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Assessment of Workplace Stress among Teachers in Private and Public Secondary Schools in Jalingo Metropolis, Taraba State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study assessed workplace stress among teachers in private and public secondary schools in Jalingo Metropolis, Taraba State, Nigeria. The study was guided by three research objectives descriptive survey research design was adopted. From a population of 1,516 teachers, a sample of 320 respondents, comprising 200 respondents' public schools and 120 respondents private school teachers, were selected using simple random sampling. Data were collected using a 31-item structured questionnaire titled workplace stress among teachers WOSAT. The instrument assessed the level, sources, and comparative dimensions of workplace stress. It was validated by experts, while its reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings revealed that teachers in public secondary schools experienced high workplace stress, particularly due to heavy workloads, large class size and inadequate instructional resources, poor working conditions, and increasing administrative demands. Private school teachers also experienced workplace stress arising mainly from job insecurity, strict supervision, extended working hours, inadequate remuneration, limited job autonomy, and high-performance expectations. Although the sources and manifestations of stress differed between the two school types, both groups experienced significant workplace stress. The study concluded that workplace stress is prevalent among secondary school teachers in Jalingo Metropolis, irrespective of school type, although its contributing factors vary. The study recommended that government and educational authorities recruit more qualified teachers in public schools to reduce excessive workloads and overcrowded classrooms, improve working conditions, provide adequate instructional resources, improve school infrastructure, and ensure timely payment of salaries and entitlements. Private school owners and administrators should improve teachers' welfare through fair remuneration, reasonable working hours, supportive supervision, job security, and greater participation in decision-making. Both public and private schools should establish workplace stress management Programs, including counseling services, staff welfare meetings, workload monitoring, peer-support systems, and stress-management training. These interventions should address school-specific stressors to enhance teachers' emotional well-being, job satisfaction, and overall effectiveness.

Keywords: Workplace Stress, stressors, comparative manifestation, professional effectiveness

Introduction

Workplace according to International Labor Organization (ILO), 2024; Rahimi & Arnold, 2024) refers to the physical, social, psychological, and organizational environment in which teachers perform their professional duties. It encompasses the school facilities, workload, administrative practices, relationships with colleagues and school management; availability of resources, and other working conditions that can influence teachers' well-being. Stress is a normal human response to challenging or demanding situations. The World Health Organization (2026**)** defines stress as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation and explains that excessive or prolonged stress can negatively affect both mental and physical well-being. The WHO further notes that

unrealistic workloads, job insecurity, conflicts, and other demanding circumstances can contribute to stress. World Health Organization (2022) view workplace stress as the physical, emotional, and psychological strain experienced by teachers when the demands and pressures arising from their teaching responsibilities, workload, working environment, administrative expectations, and interactions within the school exceed the perceived capacity to cope effectively. In this study, workplace stress refers to the degree of physical, psychological, and emotional strain experienced by teachers as a result of job-related demands such as workload, time pressure, classroom management, administrative responsibilities, inadequate resources, and limited workplace support. The concept also recognizes that persistent workplace stress may extend beyond the school environment, affecting teachers' family lives, family relationships, household functioning, and nutrition-related practices.

The relationship between stress and family well-being can also have nutrition-related implications. Stress and excessive work demands may affect the time, resources, and attention available for meal planning, food preparation, and healthy food choices. When household resources are constrained, families may be more likely to experience food insecurity, which can reduce access to adequate and nutritious foods. Krishnamurthy et al (2024). Indicates that food insecurity is associated with family functioning and family dynamics, suggesting that difficulties in securing adequate food may affect relationships and overall household well-being. According to Sparling et al. (2022), Nutrition is particularly important because dietary quality and mental well-being are interconnected. A systematic evidence map found substantial research examining the relationship between food security, nutrition, dietary patterns and mental health, with nutritional and dietary indicators frequently associated with mental-health outcomes, including depression. Thus, workplace stress may have indirect nutrition-related consequences when it contributes to reduced household resources, food insecurity, irregular meal patterns, reliance on less nutritious foods, or reduced time for preparing balanced meals (Sparling et al., 2022; Krishnamurthy et al., 2024). For teachers, therefore, the concept of workplace stress should be understood broadly as more than an individual's emotional reaction to job demands. It encompasses the extent to which occupational pressures affect teachers' psychological well-being, work performance, family functioning, and capacity to maintain healthy household practices, including adequate nutrition. This broader perspective is particularly important because teachers' well-being can influence not only their professional effectiveness but also their ability to participate effectively in family life and support the health and nutritional well-being of their households **(**Liu et al., 2026; Sparling et al., 2022).

Workplace stress has become a critical issue in the teaching profession worldwide, with increasing recognition of its impact on both educators and educational outcomes. Teaching is inherently demanding, involving continuous interaction with students, curriculum delivery, assessment, classroom management, and administrative responsibilities, often under challenging working conditions. Globally and in Nigeria, teachers may be exposed to multiple stressors, including heavy workloads, time pressure, and role conflict, which can contribute to elevated stress (Okoro, 2023; Westphal et al., 2022). Systemic challenges, including Teacher stress and burnout are associated with organizational characteristics, workload, lack of resources, time-management difficulties, and challenges associated with balancing teaching and personal responsibilities (Westphal et al., 2022). Job demands and the availability of supportive workplace resources are important determinants of teachers' well-being, job satisfaction, and professional functioning (Ostermeier et al., 2023). These realities make the assessment of workplace stress among teachers an important area of educational research.

The Nigerian secondary school system is divided into public and private sectors, each characterized by distinct organizational structures and operational demands. Public secondary schools are typically government-funded and often face issues such as insufficient funding, delayed salaries,

and high student-teacher ratios, all of which contribute to stressful working conditions (Tsagem & Lema,2022). In contrast, private secondary schools are usually better resourced but impose strict performance expectations, longer working hours, and job insecurity, which can equally generate stress among teachers (Alhassan et al.,2024). This dual structure suggests that workplace stress may manifest differently across school types, thereby necessitating comparative investigation.

Teacher stress results from a complex interplay of organizational and personal factors. These include workload, administrative support, student behavior, and work-life balance, all of which shape teachers' experiences in the workplace (Ige et al., 2024).

Importantly, comparative studies indicate that both public and private school teachers experience significant stress, though the sources and intensity may vary by institutional conditions (Opara, 2024; Alhassan et al., 2024). This highlights the need for context-specific studies that examine how these factors operate within particular environments. In addition to these general considerations, workplace stress has serious implications for teachers' well-being and professional effectiveness. High stress levels have been associated with burnout, reduced job satisfaction, and decreased productivity, which can ultimately affect the quality of education delivered to students (Agyapong et al., 2023; Wartenberg et al., 2023). Moreover, prolonged exposure to stress can lead to psychological distress, including anxiety and depression, as reported among Nigerian teachers (Okeke et al., 2024**).** These outcomes underscore the importance of assessing stress levels as a means of promoting teacher health and improving educational performance.

More specifically, regional dynamics further justify the need for localized studies on workplace stress. Jalingo metropolis in Taraba State presents unique socio-economic and educational conditions that may influence teachers' stress experiences. Variations in school infrastructure, administrative practices, and resource availability between public and private schools in the area can create differing stress patterns. Evidence from Taraba State suggests that work-related stress significantly affects teachers' mental well-being across both sectors, although comparative data remain limited (Alhassan et al., 2024). This gap highlights the importance of conducting research in Taraba state.

Statement of the Problem

Workplace stress has been associated with adverse psychological and professional outcomes, including psychological distress and reduced job performance among teachers, thereby highlighting its significance as a critical issue in the education sector (Nwakpadolu et al., 2024; Izuegbu, 2023). In Nigerian secondary schools, demanding workloads, challenging school environments, inadequate resources, class-size pressures, and limited administrative support seem to contribute to teachers' workplace stress (Alade, 2024; Shogbesan et al., 2024). Workplace stress has emerged as a persistent and escalating challenge within the education sector, particularly in developing regions where institutional and environmental pressures are pronounced. Teachers in secondary schools are expected to meet increasing academic demands, manage diverse student needs, and fulfill administrative responsibilities, often within limited time and resource constraints. This situation raises serious concerns about the sustainability of quality education, especially in contexts where stress is neither systematically assessed nor adequately addressed. There is growing concern that workplace stress among teachers is not only affecting their personal health but also undermining the quality of teaching and learning. Persistent stress has been linked to reduced concentration, emotional exhaustion, and decreased motivation, all of which can impair classroom delivery and student engagement. In severe cases, it contributes to burnout, absenteeism, and eventual withdrawal from the profession. It is against this background that this study seeks to assess workplace stress levels among teachers in private and public secondary schools with the view of identifying the remote and the immediate causes of the workplace stress in Jalingo metropolis, Taraba State, Nigeria

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to assess Workplace Stress Levels among Teachers in Private and Public Secondary Schools. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. assess the workplace stress levels among teachers in public and private secondary schools in Jalingo Metropolis.
2. assess the sources of workplace stress among teachers in public and private secondary schools in Jalingo Metropolis.
3. compare the workplace stress among teachers in public and private secondary schools in Jalingo Metropolis.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive survey research design to assess workplace stress levels among teachers in public and private secondary schools in Jalingo metropolis, Taraba State, Nigeria. The design therefore suits the objective of determining and comparing stress levels among teachers in different school types. The study is conducted Jalingo Metropolis, Taraba State, Nigeria. Jalingo is the capital of Taraba State located in the Northeastern part of Nigeria. The metropolis has a number of registered public and private schools that employs teachers with varying working conditions and organizational environments.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises 1,516 teachers in registered public and private secondary schools within Jalingo metropolis, the population include teachers working in both public and private secondary school, because the two school types provide a basis for assessing workplace stress across different school setting.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A representative sample of 320 was drawn from the population of 1,516 teachers using a simple random sampling technique. A total of 200 respondents were picked from public secondary schools, while 120 respondents formed the sample for the private secondary schools using Taro Yamane sample size formula.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled ‘WOSAT’ (workplace stress among teachers). Responses were measured on a four-point scale of preference ranging from strongly agree 4, agree 3, strongly disagree 2, disagree 1, therefore, the threshold is 2.5 mean score. Experts in educational measurement and evaluation, Family and consumer science were requested to examine the instrument in terms of the relevance, clarity, adequacy, and appropriateness of the items for measuring workplace stress among teachers. Their observations were incorporated into the final version of the instrument before its administration. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. A reliability coefficient of 0.74 is obtained, indicating an acceptable level of internal consistency.

Method of Data Collection

The data collection method was the direct administration of the questionnaire to the selected respondents. The questionnaires were administered in person to ensure a high response rate and respondents were given sufficient time to complete. Completed questionnaires were collected immediately to minimize data loss of questionnaires and improve the completeness of the returned data

Data Analysis and Techniques

Descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations were used to summarize and describe workplace stress among teachers. The results were presented in tables and interpreted in line with the objectives of the study, providing a clear understanding of workplace stress patterns among teachers in Jalingo metropolis.

Results

Table 1 shows the level workplace stress among teachers in public secondary schools in Jalingo Metropolis. The grand mean score of 3.53 indicates that teachers experience a high workplace stress. The findings further revealed that teachers experience tension, anxiety, physical fatigue, headaches, and pressure to meet school expectations. Respondents also agreed that their job demands more than they can comfortably handle and that they often feel irritable after school hours. Overall, the results suggest that teachers in public secondary schools' experience significant emotional, mental, and physical stress arising from their work responsibilities.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Assess the level of workplace stress among teachers in public and private secondary schools in Jalingo Metropolis

S/N	ITEM	Mean	Std. Dev	Remark
1	Mental exhaustion after work	3.11	1.00	Agreed
2	Feeling drained at the end of the school day	3.01	1.90	Agreed
3	Workload leaving little energy for personal or family life	3.93	1.11	Agreed
4	Tension and anxiety caused by work-related pressure	3.55	1.16	Agreed
5	Constant pressure to meet school expectations	3.69	1.14	Agreed
6	Job demands exceeding manageable levels	3.54	1.32	Agreed
7	Physical fatigue resulting from work stress	3.77	1.04	Agreed
8	Headaches or body pains associated with work stress	3.79	1.12	Agreed
9	Mental fatigue during lesson preparation, note writing, or script marking	3.95	1.16	Agreed
10	Irritability or feeling easily upset after school hours	2.95	1.22	Agreed
	Grand Mean	**3.53**		

Table 2 presents the perceived sources of workplace stress among teachers in private secondary schools in Jalingo Metropolis. The grand mean score of 3.38 indicates a high workplace stress factors among the teachers. The respondents agreed that excessive workload, large class size, too many teaching periods, poor administrative support, and inadequate salary contribute to their stress. The findings also showed that a lack of participation in decision-making, inadequate teaching facilities, students' indiscipline, frequent changes in school policies, and delayed salary payments contribute to workplace stress. Frequent changes in school policies and inadequate teaching facilities were associated with the highest mean scores. Overall, the results indicate that administrative, instructional, and welfare-related issues are major sources of stress among teachers in private secondary schools.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Assess the perceived sources of workplace stress among teachers in public and private secondary schools in Jalingo Metropolis

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	Std. Dev	Remark
1	Excessive workload causes me stress	3.36	0.89	Agreed
2	Large class size increases my stress level	3.19	0.86	Agreed
3	Too many teaching periods per week cause stress	3.34	1.00	Agreed
4	Poor administrative support increases my stress	3.11	1.04	Agreed
5	My salary is not commensurate with my workload	3.10	1.21	Agreed
6	Lack of participation in decision-making is stressful	3.67	1.08	Agreed
7	Inadequate teaching facilities increase my stress	3.90	1.20	Agreed
8	Students' indiscipline contributes to my stress	3.10	1.06	Agreed
9	Frequent changes in school policies cause stress	3.98	0.92	Agreed
10	Delayed salary payment causes stress	3.01	1.30	Agreed
	Grand Mean	**3.38**		

Table 3 shows the comparative perception of workplace stress among teachers in public and private secondary schools in Jalingo Metropolis. The grand mean score of 3.74 indicates that teachers in both school types experience a high level of workplace stress. The respondents agreed that job insecurity, strict supervision, extended working hours, parental expectations, and administrative pressure contribute more to stress among private school teachers.

The findings further revealed that overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching resources, promotion-related issues, and class size-related stress affect public school teachers more than private school teachers. Respondents also agreed that salary-related concerns and pressure to meet performance targets contribute significantly to stress among private school teachers. Overall, the findings indicate that both public and private school teachers experience workplace stress, though the sources of stress differ between the two school systems.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Comparative perception of Workplace Stress among Teachers in Public and Private Secondary Schools in Jalingo Metropolis

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	Std. Dev	Remark
	1. Fear of job insecurity causes stress	3.79	1.13	Agreed
2	Teachers in private schools feel more stressed due to strict supervision by school management than in public schools	3.65	0.76	Agreed
3	Teachers in private schools experience more stress from extended working hours than those in public schools	3.63	0.66	Agreed
4	Parental expectations create more stress for teachers in private schools than in public schools	3.42	0.85	Agreed
5	Administrative pressure is higher in private schools than in public schools	3.59	0.72	Agreed
6	Teachers in public schools experience more stress due to overcrowded classrooms than in private schools	3.05	1.23	Agreed
7	Teachers in public schools experience more stress due to inadequate teaching resources than those in private schools	3.20	1.11	Agreed
8	Salary-related concerns cause more stress for teachers in private schools than in public schools	3.09	0.94	Agreed
9	Teachers in private schools experience more pressure to meet performance targets than those in public schools	3.50	0.74	Agreed
10	Teachers in public schools face greater class size-related stress than teachers in private schools	3.45	0.92	Agreed
11	Promotion opportunities affect stress levels more in public schools than in private schools	3.07	1.02	Agreed
	Grand Mean	**3.74**		

Discussion

Table one revealed that teachers in public secondary schools in Jalingo Metropolis experience a high workplace stress. This finding is in agreement with Ige et al. (2024) who found that public secondary school teachers experience significant workplace stress due to heavy workload, poor working conditions, and increasing administrative demands. The finding also supports the report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2024), and the International Task Force on Teachers on working conditions, heavy workloads, and inadequate institutional support all of which can negatively affect their well-being and retention in the

profession. The report further highlights inadequate teachers contribute to increased workloads and diminished teacher well-being, particularly in the context where educational demands exceed available resources. This finding implies that persistent workplace stress may negatively affect teachers' productivity, emotional well-being and instructional effectiveness in public secondary schools.

Table two showed that several factors contribute to workplace stress among teachers in private secondary schools in Jalingo Metropolis. Shogbesan et al. (2024), reported that poor welfare conditions, unstable administrative practices, and inadequate instructional resources are major causes of stress among private school teachers in Nigeria. The result also aligns with the findings of Nwafor (2022), observed that private school teachers often face workplace stress because of strict supervision, inadequate remuneration, and limited involvement in school administration.

Results on table 3 revealed that both public and private secondary school teachers experience workplace stress, although the causes and intensity of stress differ between the two school types. This finding is consistent with Opara (2024), who found a significant difference in workplace stress between public and private school teachers, with public-school teachers experiencing higher levels of stress. The difference was associated with factors such as workload and class size, suggesting that variations in working conditions and organizational demands may contribute to differences in teachers' experiences of workplace stress. The finding also supports the study of Alhassan et al. (2024), which reported that private school teachers experience higher administrative and performance-related stress, while public school teachers are more affected by infrastructural and classroom-related challenges. This finding implies that school environment and administrative structure influence the nature and level of workplace stress experienced by teachers.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that workplace stress is a major challenge affecting teachers in both public and private secondary schools in Jalingo Metropolis. The nature and intensity of workplace stress differ between public and private secondary schools because of differences in management practices, work environment, available resources, and organizational expectations. If workplace stress among teachers is not properly addressed, it may negatively affect teachers' job performance, effectiveness, motivation, and overall quality of education.

From the conclusion, the following recommendations were made

1. The Taraba State Government and relevant educational authorities should recruit more qualified teachers to public secondary schools, to reduce excessive workloads and overcrowded classrooms. In addition, government should improve teachers' overall working conditions by providing adequate instructional resources, improving school infrastructure, and ensuring the timely payment of salaries and other entitlements. These measures will help reduce workplace stress, promote teachers' well-being, and enhance their productivity and instructional effectiveness.
2. Proprietors of private secondary schools should improve teachers' welfare through improved remuneration, reasonable working hours, supportive supervision, and greater involvement of teachers in relevant school decision-making processes. School management should also provide adequate teaching resources and adopt supportive rather than overly strict administrative practices to minimize workplace stress.
3. Both public and private secondary schools should establish workplace stress management programs, including counselling services, regular staff welfare meetings, workload monitoring, peer-support systems, and stress-management training. Such interventions should be tailored to the specific sources of stress in each school type to promote teachers' emotional well-being, job satisfaction, and overall effectiveness.

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