

Comparative Study of Level of Stress among Teaching and Non-Teaching Mothers in Tertiary Institutions in Anambra State

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Abstract: Stress today has become a natural phenomenon. It occurs in various forms. Every work place and organization are experiencing the alarming increase of the negative effects and problems on their workers. This study therefore compares the level of stress of teaching and non-teaching working mothers in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. The study employed descriptive survey design and one hypothesis which was tested at 0.05 level of significant. The population of the study was 2,911 working mothers in the five tertiary institutions in Anambra State. A sample of 630 working mothers (representing 22% of the population) was drawn through proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Instrument titled Levels of Stress Inventory (LSI) was constructed, validated and used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was estimated using split half and value got was 0.76. Six hundred and thirty (630) copies of questionnaire were correctly filled, retrieved and used for analysis. t-test was used to test the hypothesis. The findings of this study revealed that there is significant difference between the level of stress of teaching and non-teaching working mothers in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. Based on the findings, recommendations were made which includes that counsellors should introduce stress management strategies for working mothers in tertiary institution to curb their stress. Also, management of tertiary institutions should endeavour to recruit more workers and provide recreational facilities for their staff to relieve tension.

Keywords: Comparative, study, levels of stress, teaching, non teaching, mothers, tertiary institutions

I. INTRODUCTION

Economic changes in different families have made mothers at all levels especially those mothers who work in tertiary institutions to face numerous challenges both at home and in their work place. Demand from work place such as marking of examination answer scripts, long hours of work, lack of holiday or annual leave, high volume of work, teaching of large classes in the mist of inadequate resources/facilities, coping with students' demands, coping with administrative rules and so on are challenges faced by working mothers in tertiary institutions. Working mothers are married women who work in tertiary institutions. Apart from challenges working mothers faced in their offices, they also have additional responsibilities at home. Some of these responsibilities are child care, school run, preparation of food and management of household. Some times their office responsibilities compete with their home demands and when

they try to meet with these dual responsibilities, they become exhausted, confused and stressed.

Stress is a disruption of emotional stabilities of an individual that induces a state of disorganization in personality and behaviour (Selye, 2000). Stress according to The United States National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (2009) is the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of job do not match with the capabilities, resources or needs of the workers. Akuezuilo (2012) defines stress as the effects and reactions between one and his environment both mentally, physically, psychologically, socially and financially. Stress can be seen as fight-or-flight response in action. Stress is actually inevitable in life. It sometimes serves useful purpose. Stress leads to great achievement. However, if the stress is allowed for a long time, it could seriously interfere with one's job, family life and health.

Stress according to Obi and Obi (2007) could be categorized into negative and positive effect. According to them, positive effects include motivation of staff in success, it help them to react quickly to changes. Stress motivates working mothers to take actions. Negative effects of stress include; depression, quarrels, grumbling, tiredness, high blood pressure among others.

People experience stress in varying forms and degrees every day. Stress sometimes is not bad especially when it is moderate. Stress can result in new awareness and discovery but when it is too much it becomes bad. The effect of stress depend on people's perception, this means that stress affects individual depending on how he responds to it. It is not how it affects John that it affects Paul. It depends on how one perceives it. Also people have different interpretations about stress as well as their response to it. Hence Adebola (2011) regarded stress as a psychological process that involves an individual's personal interpretation and response to any threatening event. However, what one regards as stress might not be stressful to another that is to say that stress sometimes depends on perception and interpretation of individuals.

Stress is grouped or categorized into social, psychological and physical (Onah, 2013). However, one category of stress response can lead to the other. For example, mild chest pain may lead to the psychological stress

response of worrying about getting heart attack. Physical responses can be when someone escape from a horrible accident, he will experience rapid breathing, increased heart beating, sweating and even shaking a beat. These reactions are part of a general pattern known as the fight-or-flight syndrome. The psychological responses to stress can appear as changes in emotions, thoughts (cognition) and behaviours (Bernstein, 2008). In this regard Adebola (2011) reported that psychological variables have been generally viewed as instrumental to the onset of stress which associated with the appraisal of environmental stress. In some cases appraisal of events leads to stress.

Obi and Obi (2007) attested that negative effects of stress could be classified into emotional, cognitive and physiological. Emotionally most working mothers in tertiary institutions seem to manifest unpleasant feelings of anxiety, depression and anger. Cognitively, severe stress can disrupt their thinking, mental images, concentration and memory. Physiologically, working mothers under prolonged stress could show some symptoms like headache, tension and weakness, pain and heart diseases.

Working mothers in tertiary institution include teaching and non-teaching working mothers. Each of these categories of staff faces stress in their own way. Studies like Akubue (2000) stated that working in tertiary institution is a stressful occupation. This situation seems pathetic in all workers in tertiary institution especially among working mothers who have double responsibilities both of which are stressful. Some of their commitments/responsibilities includes teaching the students, setting examination and marking the examination scripts. Apart from these responsibilities, they sometimes assist in administrative work like computation of result and preparation of time-table among others. All these work including their responsibilities at home make their job stressful.

On the other hands non-teaching staff find it difficult to meet with the dead line of resumption, facing administrative one, facing the challenges or problems from ones boss and closing late. Apart from these, they face the responsibilities of school run, not closing till boss closes, cooking at home, caring for children, among others. Based on these responsibilities of the two groups, it becomes pertinent to compare the levels of stress of the two groups; teaching and non-teaching staff in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Statement of Problem

A disturbing trend in many tertiary institutions is the issue of stress among workers, working mothers in particular. It has been noted that working mothers in tertiary institutions (teaching and non-teaching staff) have been facing stress both in their work place and at home. This has effects and consequences in their health. It numerous effects ranges from poor job performance, mental illness, anxiety, low self-esteem, depression, high blood pressure, premature death and headache (Ngoka, 2000).

Based on numerous bad effects of stress on working mothers, researchers have worked on stress, level of stress among workers in tertiary institutions. Akuezuilo (2012) reported that the level of stress of working mothers in Anambra State is high. She also recommended some strategies to curb the stress which include relaxation technique, prayer therapy, wise use of the time, accepting things that cannot be changed among others. Although these studies were focused on lecturers and other workers in the tertiary institutions, the researcher has no evidence of study that compared the level of stress of teaching and non-teaching working mothers in tertiary institutions. Hence the topic comparative study on the level of stress of teaching and non-teaching working mothers in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to compare empirically the level of stress of teaching working mothers and non-teaching working mothers in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be beneficial to tertiary institution workers as it will provide information on the differences in the levels of stress of teaching and non-teaching working mothers in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. Such information will instigate the management of tertiary institutions such as National University Commission (NUC), National Board of Technical Education (NBTE) and National Commission on College of Education (NCCE) to employ more staff, provide recreational facilities in institutions to reduce the level of stress experienced by teaching and non-teaching staff in tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Null Hypothesis

One hypothesis guided the study and was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of teaching and non-teaching mothers on the level of stress they experienced.

II. METHOD

The study was carried out in Anambra State of Nigeria using descriptive survey design. The sample size of 630 working mothers (315 teaching and 315 non-teaching working mothers) drawn from 2,911 teaching and non-teaching working mothers. The sample was gotten through proportionate stratified random sampling of teaching and non-teaching working mothers from the five tertiary institutions in Anambra State. A validated instrument titled levels of stress inventory was used by the researcher to collect data. The reliability of the instrument was established through split half method. This yielded 0.65 co-efficient which was corrected to

0.79 by the application of Spearman Brown prophecy formula (Akuezuilo & Agu, 2015).

Copies of questionnaire were distributed to the respondents and were allowed up to a whole day to respond. The questionnaire were retrieved, scored and analysed. t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. There is no significant difference in the mean

score of teaching and non-teaching staff working mothers on the level of stress they experience in tertiary institutions.

III. RESULTS

The results are analysed and presented in tables as follows:

t-test on the mean scores of teaching and non-teaching working mothers on their level of stress in tertiary institutions.

Source of Variation	N	x	sd	df	cal.t	crit. t	p>0.05
Non-teaching	312	122.36	31.55				
				618	3.80	1.96	S
Teaching	308	112.97		29.99			

S = significant

The table shows that at 0.05 level of significant and 618 df, the calculated $t = 3.80$ is greater than the critical $t = 1.96$. Therefore, there is significant difference in the mean score of teaching and non-teaching working mothers on their levels of stress in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. Also the non-teaching staff experiences more stress with mean difference of 9.39.

IV. DISCUSSION

The result revealed that the mean score of non-teaching working mothers' levels of stress is 122.36 and there is significant difference in the mean score of teaching and non-teaching working mothers with the mean difference of 9.39. This shows that non-teaching working mothers are experiencing more stress than the teaching working mothers. This may be as a result of their work schedule, time schedule or the commitments. The result disagrees with the study of Ofoegbu and Nwadiani (2006) and that of Ukavbe (2009) which reported that teaching staff of universities are experiencing high level of stress. However, this study focused on the working mothers in tertiary institutions while theirs dealt with male and female teaching staff. Also this study covers all the tertiary institutions in Anambra State while theirs focused on only the university teaching staff. Besides Ofoegbu and Nwadiani (2006) carried their study in all universities in Nigeria, Ukavbe (2009) carried out his own in the universities in Edo State while this study was done in Anambra State.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Counsellors should initiate stress management strategies for working mothers in the tertiary institutions especially the non-teaching working mothers to enable them

curb their stress. This could be done through counselling, seminar and workshops.

Management of tertiary institutions should endeavour to recruit more staff, in order to reduce work load on the staff especially on the non-teaching working mothers.

Government and management of tertiary institutions should provide recreational facilities in tertiary institutions for staff especially for working mothers to relieve their tensions.

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