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Work Stress Management Strategies And Teachers' Productivity In Private Secondary Schools In Wukari Education Zone Of Taraba State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT
Teachers' productivity refers to the ability of educators to efficiently and effectively achieve educational goals, meet professional responsibilities, and make the most of their time and resources in the teaching and learning process. Work stress management strategies refers to various coping actions, behaviours or attitudes which an individual teacher exhibits when faced with certain psychological and social demands that is tasking thus causing the individual's adaptive resources (Oboegbulem, 2021). Flexible work schedule refers to allowing employees the flexibility to choose their work hours, Location, and duration which can be a powerful tool in enhancing work-life balance, Building Social support involves people on whom we can rely. Despite the importance of teachers' productivity in achieving educational goals and objectives, research has shown that many teachers in private secondary schools in Nigeria, including those in Wukari Education Zone, The correlational research design was used for the study. Whitley and Kite (2013 The population of the study consisted of 90 principals and 697 teachers totaling Seven Hundred and Eighty-Seven (787) teaching staff, drawn from Ninety (90) in which Wukari has 67 private secondary schools while ibi has 23 private secondary schools in Wukari education Zone (Taraba State Universal Basic Education Board, 2024). The researcher designed two research questionnaires for data collection. A sample size of 338 was randomly selected from the population. The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970, Descriptive statistics are essential tools in summarizing and interpreting data in research. The mean and standard deviation are two of the most commonly used descriptive statistics to convey central tendency and variability, respectively (Gravetter (2016). Conclusion Given the increasing challenges in the teaching profession, incorporating workplace policies that support stress reduction can contribute significantly to improved instructional delivery and student success. Recommendation Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made: such as Private school administrators should introduce flexible work arrangements that will allow teachers to balance their professional and personal responsibilities effectively and Private schools should foster a collaborative and supportive work environment by encouraging teamwork, mentorship programs, and peer-to-peer engagement to enhance teachers' productivity.
Keywords: teachers' productivity, Work stress, learning process

INTRODUCTION

Teachers' productivity refers to the ability of educators to efficiently and effectively achieve educational goals, meet professional responsibilities, and make the most of their time and resources in the teaching and learning process. It encompasses a wide range of activities and factors that contribute to the overall success of teachers in their roles as educators and mentors (Okereke, 2018). One of the central aspects of teacher productivity is the ability to deliver high-quality instruction that maximizes student learning outcomes. Effective teachers employ various instructional strategies, adapt to diverse learning needs, and engage students in meaningful ways. Similarly, effective time management is crucial for teachers to balance their numerous responsibilities, including lesson planning, grading, classroom management, and professional development. Teachers who can allocate their time efficiently are often more productive.

Work stress management strategies refers to various coping actions, behaviours or attitudes which an individual teacher exhibits when faced with certain psychological and social demands that is tasking thus causing the individual's adaptive resources (Oboegbulem, 2021). Similarly, Omoregie and Jimoh (2022) also reported that for managing stress, the following factors should be in place in measurement and management of stress. These factors are: cognitive coping strategy, physical coping strategy, physiological coping strategy, discovering of one's personality, social support, avoid too much work, and so on. Furthermore, Kim and Gong (2017) described stress management strategies as proven techniques for modifying stress, generating positive thoughts, relaxing physical and emotional tension, and making environmental changes when possible. These strategies empower individuals to resolve conflicts assertively, become better problem solvers, and appreciate the benefits of exercise and recreation. Implementing stress management strategies is crucial in reducing the impact of stress on mental and psychological wellbeing of teachers, particularly in private secondary schools in Wukari Education Zone, Taraba State. A more comprehensive stress management techniques has been identified by Lehrer, and his colleagues (2019) According to these scholars, Stress management strategies, such as Autogenic training, social activities, cognitive therapy, conflict resolution, meditation, mindfulness, and physical exercise. Study by Kusi et al. (2021). Findings revealed that higher student-teacher ratios were significantly associated with increased teacher workload, stress levels, and reduced job satisfaction. The study concludes that an optimal student-teacher ratio is essential for managing teacher stress and enhancing job satisfaction.

Flexible work schedule refers to allowing employees the flexibility to choose their work hours, location, and duration which can be a powerful tool in enhancing work-life balance, reducing stress, and increasing overall job satisfaction and productivity (Amie-Ogan & Nduche, 2021; Leslie, et al, 2017). However, some individuals hesitate to embrace flexible arrangements due to concerns about potential negative impacts on their career visibility (Ko & Kim, 2018). Teachers know that their stress and anxiety affect their ability to be productive. Study conducted by Ferris and Weitzman, in 2021.This study found that flexible work-hour arrangements improved employee performance, increased retention of employees and reduced employee work stress. The reviewed study is related the present study in terms of variable (flexibl

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Building social support refers to having relationships with others, whether relatives or friends. Building Social support involves people on whom we can rely. People in this aspect are those persons who let us know that they care about, value and love us. It is based on this line of thinking that Adewale (2015) regarded social support as a strong moderating variable that buffers the negative outcome of job insecurity. Supportive family and friends can help people deal with normal stress on an on-going basis. Support groups can be particularly useful to a teacher during times of crisis. For example, suppose a teacher has just learned that he or she did not get the promotion she has been working towards for months; it may help tremendously if he or she had good friends to lean on, be it to talk to or to yell at. Study conducted by Ayeni (2020) It was concluded that in spite of the inadequacies in capacity building, teachers maintained high level of productivity possibly due to their strong commitment to professional duties. However, teachers are still faced with the challenges of excess workloads, large class size and shortage of instructional materials. The reviewed study is related to the present study in terms of social

support capacity building and teachers' productivity variable, instrument, sampling technique, but differs in terms of research design, population, sample size, validity, and reliability, area of the study and method of data analysis, hence the gap the study intends to fill.

Despites invaluable roles of work tress management strategies on teachers' productivity on realization of school goals and objective, it has been observed that in private secondary schools in Wukari Education Zone, stress management strategies seemed to be inadequate for teachers to increase their productivity. Teachers in private secondary schools find it difficult to fit every activity such as writing lesson plans, grading examinations and actual teaching, into the allotted time frame as a result of poorly managed stress. Teachers also find it difficult to organize the classroom, decide how long and how often to teach their subjects, record students' progress, or keeping time-consuming behaviour problems to a minimum. Again, private secondary school teachers find it difficult to control the available time required to complete task and duties assigned to them. They also find it almost impossible to identify the time leaks and then find a way to plug them. However, to the best of the researcher knowledge, no study has been done in Wukari Education Zone to determine if the poor productivity level of teachers is as a result of poorly managed work stress. It is against this background that the researcher intends to carry out the study on the work stress management strategies and teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Wukari Education zone, Taraba state.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers' productivity is a critical factor in the achievement of educational goals in private secondary schools. However, teachers in these schools are face with numerous stressors that can negatively impact their productivity. In Wukari Education Zone, Taraba State, private secondary school teachers are not exempted from these stressors, which can range from heavy workload, student misbehaviour, and lack of resources, to poor working conditions and inadequate support from school administrators.

Despite the importance of teachers' productivity in achieving educational goals and objectives, research has shown that many teachers in private secondary schools in Nigeria, including those in Wukari Education Zone, Taraba State, some stakeholders in education attributed teachers' poor productivity such as writing lesson plan, grading of examination, use of effective pedagogies and effective organization of classroom, as well as lack of proper utilization of time to complete tasks and duties in private secondary schools to the lack of flexible work schedules, as most of teachers' activities seemed not to be flexible scheduled or planned for easy execution and inadequate social support from colleagues to work as a team towards academic activities, this trend appears to jeopardizes productivity as they do not work as a team or collaborate.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the relationship of work stress management strategies and teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Wukari Education Zone, Taraba state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Determine to what extent stress flexible work schedule management strategies relates with teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Wukari Education Zone, Taraba state, Nigeria;
2. Determine the relationship between building social support stress management strategy and teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Wukari Education Zone, Taraba state, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

1. To what extent class flexible work schedule stress management strategy relates with teachers productivity in private secondary schools in Wukari Education Zone, Taraba state, Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between building social support stress management strategy and teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Wukari Education Zone, Taraba state,

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and will be tested at 0.05 alpha Level of significance.
H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between flexible work schedule stress management strategy and teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Wukari Education Zone, Taraba state, Nigeria.
H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between building social support stress management strategy and teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Wukari Education Zone, Taraba state, Nigeria.
H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between leisure stress management strategy and teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Wukari Education Zone, Taraba state, Nigeria.

RESEARCH METHODS

The correlational research design was used for the study. Whitley and Kite (2013) explained correlational study as the research method that describes and predicts how variables are naturally related in the real world, without any attempt by the researcher to alter them or assign causation between them. The study was carried out in Wukari Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria. Two Local Government areas that made up Wukari Education Zone, are, Ibbi and Wukari, The population of the study consisted of 90 principals and 697 teachers totaling Seven Hundred and Eighty-Seven (787) teaching staff, drawn from Ninety (90) in which Wukari has 67 private secondary schools while ibi has 23 private secondary schools in Wukari education Zone (Taraba State Universal Basic Education Board, 2024). A sample size of 338 was randomly selected from the population. The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) probability sampling table at 95% confident level, The researcher designed two research questionnaires for data collection. The first questionnaire was titled "Work Stress Management Strategies Questionnaire (WSMSQ)" for teachers while the second questionnaire was titled "Teachers' Productivity Questionnaire (TPQ)" for principals. Validation of the instrument was based on face and content validity. Instruments were subjected to scrutiny by three experts, two from Educational Administration and Planning, one from Measurement and Evaluation discipline, and all from Department of Educational foundations, Faculty of Education, Taraba State University, and Jalingo. To ascertain the reliability of the WSMSQ and TPQ, a trial test was conducted to check the internal consistency of the instrument. The respondents for the pilot testing were 50 respondents (25 teachers and 25 principals) from 25 secondary schools in Jalingo Education zone, Taraba State who are not part of the study but having the same attributes. The data obtained from the instruments were analyzed using descriptive statistics of Mean, Standard deviation. Descriptive statistics are essential tools in summarizing and interpreting data in research. The Mean and Standard Deviation were specifically used for answering the research questions, any mean of 3.50 and above will be regarded as "High Extent" (HE) while any mean less than 2.50 will be regarded as "Low Extent" (LE). While Linear Regression was used to test Hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The reason for the choice of linear regression is primarily due to its effectiveness in analyzing and predicting relationships between variables.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *To what extent class flexible work schedule stress management strategy relates with teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Wukari Education Zone, Taraba state, Nigeria?*

Table 2: Mean Rating and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the Relationship Between class Flexible Work Schedule Stress Management Strategy and Teachers' Productivity

S/N	Items Description	N	X	SD	Remark
1.	In my school work are often modified to suit need of individual worker.	227	2.51	.76	HE
2.	In my school teachers know their work hours.	227	2.52	.69	HE
3.	Teachers in my school have flexible time and compressed workweek.	227	2.87	.99	HE
4.	In my school remote working is observed.	227	2.02	.91	VLE
5.	In my school teachers' work-life enrichment is organized.	227	2.64	.79	HE

6	In my school work are often planned	227	2.71	.64	HE
7	In my school there is flexible time allowed for workers	227	2.61	.90	HE
8	In my school flexible teachers to other activities without stress	227	2.48	1.25	VLE
	Cluster Mean		**2.55**	**0.87**	**HE**

Source: Field work (2025) Magnitude is (2.50)
Decision Rule: 1.00-1.49 Very Low Extent (VLE), 1.50-2.49 Low Extent (LE), 2.50-3.49 High Extent (HE) and 3.50-4.00 Very High Extent (VHE)

Research Question 2: *What is the relationship between building social support stress management strategy and teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Wukari Education Zone, Taraba state, Nigeria?*

Table 3: Mean rating and Standard deviation of Respondents on the Relationship between Building Social Support Stress Management Strategy and Teachers' Productivity in Private Secondary Schools

S/N	Items Description	N	X	SD	Remark
9	There is regular staff training to help teachers in managing work stress.	227	2.39	.65	VLE
10	There is provision of adequate instructional material reduce teachers' work stress in my school.	227	2.53	.61	HE
11	Supportive family can help teachers deal with normal stress on an on-going basis.	227	2.95	1.01	HE
12	Supportive work colleagues aften help teachers deal with work stress.	227	2.29	.98	VLE
13	My school encourage job satisfaction protection by teachers' union.	227	2.50	.73	HE
14	There is regular staff development to help teachers in managing work stress.	227	2.51	.76	HE
15	Supportive friends often help teachers deal with work stress.	227	2.52	.69	HE
16	Work colleagues always help in tackling difficulties in school	227	2.87	.99	HE
	Cluster Mean		**2.57**	**0.80**	**HE**

Source: fieldwork (2025) Magnitude is (2.50)
Decision Rule: 1.00-1.49 Very Low Extent (VLE), 1.50-2.49 Low Extent (LE), 2.50-3.49 High Extent (HE) and 3.50-4.00 Very High Extent (VHE)

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings arrived at in this study are discussed in this section. The study examined the relationship between stress management strategies and teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Wukari Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria. The findings of the study were discussed based on the answers to the research questions and the test of corresponding hypotheses. Findings on the impact of flexible work schedule on teachers' productivity revealed that flexible work schedules had a significant positive relationship with teachers' productivity ($r = .226$, $p = .020$). This implies that when teachers can adjust their work schedules to accommodate their needs, they experience less stress and perform better in their roles. The finding agrees with Johnson and Peters (2023) that flexible work arrangements enhance job performance and work-life balance among educators. The finding concurs with Smith and Taylor (2022) that teachers with control over their schedules demonstrate improved job satisfaction and reduced burnou

CONCLUSION

The study examined the relationship between various stress management strategies and teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Wukari Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria. The findings revealed significant positive relationships between flexible work schedules, social support. These results highlight the importance of adopting effective stress management strategies to enhance teacher performance, job satisfaction, and overall educational outcomes. Given the increasing challenges in the teaching profession, incorporating workplace policies that support stress reduction can contribute significantly to improved instructional delivery and student success.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Private school administrators should introduce flexible work arrangements that will allow teachers to balance their professional and personal responsibilities effectively.
2. Private schools should foster a collaborative and supportive work environment by encouraging teamwork, mentorship programs, and peer-to-peer engagement to enhance teachers' productivity.
3. Private school Teachers should be encouraged to participate in leisure and recreational activities to improve mental well-being and reduce work-related stress.

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