

The Predictive Influence Of Teaching Anxiety And Occupational Stress On Teaching Efficacy Of Secondary School Teachers In Owerri Municipal Of Imo State Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study investigated the predictive influence of teaching anxiety and occupational stress on teaching efficacy of secondary school teachers in Owerri Municipal of Imo State Nigeria. Using a descriptive survey research design. Simple random sampling technique was used to select four hundred secondary school teachers from twenty secondary schools in Owerri Municipal Imo State Nigeria. Instruments used were: Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (long form) (0.90); Teachers Teaching Anxiety Scale (0.84) and Teachers Occupation Job Stress Scale (0.72). Two research questions were answered at 0.05 level of significance. Data were analysed using Multiple Regression statistical tool. The independent variables accounted for 72.3% of the total variance on teaching efficacy of secondary school teachers. In order of magnitude, of the contribution: Occupational stress has more predictive influence on teaching efficacy of secondary school teachers ($\beta = 0.382, t = 5.214, P < 0.05$) followed by teaching anxiety ($\beta = 0.164, t = 3.428, P < 0.05$) on teaching efficacy of secondary school teachers. Therefore, School administrator should ensure teachers are given tasks that commiserate with their ability to avoid the experience of work-overload, burnout and stress. Also, teachers should take time to update themselves academically as to overcome the challenge of intellectual deficiency that could generate anxiety while teaching.*

Key Words: *Occupational stress, Teaching anxiety, Teaching efficacy, School, Teacher*

I. Introduction

Teaching is a profession that is intellectually demanding and emotionally exhausting. It requires those involved to express competence and self-confidence in their ability to transmit knowledge to learners during teaching and learning process. For teachers interacting with secondary school students of tender age, to make meaningful impact on their intellectual and character development, they need to be self-efficacious and have potent teaching efficacy to withstand the overbearing demands of teaching. The teacher's professional world is comprised of the classroom domain and the school domain. In each domain, the teacher must perform defined tasks, and ensure defined expressive elements. In this regard, Bandura (1997) stated that teachers' perceptions of efficacy depend on more than their ability to teach subject matter. Teacher's effectiveness is, in part, determined also by their efficacy in maintaining classroom discipline that establishes an environment conducive for learning, in using resources, and in supporting parental efforts to help their children learn (Bandura, 1997).

This view requires a teacher to be self-efficacious to have the competence to put in place the necessary stimuli in classroom environment that encourages students to become active, self-motivated or mastery oriented learners (Deemer, 2004). It is obvious that teachers play an important role in creating this kind of environment (Pajares, 1992). Specifically, teachers' beliefs are one of the most important factors that affect the implementation of curriculum reforms (Tatto, Schmelkes, Guevara, & Tapia, 2006). For example, teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs are likely to adopt more student-centred approaches than teacher-centred approaches in educational settings such as classrooms (Swars, 2005). Jerald (2007) highlights some teacher behaviours found to be related to a teacher's sense of efficacy. Teachers with a stronger sense of efficacy: Tend to exhibit greater levels of planning and organization; Are more open to new ideas and are more willing to experiment with new methods to better meet the needs of their students; Are more persistent and resilient when things do not go smoothly; Are less critical of students when they make errors; and Are less inclined to refer a difficult student to special education.

According to Shaughnessy (2004) efficacy teachers are those who set high goals, who persist, who try another strategy when one approach is found wanting in other words, teachers who have a high sense of efficacy and act on it are more likely to have students who learn. However, an important factor in the determination of a teacher's sense of efficacy is, not surprisingly, experience, or what Bandura (1977), a leader in the development of self-efficacy theory, calls performance accomplishments but the teachers ability to enhance students attainment of learning. Furthermore, Hoy (2000) suggests that some of the most powerful influences on the development of teacher efficacy are mastery experiences during student teaching and the induction year. This

implies that the first years of teaching could be critical to the long-term development of teacher efficacy. Bandura (1986) posited that self-efficacy is the central mediator of effort. That is, increased efficacy beliefs will lead to increased persistence and high levels of performance. With regard to teachers, Tuckman and Sexton (1990) have documented the relationship between teachers' efficacy and persistence in the face of difficulty. Similarly, researchers have found a relationship between teachers' efficacy and their performance. For example, Ashton and Webb (1986), as well as Berman and colleagues (1977), have documented the relationship of higher efficacy to the instructional practices known to foster academic achievement.

However, during teaching in classroom, some teachers could be nervous, apprehensive and frightened. This development might not be due to intellectual incompetence but anxiety. Teaching anxiety when experienced could mar effective teaching and learning process. Its physiological consequence could lead to long term classroom struggle by affected teachers to make an impact. It is an experience which if not well managed, makes teachers to express poor teaching efficacy. Some of the negative consequences of teaching anxiety were related to physical health and well-being (Pert, 1986). Gardner and Leak (1994) proposed that teaching anxiety is a state condition. They did not believe teaching anxiety to be a personality characteristic, but an association the individual had made between anxiousness and teaching.

Gardner and Leak (1994) conceptualized teaching anxiety as anxiety experienced in relation to teaching activities that involve the preparation and execution of classroom activities.

Teaching anxiety in general appears to be a problem for a significant number of post-secondary educators (Gardner & Leak, 1994; Ameen, Guffey, & Jackson, 2002). Anxiety for teaching is a frequent fear of pre-service teachers and can lead to series of task avoidance (Akinsola, 2008a). It is associated with a particular school subject. It may reflect real or perceived knowledge deficits in subject content as well as in skill of delivery. The studies on subject teaching anxiety will apparently go on unless the students get rid of this anxiety. If it is admitted that anxiety will naturally exist as the human beings exist (Engelhard, 2001), then it is evident that there are disadvantages of living without anxiety. Akinsola (2002) found out that elementary in-service mathematics teachers' mathematics anxiety affects their studying and teaching of mathematics negatively and also have a debilitating effect on their problem solving ability (Akinsola, 2008b). This may be due to perceive knowledge deficits in mathematics content as well as in mathematics teaching skills, and memories of past occurrences of mathematics failure or mathematics anxiety (Levine, 1993).

Frustration, multiple roles and task ambiguity as associated with teacher's responsibilities and teaching in secondary schools in Nigeria could result to the experience of occupational stress.

It occurs when there is a discrepancy between the demands of the workplace and that of individual's. Besides, they are also supposed to engage in many other tasks such as paperwork, evaluating students, preparing for the class and keeping themselves up-to-date with their teaching area. At the same time, they might have positive or negative encounters with parents, colleagues, administrative authorities and students, all of which can affect them psychologically (Mousavi, 2007).

Thus, there exists a substantial body of literature describing teaching as stressful occupation and suggesting that teacher stress appears to be an increasing problem (Guthrie, 2006; Kyriacou, 2001; Munt, 2004). In recent time, several studies have examined occupational stress in the teaching profession. Studies have suggested that teachers experience disproportionately high level of stress (Adeyemo & Ogunyemi, 2005; Borg, 1990). Teacher stress often affects the teacher's ability to function effectively (Poornima, 2010), sometimes to the extent of causing burnout (Reddy, 2011). Other common responses listed by Brown and Ralph (1992) includes reduction in work performance and output; inability to manage time or delegate; feelings of alienation and inadequacy; loss of confidence and motivation; increasing introversion; irritability with colleagues; unwillingness to cooperate; frequent irrational conflict at work; withdrawal from supportive relationships; inappropriate cynical humour; persistent negative thoughts; increased substance abuse; loss of appetite; frequent infections; and accident proneness. In the present study, the investigators made an attempt to assess the level of stress experienced by the higher secondary teachers.

The following research questions were answered in this study

To what extent does the independent variables (teaching anxiety and occupational stress) predict teaching efficacy of secondary school teacher?

What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (teaching anxiety and occupational stress) on teaching efficacy of secondary school teacher?

II. Methodology

Design and Participants

This study adopted a survey research design of ex-post facto type. The population comprised of secondary school teachers in Owerri Municipal of Imo State Nigeria.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample for this study consists of four hundred secondary school teachers (400) selected randomly from twenty randomly selected secondary schools in Owerri Municipal in Imo State Nigeria.

Instrumentation

Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale (long form) by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001). It is a twenty four item scale with a 9 point rating format. It has items such as: How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students? How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students ? How much can you do to help your students’ value learning? How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules? Etc. it has internal consistency of 0.90

Teachers Teaching Anxiety Scale was used to measure teachers teaching anxiety. It is a self-constructed scale with ten items: It has items such as: I feel tensed when teaching; I am scared to answer questions from students in class: The presence of large number of students in class frightens me: etc; It is a four point modified Likert scale with response pattern of strongly agreed SA to strongly disagreed SD with an internal consistency of 0.84

Teachers Occupation Job Stress Scale was used to measure teachers’ occupational stress. It is a self-constructed scale with ten items: It has items such as: I am engage with much more task than I can cope with: I have large number of students to attend to daily: I find it difficult to coordinate myself at work due to multiple role function; etc; It is a four point modified Likert scale with response pattern of strongly agreed SA to strongly disagreed SD with an internal consistency of 0.72.

Procedure

The researchers obtained permission from school authorities used for the study. The consent of participants were equally sought and obtained. After the consent of the participants was obtained, the researchers administered copies of the instrument with explanation on how to complete them and the purpose of the research.

Method of Data analysis

Data were analysed with multiple regression statistical tools at 0.05 level of significance.

III. Result

Research Question One

To what extent does the independent variables (teaching anxiety and occupational stress) predict teaching efficacy of secondary school teachers?

Table 1: Multiple Regression Analysis showing joint predictive influence of the independent variables on teaching efficacy of secondary school teachers

Multiple R	=	0.821			
Multiple R ²	=	0.715			
Multiple R ² (Adjusted)	=	0.723			
Standard Error of Estimate	=	4.1632			
Source of variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean square	of F-Ratio	P
Regression	3472.464	2	1736.232	504.43	<.05
Residual	1366.422	397	3.442		
Total	4838.886	399			

Table 1 shows that the independent variables had significant joint predictive influence on the dependent variable (teaching efficacy of secondary school teachers) (R = 0.821, P <.05). The combination of the independent variables accounted for 72.3% of the total variance on the prediction of teaching efficacy of secondary school teachers (adjusted R² = 0.723). The analysis of variance of the multiple regression data yielded an F-ratio value which was found to be significant at 0.05 Alpha level, F (2, 397) = 504.43, P < 0.05).

Research Question Two

What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (teaching anxiety and occupational stress) on teaching efficacy of secondary school teacher?

Table 2: The relative contribution of each of the independent variables on teaching efficacy of secondary school teachers

Variables	B	Std.Error	Beta	T	Sig.	P
(constant)	8.217	2.490		3.665	.000	<.05
Teaching Anxiety	.193	.033	.164	3.428	.000	<.05
Occupational Stress	.348	.051	.382	5.214	.000	<.05

Dependent –Variable: Teaching efficacy of secondary school teachers

Table 2 highlights the contributions of each of the independent variables to the predictions of teaching efficacy of secondary school teachers. In terms of magnitude of the contribution: occupational stress has more predictive influence on teaching efficacy of secondary school teachers ($\beta = 0.382$, $t = 5.214$, $P < 0.05$) followed by teaching anxiety ($\beta = 0.164$, $t = 3.428$, $P < 0.05$) on teaching efficacy of secondary school teachers

IV. Discussion of Findings

Research Question One: To what extent does the independent variables (teaching anxiety and occupational stress) predict teaching efficacy of secondary school teachers? The findings of this study revealed that the independent variables had significant joint predictive influence on the dependent variable (teaching efficacy of secondary school teachers) and the combination of the independent variables accounted for 72.3% of the total variance on the prediction of teaching efficacy of secondary school teachers (adjusted $R^2 = 0.723$). This indicates the challenging nature of the teaching profession could make teachers manifest symptoms teaching anxiety and occupation stress that could negatively impair their level of teaching efficacy. In this regard, Bandura (1997) stated that teachers’ perceptions of efficacy depend on more than their ability to teach subject matter. Teacher’s effectiveness is, in part, determined also by their efficacy in maintaining classroom discipline that establishes an environment conducive for learning, in using resources, and in supporting parental efforts to help their children learn (Bandura, 1997). Teaching anxiety when experienced could mar effective teaching and learning process. Its physiological consequence could lead to long term classroom struggle by affected teachers to make an impact. It is an experience which if not well managed, makes teachers to express poor teaching efficacy. Some of the negative consequences of teaching anxiety were related to physical health and well-being (Pert, 1986).

Gardner and Leak (1994) proposed that teaching anxiety is a state condition. They did not believe teaching anxiety to be a personality characteristic, but an association the individual had made between anxiousness and teaching. Also the result of this study revealed that teacher stress often affects the teacher’s ability to function effectively (Poornima, 2010), sometimes to the extent of causing burnout (Reddy, 2011). Other common responses listed by Brown and Ralph (1992) includes reduction in work performance and output; inability to manage time or delegate; feelings of alienation and inadequacy; loss of confidence and motivation; increasing introversion; irritability with colleagues; unwillingness to cooperate; frequent irrational conflict at work; withdrawal from supportive relationships; inappropriate cynical humour; persistent negative thoughts; increased substance abuse; loss of appetite; frequent infections; and accident proneness. In the present study, the investigators made an attempt to assess the level of stress experienced by the higher secondary teachers.

Research Question Two: What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (teaching anxiety and occupational stress) on teaching efficacy of secondary school teacher? The finding of this study shows that in terms of magnitude of the contribution: occupational stress has more predictive influence on teaching efficacy of secondary school teachers ($\beta = 0.382$, $t = 5.214$, $P < 0.05$) followed by teaching anxiety ($\beta = 0.164$, $t = 3.428$, $P < 0.05$) on teaching efficacy of secondary school teachers. The reason for this development could be that teachers in Nigerian secondary schools are most times assigned multiple roles and they experience task ambiguity which leads to frustration and generate occupational stress. It occurs when there is a discrepancy between the demands of the workplace and that of individual’s capabilities and competence. Besides, they are often engage in many other tasks such as paperwork, evaluating students, preparing for the class and keeping themselves up-to-date with their teaching area. At the same time, they might have positive or negative encounters with parents, colleagues, administrative authorities and students, all of which can affect them psychologically (Mousavi, 2007).

V. Recommendation

Teachers should be exposed to psychological intervention programmes such as emotional intelligence and self-efficacy training that would help enhance their teaching efficacy competence and capability to effectively dispense their professional service to humanity.

School administrator should ensure teachers are given tasks that commiserate with their ability to avoid the experience of work-overload, burnout and stress.

Teachers should take time to update themselves academically as to overcome the challenge of intellectual deficiency that could generate anxiety while teaching.

VI. Conclusion

Teaching is a dynamic profession that requires competence. This makes it imperative for teachers to be equipped with knowledge, skills and techniques that would enhance their competence in teaching and learning situation.

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