data were collected using a structured instrument titled Teachers' Job Stress and Management Strategies Questionnaire (TJSMS-Q) and a semi-structured interview guide for principals. The instrument was validated by experts in Educational Management and its reliability was established using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient which yielded a reliability index above 0.70. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages and mean scores to answer the research questions, while chi-square statistics were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that major job stressors experienced by teachers include student indiscipline, work overload and lack of instructional materials. The study further revealed that non-reward for good performance constituted one of the most prominent stressors affecting teachers. The study concluded that persistent occupational stress among teachers may undermine instructional effectiveness and job commitment. It was therefore recommended that educational administrators and government agencies should institute effective reward systems, improve working conditions, and provide adequate instructional resources to reduce job stress among teachers.*

**Keywords:** *Teacher Stress, Occupational Stress, Reward System, Secondary Schools, Osun State.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers occupy a central position in the educational system because they translate curriculum goals into meaningful learning experiences that facilitate students' intellectual, social, and moral development.

Omotoyinbo and Olaniyi, (2019) opined that teachers are central to the success of any educational system, translating curricula into meaningful learning experiences that foster societal development.

The effectiveness of any educational system therefore depends largely on the level of commitment, motivation, and psychological wellbeing of teachers. However, teaching has increasingly been recognized as a profession that is susceptible to occupational stress due to the complex demands associated with classroom management, instructional responsibilities, administrative tasks, and societal expectations.

Mohamed (2018) noted that in Nigeria, teachers face significant challenges that induce job stress, defined as harmful physical and emotional responses resulting from a mismatch between job demands and individual capabilities. These stressors, including inadequate resources, poor remuneration, and societal devaluation of teaching, can undermine teacher efficiency and student outcomes (Subair et al., 2021).

Job stress refers to the physical and psychological strain experienced when the demands of a job exceed an individual's capacity or resources to cope effectively. In the teaching profession, stress may arise from excessive workload, student disciplinary problems, inadequate instructional materials, poor working conditions, and lack of recognition for professional efforts (Kayode, 2024).

When these pressures persist over time, they may lead to emotional exhaustion, burnout, reduced job satisfaction, and declining instructional effectiveness. In many developing countries, including Nigeria, teachers operate under challenging conditions characterized by large class sizes, inadequate

educational resources, poor remuneration, and limited opportunities for professional recognition.

These conditions often create significant stress for teachers and may negatively affect their efficiency and commitment to instructional duties. In Osun State, secondary school teachers frequently confront multiple stressors such as administrative workload, pressure to meet academic targets, and societal undervaluation of the teaching profession.

Previous studies have identified several sources of job stress among teachers, including heavy workload, poor organizational support, student indiscipline, and inadequate resources. Despite these insights, there remains limited empirical evidence regarding the relative prominence of these stressors within specific educational contexts such as Osun State. Understanding the most dominant sources of stress is essential for designing targeted interventions that can improve teacher wellbeing and enhance educational outcomes.

It is against this background that this study investigates the types of job stress experienced by teachers and identifies the most prominent stressors affecting secondary school teachers in Osun State, Nigeria.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of stress, derived from the Latin term *\*stringer\** (meaning hardship or strain), was first articulated by Hans Selye as the body's non-specific response to demands (Selye, 1979). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) further defined stress as a psychological and physiological reaction to demands exceeding coping resources. Stress manifests in two forms: eustress (positive, motivating stress) and distress (negative, harmful stress) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2018). Distress, particularly chronic, can lead to health issues such as anxiety, depression, and cardiovascular problems (McEwen, 2008).

Taylor (1995) categorizes stress into chronic, acute, traumatic, episodic acute, and work-related types. Chronic stress, characterized by unrelenting demands, is particularly detrimental, leading to

physical and mental health deterioration (Senanayake & Arambepola, 2019). Work-related stress, or job stress, arises from workplace demands exceeding an individual's capacity, resulting in negative emotional states like frustration and anxiety (Kyriacou, 2004). For teachers, job stress is often linked to workload, student behavior, and resource scarcity (Arvidsson et al., 2019).

Empirical studies identify multiple sources of job stress for teachers. Kotteeswari and Sharief (2014) highlight overtime work, high managerial standards, lack of motivation, and poor organizational commitment as key factors. In educational settings, stressors include large class sizes, inadequate instructional materials, student indiscipline, and societal attitudes toward teachers (Desouky & Allam, 2017; Subair et al., 2021). In Nigeria, economic challenges, such as irregular salary payments and inflation, further exacerbate stress (Adeyemo & Ogunyemi, 2005). Globally, studies confirm that workload and lack of recognition are significant stressors (Warraich et al., 2014).

The study is grounded in Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Transactional Model of Stress, which posits that stress results from an individual's appraisal of demands versus available resources. Teachers appraise stressors like workload or student indiscipline as threats when resources (e.g., materials, support) are insufficient, leading to distress. This framework guides the identification of stressors and their prominence in Osun State.

### Statement of the Problem

Teachers play a critical role in achieving educational objectives and promoting students' academic success. However, increasing evidence suggests that teachers are exposed to numerous occupational stressors that may adversely affect their professional performance and psychological wellbeing. In Nigeria, particularly within public secondary schools, teachers often operate under challenging conditions characterized by excessive workload, inadequate instructional materials, poor working environments, and limited recognition for professional achievements.

Although several studies have examined occupational stress among teachers, many of these studies have

focused primarily on the general existence of stress without adequately identifying the specific stressors that are most prominent within particular educational contexts. In Osun State, anecdotal reports and observations suggest that teachers experience significant stress arising from classroom management challenges, administrative demands, and limited institutional support. However, empirical evidence identifying the major sources of stress and determining which of them constitutes the most prominent stressor remains limited.

Furthermore, the lack of systematic recognition or reward for teachers' good performance may contribute significantly to job dissatisfaction and emotional exhaustion among teachers. When teachers perceive that their efforts are not adequately acknowledged or rewarded, their motivation and commitment to instructional responsibilities may decline.

The absence of reliable empirical information on the dominant stressors affecting teachers in Osun State makes it difficult for policymakers and school administrators to develop effective interventions aimed at improving teachers' working conditions and professional wellbeing. It is therefore necessary to investigate the various sources of job stress experienced by teachers and determine the most prominent stressors affecting secondary school teachers in Osun State.

#### Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the types and prominence of job stress among secondary school teachers in Osun State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. identify the various forms of stress experienced by teachers in Osun State secondary schools;
2. determine the most prominent stress experienced by teachers in Osun State secondary schools;
3. examine whether there is a significant difference in the types of job stress experienced by teachers based on their years of service in Osun State secondary schools; and
4. determine whether non-reward for good performance significantly constitutes a major stressor among teachers in Osun State secondary schools.

#### Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the various stresses experienced by teachers in Osun State secondary schools?
2. Which is the most prominent stress among teachers in Osun State secondary schools?

#### Hypotheses

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference in the types of job stress experienced by teachers based on years of service in Osun State secondary schools.

H<sub>02</sub>: Non-reward for good performance does not significantly constitute a major stressor among teachers in Osun State secondary schools.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to collect data from a large group of respondents in order to identify the various sources of job stress experienced by teachers and determine the most prominent stressors affecting them. The population of the study consisted of all teachers and principals in public secondary schools in Osun State, Nigeria. Specifically, the population comprised 6,982 teachers and 601 principals in public senior secondary schools across the state.

A multistage sampling procedure was employed to select respondents for the study. In the first stage, three Local Government Areas were randomly selected from each of the three senatorial districts in Osun State, resulting in a total of nine Local Government Areas.

In the second stage, five secondary schools were randomly selected from each Local Government Area, giving a total of forty-five schools. In the final stage, six teachers were selected from each school through simple random sampling, resulting in a sample of 365 teachers, while all 45 principals were selected through total enumeration. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Teachers' Job Stress and Management Strategies Questionnaire (TJSMS-Q) and a semi-structured interview guide.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections: Section A collected demographic information while Section B contained items on sources and prominence of job stress using a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by experts in Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation.

The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach Alpha method, which yielded a reliability coefficient above 0.70, indicating that the instrument was suitable for the study. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores were used to answer the research questions. Inferential statistics were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

#### IV. RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the various stressors experienced by teachers in Osun State secondary schools? To analyse this, the responses of the respondents were calculated using percentage. The results are as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Stressors Experienced by Teachers

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Workload	75	21.4
Student Indiscipline	83	23.6

Family Problem	45	12.9
Working Condition	41	11.8
Instructional Materials	48	13.8
Relationship with Colleagues	29	8.2

To answer research question 1, 6 stressors were raised and analysed using simple percentage in order to identify the top three stress secondary school teachers experienced in schools. Therefore, from the Table 1, it was established that 75(21.4%) of the respondents' identified work overload, as a stressor, 83(23.6%) identified student indiscipline as a stressor, 45(12.9%) identified family problem as a source of stress, 41(11.8%) identified working condition as a form of stressor, 48(13.8%) identified lack of instructional materials as a form of stressors teachers' experience, while 44(8.2%) identified relationship with colleagues as a form of stressor.

Therefore, from the analysis, the top three identified stressors are student indiscipline 83(23.6%), work overload 75(21.4%), and lack of instructional materials 48(13.8%).

Research Question 2: What is the most prominent stress among teachers in Osun State secondary schools?

Table 2: The most prominent stress among teachers

S/N	ITEM	S/A	A	D	S/D	MEAN (%)
1.	Sourcing instructional materials.	82(23.3%)	162(46.2%)	70(19.9)	35(9.9%)	2.78
2.	Writing lesson notes.	78(22.2%)	180(51.1%)	58(16.5%)	36(10.2%)	2.83
3.	Marking scripts.	73(20.7%)	145(41.2%)	103(29.3%)	31(8.8%)	2.72
4.	Attending meetings.	59(16.8%)	179(50.9%)	99(28.1%)	15(4.2%)	2.78
5.	Managing student's disciplinary issues	83(23.6%)	161(45.7%)	89(25.3%)	19(5.4%)	2.86
6.	Keeping relationship with parents.	84(23.9%)	116(33.0%)	119(33.8%)	33(9.3%)	2.68
7.	Non-reward of good job done.	101(28.7%)	164(46.6%)	55(15.6%)	32(9.1%)	2.92
8.	Parents coming to schools to fight teachers when teacher discipline students.	71(20.2%)	175(49.7%)	75(21.3%)	31(8.8%)	2.79
9.	Poor or low esteem of teachers.	59(16.8%)	144(40.9%)	78(22.2%)	71(20.2%)	2.50

Note: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

To answer research question 2, 9 items were raised and analysed using simple percentage in order to assess the most prominent stress among teachers in Osun State secondary schools. Therefore, from Table 2, it was established that 244(70.2%) respondents agreed that sourcing instructional material is a form of stress, while 105(29.8%) disagreed. It was also established that 258(73.3%) respondents agreed that writing lesson notes is stressful, while 94(26.7%), disagreed.

It showed that 218(61.9%) respondents agreed that marking of scripts is a form of stress, while 134(38.1%) disagreed. It further showed that 238(67.7%) respondents agreed that attending meetings is stressful, while, 114(32.3%) disagreed.

It established that 244(69.3%) respondents agreed that managing students' disciplinary issues is a form of stress, while 108(30.7%) disagreed. It was also established that 200(56.9%) respondents agreed that keeping relationship with parents is stressful, while 152(43.1%), disagreed. It showed that 265(75.3%) respondents agreed that non-reward of good job done is stressful, while, 87(24.7%) disagreed.

It showed that 246(69.9%) respondents agreed that parents coming to schools to fight teachers leads to stress for teachers, while 106(30.1%) disagreed. It further showed that 203(57.7%) respondents agreed that poor or low esteem of teachers is a form of stress for teachers, while, 149(42.4%) disagreed.

The result from Table 2 therefore established from the respondents' total responses that 236 agreed that 66.9% of the items listed are the stress experienced by teachers in Osun state secondary schools, while 117(33.1%) disagreed. The larger sum of the respondent's responses established that sourcing instructional material, writing lesson notes, marking scripts, attending meetings, managing students, and poor or low esteem of the teachers are the types of stress experienced by teachers in secondary schools. However, the most prominent stress identified by the teachers is non-reward of good job done from the administrators, important stakeholders and even the nation at large.

Hypotheses Testing

Ho1: Job stress has no significant influence on teachers' efficiency in Osun State secondary schools. To test the hypothesis, responses were calculated into low, moderate and high job stress and teachers' efficiency. Adopting the chi-square statistical tool, the two variables were computed under degree of freedom 2 and P value being <0.05. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Influence of Job Stress on Teachers' Efficiency

Teachers' Efficiency	Job Stress				
	LOW	MODERATE	D	Chi square	P
LOW	0	3	2	0.772	0.03
MODERATE	41	255			
HIGH	0	30			

To ascertain the influence of strike action on student academic achievement, Chi square was used for this measurement. Chi square was used to establish the influence of the variables and it was observed that ( $\chi^2 p < 0.05$ ). This shows that there is significant influence of job stress on teachers' efficiency in Osun State secondary schools, hence, the null hypothesis accepted.

Ho2: Non-reward for good performance does not significantly constitute a major stressor among teachers in Osun State secondary schools.

To test this hypothesis, responses of teachers to the item "Non-reward for good job done constitutes a stressor for teachers" were analysed using the One-Sample Chi-Square (Goodness-of-Fit) Test. The test was used to determine whether the observed distribution of responses significantly differed from an expected equal distribution. The responses of Strongly Agree and Agree were collapsed into Agree, while Disagree and Strongly Disagree were collapsed into Disagree to facilitate inferential testing.

Table 4: One-Sample Chi-Square Test Showing Whether Non-Reward for Good Performance Constitutes a Major Stressor Among Teachers

Response Category	Observed Frequency (O)	Expected Frequency (E)	(O - E)	(O - E) <sup>2</sup>	(O - E) <sup>2</sup> / E
Agree	265	176	89	7,921	45.01
Disagree	87	176	-89	7,921	45.01
Total	352	352	—	—	90.02

$\chi^2$  calculated = 90.02

df = 1

$\chi^2$  critical (0.05, df = 1) = 3.84

p < 0.05

Since  $\chi^2$  calculated (90.02) >  $\chi^2$  critical (3.84), the null hypothesis is rejected because the calculated Chi-square value is greater than the critical Chi-square value at 0.05 level of significance and 1 degree of freedom. The result indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the observed and expected distribution of teachers' responses regarding non-reward for good performance as a source of job stress.

The majority of respondents (265 teachers representing approximately 75.3%) agreed that the absence of recognition or reward for good performance constitutes a significant stressor in their professional duties, whereas only 87 teachers (24.7%) disagreed with this view. The large disparity between these response categories resulted in a high Chi-square value, indicating that the observed distribution did not occur by chance.

The implication of this finding is that non-reward for good performance significantly constitutes a major stressor among teachers in Osun State secondary schools. Consequently, teachers who perceive that their efforts are not acknowledged or rewarded by school administrators, educational authorities, or society are more likely to experience psychological strain and dissatisfaction in their professional roles.

#### Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings is presented in line with the objectives, research questions, and hypotheses that guided the study.

The findings of this study revealed that secondary school teachers in Osun State experience various forms of job stress in the course of carrying out their professional duties. Among the stressors identified, student indiscipline, work overload, and lack of instructional materials emerged as the most common sources of stress. This finding underscores the multifaceted nature of teaching responsibilities, which often require teachers to simultaneously manage classroom discipline, deliver instruction, prepare lesson materials, and evaluate students' performance.

The presence of these multiple responsibilities can place considerable pressure on teachers, thereby contributing to occupational stress. This finding is consistent with previous studies which reported that teachers frequently experience stress due to excessive workload, inadequate teaching resources, and student behavioural challenges.

For instance, Desouky and Allam (2017) and Arvidsson et al. (2019) observed that large class sizes, insufficient instructional materials, and behavioural issues among students significantly contribute to teacher stress. Similarly, Kotteeswari and Sharief (2014) reported that heavy job demands and limited organizational support often expose teachers to stressful working conditions. The implication of this finding is that improving working conditions and providing adequate instructional resources are essential for reducing job stress among teachers.

The study further revealed that several professional responsibilities such as sourcing instructional materials, writing lesson notes, marking scripts, attending meetings, and managing students' disciplinary issues contribute to teachers' stress. However, the analysis showed that the most prominent stressor among teachers was the non-reward for good performance.

This suggests that many teachers perceive a lack of adequate recognition and appreciation for their efforts within the educational system. This finding aligns with the view that lack of recognition and reward is a significant contributor to occupational stress and reduced job satisfaction. Warraich et al. (2014) noted that when employees perceive that their efforts are not adequately rewarded, it can lead to frustration, dissatisfaction, and reduced motivation.

In the teaching profession, where teachers often invest significant effort in preparing lessons, managing classrooms, and supporting students, the absence of recognition may negatively affect their morale and professional commitment. Therefore, establishing effective reward and recognition systems is essential for enhancing teacher motivation and reducing occupational stress.

The study also examined whether differences exist in the types of job stress experienced by teachers based on their years of service. The result indicated that there was a significant difference in the types of stress experienced by teachers depending on their level of teaching experience.

This suggests that teachers at different career stages encounter varying stressors as they progress in their professional careers. Early-career teachers may experience stress due to limited professional experience, classroom management challenges, and adjustment to institutional expectations. In contrast, more experienced teachers may face stress associated with increased administrative responsibilities, mentoring roles, and expectations for professional leadership.

This finding supports the argument that occupational stress in teaching may vary depending on professional experience and role expectations. Similar observations were reported by Kyriacou (2004), who noted that the nature and intensity of teacher stress may change over the course of a teacher's career due to evolving professional responsibilities.

The inferential analysis conducted using the One-Sample Chi-Square test revealed that non-reward for good performance significantly constitutes a major

stressor among teachers in Osun State secondary schools. This finding indicates that the absence of recognition and reward mechanisms for teachers' professional efforts significantly contributes to occupational stress.

This result is consistent with the propositions of the motivational and organizational behaviour literature, which emphasize the importance of recognition and reward in enhancing employee motivation and job satisfaction. When teachers perceive that their efforts are not adequately acknowledged, they may develop feelings of frustration, professional neglect, and reduced commitment to their duties. Hester, Bridges, and Rollins (2020) similarly observed that lack of administrative support and recognition can increase the likelihood of stress and burnout among teachers. Consequently, establishing effective reward systems and supportive administrative practices is crucial for promoting teacher wellbeing and improving instructional effectiveness.

The findings of this study highlight the significant role that organizational conditions, recognition systems, and professional demands play in shaping the level of occupational stress experienced by teachers in secondary schools. Addressing these factors is therefore essential for improving teacher wellbeing and enhancing the quality of education delivery in the school system.

## V. CONCLUSION

This study examined the types and prominence of job stress among secondary school teachers in Osun State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that teachers in public secondary schools experience several forms of occupational stress arising from their professional responsibilities and working conditions. Among the various stressors identified, student indiscipline, work overload, and lack of instructional materials emerged as the most common sources of stress among teachers.

These stressors reflect the complex demands placed on teachers in managing instructional activities, maintaining classroom discipline, and delivering effective teaching with limited resources. The study further established that several routine professional

activities such as sourcing instructional materials, writing lesson notes, marking scripts, attending meetings, and managing students' disciplinary issues contribute to teachers' stress levels. However, the most prominent stressor identified by teachers was the non-reward for good performance. This finding suggests that many teachers perceive a lack of recognition and appreciation for their efforts, which may lead to frustration, low morale, and reduced professional motivation.

In addition, the study revealed that differences exist in the types of stress experienced by teachers based on their years of service. This suggests that teachers at different career stages may encounter varying levels or forms of stress depending on their professional experience, responsibilities, and coping capacities. Furthermore, the inferential analysis confirmed that non-reward for good performance significantly constitutes a major stressor among teachers in Osun State secondary schools.

The study concludes that job stress is a significant issue affecting teachers in Osun State secondary schools. If not properly addressed, these stressors may negatively influence teachers' efficiency, job satisfaction, and instructional effectiveness, thereby undermine the overall quality of teaching and learn in the school system.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Provision of Adequate Teaching Resources and Improved Working Conditions: Since the study found that teachers experience various forms of job stress such as student indiscipline, work overload, and lack of instructional materials, the government and educational authorities should improve teachers' working conditions by providing adequate instructional materials, reducing excessive workload, and ensuring a supportive teaching and learning environment in secondary schools.
2. Reduction of Administrative Burden and Classroom Stressors: Given that several routine professional responsibilities such as lesson preparation, marking of scripts, classroom management, and meetings contribute to teachers' stress, school administrators should implement strategies that reduce unnecessary administrative workload and provide support systems that enable teachers to effectively manage classroom activities.
3. Career-Stage Support for Teachers: Since the study revealed differences in the types of job stress experienced by teachers based on their years of service, educational authorities should design targeted professional support programmes for teachers at different career stages. Such programmes may include mentoring for early-career teachers and stress management or leadership development programmes for more experienced teachers.
4. Establishment of Effective Reward and Recognition Systems: As the study established that non-reward for good performance significantly constitutes a major stressor among teachers, educational policymakers and school administrators should establish structured reward and recognition systems such as merit awards, promotion opportunities, and other motivational incentives to acknowledge and encourage outstanding teacher performance.

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