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## **Influence Of Occupational Stress On Teachers Job Effectiveness In Special Schools In Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State**

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### **Abstract**

The study investigated the influence of occupational stress on teachers' job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The population of the study consisted of 112 special needs teachers in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Census sampling technique was used to select a sample of 112 respondents for the study. A self-designed questionnaire titled: 'Occupational Stress and Teachers Job Effectiveness Questionnaire' (OSTJEQ) was used for data collection. The reliability coefficient for (OSTJEQ) was  $r=0.83$ . Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while Independent sample t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that to a high extent, stress due to inadequate infrastructural facilities and stress due to uncondusive working environment influences teachers job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Results further revealed that there is significant difference between male and female teachers on the influence of stress due to inadequate infrastructural facilities and stress due to uncondusive working environment on teachers' job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. It was recommended among others that; the management of special schools comprising of the government, parents and other education stakeholders should make teachers work environment more condusive by paying more attention to the motivational needs of teachers such as: good offices, canteen, good recreation centres among others

**Keywords:** Occupational stress, Teachers job effectiveness, Special schools

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## **Introduction**

One of the most disturbing issues that have bothered stakeholders in the education industry during the past decade is declining productivity among teachers. Teachers' job effectiveness can be easily inferred from results of various external examinations such as the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO) among others. Some in-service programmes have been organized by government at various times towards improving teachers' job effectiveness. Such programmes include sponsoring of teachers for in-service training, organizing seminars, workshops, conferences and symposia in educational matters. The fact that noticeable improvement has not been recorded in the issue of teachers' job effectiveness implies that more intellectual efforts should be made in this regard and hence the rationale for this present effort.

Teachers' job effectiveness may be influenced by several factors. Some of these factors may include: motivation, leadership style of the principals, working environment, availability of infrastructural facilities, workload, equipment and instructional materials, remuneration and occupational stress among others. Stress is a feeling of tension, which is both physical and emotional. Stress is an aspect of the normal fabric of human existence. It is a fundamental part of the challenges which prompt mastery of new skills and behavioural patterns. However, problems arise when stress becomes excessive and chronic. The individual then experiences disrupted emotional, cognitive, and physiological functioning (Kyria, 2021). Stress is an adaptive response mediated by individual characteristics and or psychological processes, which are consequence of any external action, situation or event that places special physical and /or psychological demands upon a person (Jepsob, 2016).

Occupational stress is viewed by Kyria (2021) as negative feelings or unpleasant emotional state resulting from work. Bourke (2022) views occupational stress as a subjective negative reaction to aspect of the job that threatens a worker's self-esteem or wellbeing. Adeyemo (2022) describe it as a "global epidemic" with no occupation spared. Thus, occupational stress can be experienced by Medical Doctors, Priests, Prison Workers, Policemen, Soldiers, Nurses, Custom Officers, Teachers, Lawyers, Pilots, Sailors, and Bankers and so on. Teachers' job seems to be very stressful especially in modern days where teachers' welfare seems to have been neglected by their employers. Borg (2020) observes that up to one third of teachers perceive their occupation as highly stressful. It is clear that teachers can be exposed to a number of sources of stress. Kyria (2021) also reports that the main sources of teacher stress are teaching students who lack motivation, maintaining discipline in the classroom, confronting general time pressures and workload demands. It also includes being exposed to a large amount of change, being evaluated by others, having challenging relationships with colleagues, administration, and management. Moreover, being exposed to generally poor working conditions prospects, unsatisfactory working conditions, ambiguity of the teacher's role, poor relationships with colleagues, pupils and administrators and job insecurity are all main sources of teachers' stress.

Stress, up to moderate level, is inevitable and leads to motivation, but prolonged teacher stress has been found to result in both physiological and psychological ailments which ultimately have adverse effects on teachers' professional efficacy (Kyria, 2021). Teaching has seemed to become very stressful profession in the present

times. It is an established fact that the performance of a teacher mainly depends upon their psychological state of mind. Teacher stress affects the physical and psychological wellbeing of the teacher which in turn may definitely influence efficiency and performance of the teacher. There are numerous factors that can contribute to teacher stress levels. These factors according to Weis (2020) includes: work overload, student-teacher ratios in class, poorly defined program structures, and constant responsibility for others. In a review, Eisen (2021) noted four contributing factors such as: role ambiguity, role conflict, role overload, and lack of administrative support as factors attributed to teachers' occupational stress.

Murphy (2015) submits that stress can be the result of any number of situations in the occupational workplace of a person which influence their extent of job effectiveness. Murphy illustrates the following as categories of workplace stressors in one's occupation to include: poor working environment, inadequate infrastructural facilities, excess workload, inadequate instructional materials, lack of in-service training and students' discipline. Others include: conflicts occurring due to ill-defined organizational boundaries, over promotion; under promotion; lack of job security; thwarted ambitions, relationship at work; poor relations with boss, subordinates or colleagues; difficulties in delegation, threat of violence, harassment; organizational structure and climate which include: participation or non-participation in decision making; management style and communications patterns.

The effectiveness of the educational system largely depends upon active, resourceful and competent teachers (Usha, 2019). An effective teacher not only imparts the entire educational curricula allotted to him or her in the best and most efficient manner but also ensures the optimum development of the students. In today's scenario where there is fierce competition in all spheres of life, effectiveness of the teachers becomes imperative to empower the students to face global challenges. Effective teaching is a par excellence attribute of quality education. There are many factors, which influence the effectiveness of the teacher among others includes: intelligence, attitude towards teaching, experience, academic qualification, personality, mental health and so on. Ubani and Sanikpege (2020) maintains that effective teachers are those who achieve the goals which they set for themselves or which is set by others such as Ministries of Education, Legislators and other Government Officials and School/college Administrators.

Effective teachers must possess the knowledge and skills needed to attain the goals, and must be able to use that knowledge and those skills appropriately if these goals are to be achieved. The researcher observed that the standardised achievement test common in secondary schools in the study area are: school entrance examination, secondary school admission test, school placement test, achievement in specific school subjects, norm-referenced, group-administered achievement tests, criterion-referenced tests, terminal and external examinations conducted by West African Examinations Council, (WAEC), and National Examination Council (NECO). These various forms of test are used to ascertain the extent of teachers' job effectiveness hence it measures their level of achievements in the performance of their teaching task.

The researcher observed in the study area that unconducive working environment is a source of stress which seems to influence teachers' job effectiveness. The speculation is that, most secondary schools in the area seem to have poor working environment such as dilapidated facilities, hostile premises and dirt among others which does not

mean well for the teachers as such, teachers find it difficult to teach in such environment. In addition, inadequate infrastructural facilities is another area of concern expressed by concerned individuals in the study area such as: parents, students and members of the public which seem to increase teacher stress and have negative influence on teachers' job effectiveness. Most secondary schools hardly have enough learning facilities like library, laboratory, classrooms, furniture, playground, canteen among others. This situation seems to have negative implication on the level of teachers' conformability, preparedness and confidence. It therefore ignited the researcher to examine the influence of occupational stress on teachers' job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The issue of occupational stress among teachers has been generating serious discussion among educational stakeholders particularly in the South-South States in recent times. This is because, in most secondary schools in the area, stakeholders have expressed concern on the issue of occupational stress which may have been responsible for teachers' job ineffectiveness in areas such as: students' poor performance in school entrance examination, poor students' school admission tests, poor students' placement tests, poor performance of students' in aptitude test which is designed to predict achievement in specific school subjects, poor students' norm-referenced, group-administered and criterion-referenced achievement tests which evaluate the achievement of students, the skills they need to learn and the effectiveness of schools in teaching these skills, internal examination of students and external examinations conducted by West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO). The researcher, observes that the indices of occupational stress which appear to be seriously affecting teachers' job ineffectiveness in the above mentioned areas are: unconducive working environment which makes teachers demoralized in preparing themselves for effective teaching, inadequate provision of infrastructural facilities, giving teachers excessive workload, lack of provision of instructional materials for teaching and learning. Hence the study examined influence of occupational stress on teachers' job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The main aim of the study is to investigate the influence of occupational stress on teachers' job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. Specifically, the study intends to:

1. Determine the extent stress due to inadequate infrastructural facilities on teachers job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis
2. Find out the extent stress due to unconducive working environment on teachers job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions will guide the study

1. To what extent does stress due to inadequate infrastructural facilities on teachers job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

2. To what extent does stress due to uncondusive working environment on teachers job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

### Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are formulated to guide the study.

1. There is no significant difference between male and female teachers on the influence of stress due to inadequate infrastructural facilities on teachers job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female teachers on the influence of stress due to uncondusive working environment on teachers job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

### Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The target population involved in this study consisted of 112special needs teachers in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. Census sampling technique was adopted to select a target population of 112 special needs teachers. The research instrument was a self-designed instrument titled: “Occupational Stress and Teachers Job Effectiveness Questionnaire” (OSTJEQ). Section A contained the demographic data of the respondents while section B was structured on a four point modified Likert Scale of Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4, Agreed (A) = 3, Disagreed (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1respectively. Section B had a total of 8 items. The reliability coefficient of (OSTJEQ) was  $r=0.83$  and was determined using the test-retest method. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while Independent sample t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

**Research Question One:** To what extent does stress due to inadequate infrastructural facilities influence teachers job effectiveness of teachers in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

**Table 4.1: Mean and standard deviation showing the extent stress due to inadequate infrastructural facilities influence teachers job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Criterion  $\bar{X}= 2.5$**

S/N	Stress due to Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1	Inadequate infrastructural facilities in school makes teaching difficult thereby reducing teachers’ teaching effectiveness	3.16	0.97	High Extent
2	Inadequate infrastructural facilities such as classrooms result to overcrowding of students and negatively influence the effectiveness of teachers	3.38	0.79	High Extent
3	The provision of infrastructural facilities is important in reducing teachers’ stress and increasing their effectiveness in lesson delivery.	3.08	0.95	High Extent
4	Absence of good toilet facilities for defecation can make the teacher uncomfortable	3.24	0.85	High Extent

Cluster mean/Standard Deviation

3.19 0.88

Table 1 shows the extent stress due to inadequate infrastructural facilities influence teachers job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Specifically the result indicates a grand mean of 3.19 which is higher than the criterion mean of (>2.50). This further indicates that to a high extent, stress due to inadequate infrastructural facilities influence teachers job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant difference between male and female teachers on the influence of stress due to inadequate infrastructural facilities on teachers job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis

**Table 2: t-test analysis showing significant between male and female teachers on the influence of stress due to inadequate infrastructural facilities on teachers job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis**

Stress Due to Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	Standard Error	Calculated t-value	Critical t-value	Decision
Male Teachers	70	2.79	0.94	110	0.134	7.813	1.960	Significant
Female Teachers	42	2.62	0.33					

Table 2 shows that the calculated t-value is 7.813 and at 110 degrees of freedom. Since the calculated t-value (7.813) is greater than the critical t-value (1.960) at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between male and female teachers on the influence of stress due to inadequate infrastructural facilities on teachers job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis is been rejected.

**Research Question Two:** To what extent does stress due to unconducive working environment influence teachers job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

**Table 3: Mean and standard deviation showing the extent stress due to unconducive working environment influence job effectiveness of teachers in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Criterion  $\bar{X} = 2.5$**

S/N	Unconducive Working Environment	$\bar{X}$	SD	Rema
5	A noisy school environment makes the teachers uncomfortable as well as feel stressed in performing his/her teaching responsibility	2.90	0.85	High Extent
6	Inadequate number of seats for students results to increased teachers' stress, thus making lesson delivery difficult for them	2.92	0.66	High Extent

7	Unclean school offices of teachers contribute to their ill health, thus making them incapable and ineffective in	2.81	0.89	High Extent
8	Good relationship with the principal and students reduces teachers' stress and has positive influence on their job effectiveness	3.65	0.85	High Extent
<b>Cluster mean/Standard Deviation</b>		<b>3.05</b>	<b>0.33</b>	

Table 3 shows the extent stress due to unconducive working environment influence teachers' job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Specifically the result indicates a grand mean of 3.05 which is higher than the criterion mean of (>2.50). This further indicates that to a high extent, stress due to unconducive working environment influence teachers job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant difference between male and female teachers on the influence of stress due to unconducive working environment influence teachers job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

**Table 4: t-test analysis showing significant difference between male and female teachers on the influence of stress due to unconducive working environment influence teachers job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis**

<b>Unconducive Working Environment</b>	<b>N</b>	<b><math>\bar{X}</math></b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>Calculated t-value</b>	<b>Critical t-value</b>	<b>Remark</b>
<b>Male Teachers</b>	70	3.13	0.33	110	0.134	6.340	1.960	Significant
<b>Female Teachers</b>	42	3.24	0.46					

Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value is 6.340 and at 110 degrees of freedom. Since the calculated t-value (6.340) is greater than the critical t-value (1.960) at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between male and female teachers on the influence of stress due to unconducive working environment influence teachers job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis is been rejected.

## Discussion

The finding of research question one (Table 1) and hypothesis one (Table 2) revealed that to a high extent, stress due to inadequate infrastructural facilities influence teachers job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. And that there is significant difference between male and female teachers on the influence of stress due to inadequate infrastructural facilities on teachers job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. This finding is in consonance with that of Basaypa (2018) in their study on the causes and impact of stress on teachers' job effectiveness as expressed by secondary school teachers in Nigeria revealed that lack of job satisfaction, inadequate school facilities, were major causes of stress among primary school teachers.

The study also revealed that stress had negative impacts on teachers' job effectiveness. Similar in agreement with the finding is Kyria, (2021) who in their study on infrastructural facilities as determinants of productivity among secondary school teachers found that availability of adequate physical working condition led to job satisfaction and subsequent increase in productivity; that shabby and uncondusive working environment contributed to the high rate of malingering and truancy among teachers. The researchers found a significant relationship between physical working conditions and secondary school teachers' productivity. The researcher also agreed with the finding as they observing that, when infrastructural facilities are not adequately provided in a school, teachers will be more stressed in performing their duties hence they are things that help to complement the efforts of the teachers. These may result to their ineffectiveness in job performance.

The finding of research question two (Table 3) and hypothesis two (Table 4) revealed that to a high extent, stress due to uncondusive working environment influence teachers job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. And that that there is significant difference between male and female teachers on the influence of stress due to uncondusive working environment on teachers job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. This finding is in agreement with Usha (2019) who found in his study that occupational stress and workers' environment were correlates of teacher's job effectiveness in secondary schools in Ijebu-Ode Local Government. Usha found that a teacher with a condusive working environment would experience a positive mood and increase concentration on his work, and that if all elements causing stress on the job were absent, the teachers' job effectiveness would be enhanced.

Another agreement with the finding of this study is Borg (2020) who found in his study on linking the school infrastructural facilities condition to teachers' level of teachers' job effectiveness in secondary schools, discovered that the state of infrastructural facilities had influence on the school climate. Moreover, the provision of accommodations is an issue which reduced the stress of teaching and enhanced teachers' job effectiveness. School facilities determine the trends in school activities and processes which influence teachers' job effectiveness. In addition, the provision and quality of infrastructures affected the ability and enthusiasm of teachers to teach. Teachers' morale, health and safety of were also improved. The study further revealed a significant relationship between sources of stress and the teaching effectiveness of the teachers.

Contrary to this finding, Jepso (2016) stated that teachers' job effectiveness mainly depends on the teacher characteristics such as knowledge base, sense of responsibility, inquisitiveness and the student characteristics such as opportunity to learn, and academic work. Other factors are teaching factors such as lesson structure and communication; the learning aspects such as involvement of success; and organization and management. If teachers take care of these factors, their effectiveness can be enhanced to the optimum level. Moreover, in line with the finding, the researchers observed that if working environment is not condusive for teachers, they may feel much stressed and some students may not want to attend such schools. Many teachers may resort to absenting themselves even in attending classes in an uncondusive class and this is capable of affecting the teachers' job effectiveness

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that to a high extent, stress due to inadequate infrastructural facilities and stress due to uncondusive working environment influences teachers job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. And that that there is significant difference between male and female teachers on the influence of , stress due to inadequate infrastructural facilities and stress due to uncondusive working environment on teachers job effectiveness in special schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

1. The management of special schools that is the government, parents and other education stakeholders should make teachers work environment more condusive by paying more attention to the motivational needs of the teachers such as: good offices, canteen, good recreation centres among others.
2. There should be good principal-teacher relationship as well as quiet, cool, clean and beautiful environment that will make teachers be relieved of their work stress and be effective in the performance of their job.
3. Teaching Service Board and all other relevant stakeholders involved in the management of schools should work tirelessly in making sure that adequate infrastructural facilities such as;buildings, furniture, sanitary facilities, electricity, recreational facilities, libraries, laboratories, computer system, school records and teaching aids are provided. This will go a long ways in reducing the stress of special teachers and make them happy to be part of the school and use the facilities towards actualization of the school goals.

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