

STRESS, MARITAL CHALLENGES AND COPING STRATEGIES OF FEMALE MARRIED SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN SOKOTO METROPOLIS, SOKOTO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated stress, marital challenges and coping strategies of female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis. Three research questions, objectives and hypotheses were raised respectively to guide the study. A descriptive correlational research design was used in this study. The study used a population of six hundred and forty two (642) married teachers across the public secondary schools in Sokoto Metropolis, out of which two hundred and forty eight (248) were sampled based on research advisor table for determining sample size (2006). Three set of instruments were used to collect data for the study namely; researcher designed Sources of Stress Scale (SSS) with reliability index of 0.68, Marital Challenges Scale (MCS) with reliability index of 0.72 and Coping Strategies Scale (CSS) reliability index of 0.78. All the instruments were validated by experts and were said to have content and construct validity. Hypotheses one, two and three were analyzed using Pearson Moment Correlation statistics. The findings of the study revealed that there is relationship between home based and work-based sources of stress, personality factors and behavioural factor related challenges and a significant relationship between affectionate factor and social support coping strategies of female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis. The study concluded that, affectionate factor and social support coping strategies is related and could actually serve as support to female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis. It was recommended among others that, there should be concerted effort of the counsellors to the female married teachers to make sure that needs, personality factor and behavioural factor on marital related challenges are taking care of to reduce stress.

Keywords: Stress, Marital Challenges, Coping Strategies and Female.

Introduction

Having stress is a fact of life which everyone deals with on daily basis. Understanding the nature of stress is complicated. Stress is not simply anxiety, nervous breakdown, or something damaging, bad, or to be avoided (Luthans, 2010). It is an arousal state of mind and body in response to demands made up of them. Lunenbury and Omsteen, (2003) explained that stress is the physiological and psychological response of an individual to demands (the loss of something desired), constants (forces that prevent individuals from during what they desire), or opportunities involving uncertainty and important outcomes. It is a dynamic condition in which any individual confronts with an opportunity constraint or demands related to what the person desire, and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important (Clegy, 2000) Lohithakshan, 2000 stated that stress to teachers refers to the experiences of unpleasant emotion by teachers such as anger, tension, frustration, depression and nervousness, resulting from their work. Lunenburg and Omsteen, (2003: 40) explained that stress is usually known as a negative term caused by something bad.

Stress is a state of psychological imbalance resulting from the disparity between situational demand and individuals' ability or motivation to meet those demands (Kroemer and Grandjean, 2001). Some sources of stress include family relationships, occupation and how people think. According to Aldous (2006) a working woman is a woman who works consistently and sometimes constantly for the sustenance of the family. These women in their marital status are confronted with everyday challenges (stresses) within and outside the home. These challenges have the capacity of either making or marring their conjugal union. The home-based stress include abuse, extra marital affairs, sadness, worry, withdrawal, violence and complete loss of connection, a high level of tension, depression, polygyny, and mental and family (Salami, 2010).

However, some occupations are stressful while others provide basic psychological atmosphere for workers' emotional stability. Anytime stress occurs, it is an indication that the demands placed upon the person have exceeded the personal resources, whether these resources are physical, emotional, economic, social or spiritual (Dixit, 2011). Work gives a sense of identification to an individual within a community (Dixit, 2011). Workplace stress occurs when the challenges and demands of work become excessive and the pressures of the workplace exceed the workers' ability to handle them and job satisfactions turns to frustration and exhaustion (Lambert & Lambert, 2008). Personality marital related challenges is the socialization factors related to kindness, generosity, kindness and delicacy. According to Salami (2010) personality traits predict the marital adjustment of couples and involve neutral characteristics to the perception of marital issues. Behavioural marital related challenges may include; jumping into marriage for the wrong reasons, loss of individual identity, overbearing parental duties, not having the same vision of success anymore, a nonexistent sex life, unmet expectations, differences in finances, loss of physical attraction, different interests, and too many fights over problems (Salami, 2010). Affectionate coping strategy refers to putting our spouse first to nurtures trust, gratitude, generosity, and affection. It can also lead to physical intimacy. Marriages do not work well when our partner plays second fiddle to anything even the children. It is a fact that, the happiest kids are those with parents who love one-another best (Ahmed, 2013). Social support is an important strategy which helps people to cope with traumatic experiences. Having effective social support has been shown to be one of the most effective tool for intervention in marital challenges (Adeoye & Durosaro, 2009).

There is increased female involvement in teaching and as such we have female teachers who combine their domestic duties with workplace responsibilities in formal organizations. They perform reproductive, domestic and productive duties. But either way, these female teachers are likely to be confronted with different social and psychological problems. These social and psychological problems is what constituted marital challenges and are directly the result of problems, such as abuse, extra marital affairs, sadness, worry, withdrawal, violence and complete loss of connection, a high level of tension, depression, polygyny, and mental and family.

The role and place of women in the teaching profession in Sokoto is now fully recognized and accepted by a great majority on equity. It is a profession that cannot do without women, both married and unmarried. It is also well known that the married ones have to cope with the rigors of running a family life. Such a life leads them to assuming many roles, that of a wife, a mother, a civil servant and sometimes a breadwinner. Such a life takes its toll on the day to day activities of such women, thus stress invariably set in. As such many do not perform up to expectation in their daily duties. These have well resulted

in many cases of constant absenteeism, lateness to work, procrastination of assignment, transfer of aggression to students, abandonment of duty, seeking permission to attend a family responsibilities during work hour, in fact, any slight opportunity that may give them an excuse from performing their required duty. In the process of making adjustment, female teachers had to compromise their sleep, desires and health. However, this rigor leads to stress and bring about marital challenges in female teachers but at home and with the organization in which they work.

Some empirical studies in relation to the variables reviewed in the relationship between stress and marital challenges, stress and coping strategies. For example, Adeoye and Durosaro, (2009) worked on sources of stress and coping strategies on concerned married women using survey research design and employee of five selected schools in Ilorin with two hundred and fifty (250) respondents randomly selected and four research instruments as well as through statistical tools for data analysis and the findings confirmed dual career women encounter stress in their attempt to fulfill home and work demands. Amponsah, (2012) studied work stress and marital relationship in Ghana using descriptive survey research design, 723 secondary school teachers were used with 364 as the respondents and the result of the findings indicated that, there is a process of spillover between work and stress and marital roles, and between marital relationship and work stress. Ahmed (2013) worked on work family life adjustment in Punjab using ex-post facto survey design with 2,800 and servants in Punjab was adopted for the study and the result of the study showed that adjustment was a long, tiring and extremely challenging process as work had its own demands which were quite different from family responsibilities. In the process of making adjustment working mothers had to compromise their sleep, desires and health. Therefore, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, less attention has been focused on sources of stress, marital challenges and coping strategies of female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis. The main thrust of this study, therefore is to examine the relationship among sources of stress, marital challenges and coping strategies of female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the conduct of the study:

- i. Is there any relationship between home-based and work-based sources of stress of female married teachers in Secondary schools in Sokoto metropolis?
- ii. Is there any relationship between personality factor and behavioural factor of marital related challenges of female married Secondary schools' teachers in Sokoto metropolis?
- iii. Is there any relationship between affectionate factor and social support coping strategies of female married Secondary schools' teachers in Sokoto Metropolis?

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to find out:

- i. If there is any relationship between home-based and work-based sources of stress of female married teachers in Secondary schools in Sokoto metropolis.

- ii. If there is any relationship between personality factor and behavioural factor of marital related challenges of female married Secondary schools' teachers in Sokoto metropolis.
- iii. If there is any relationship between affectionate factor and social support coping strategies of female married Secondary schools' teachers in Sokoto Metropolis.

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested, at 0.05 level of significance:

- i. There is no significant relationship between home-based and work-based sources of stress of female married teachers in Secondary schools in Sokoto metropolis.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between personality factor and behavioural factor of marital related challenges of female married Secondary schools' teachers in Sokoto metropolis.
- iii. There is no significant relationship between affectionate factor and social support coping strategies of female married Secondary schools' teachers in Sokoto Metropolis.

Methodology

A descriptive correlational research design was used in this research. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 15 out of 40 schools that are within the study area with the total population of 642 female married teachers in Sokoto metropolis. Table of determining sample size by Research Advisor's (2006) was used and samples of 248 participants from the fifteen schools were considered using purposive sampling technique. Meanwhile, the female married teachers in each school were selected by using simple random sampling of Yes or No ballot form in order to represent the whole population and the opinion of the respondents reflects the feelings of the population.

Three research instruments that were used for this research are:

Researcher designed Stress Scale (SS): to measure sources of stress among married Secondary School teachers in Sokoto metropolis with construct validity after scrutiny by experts in the Department of Educational Foundations, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, and reliability index of 0.68 using test re-test method. This was considered high enough for use in this research.

Researcher designed Marital Challenges Scale (MCS): to measure marital challenges with content validity after scrutiny by experts in the Department of Educational Foundations, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, and reliability index of 0.72 using test re-test method. This was considered high enough for use in this research.

Researcher designed Coping Strategies Scale (CSS): to measure coping strategies with content validity after scrutiny by experts in the Department of Educational Foundations, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, and reliability index of 0.78 using test re-test method. This was considered high enough for use in this research.

Data Presentation and Analysis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between home-based and work-based sources of stress of female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis

Table 1: Relationship between home-based and work-based sources of Stress

| Sources | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | r-cal | p-value | Decision |
|------------|-----|-------|----------------|-------|---------|----------|
| Home-based | 248 | 62.54 | 7.312 | .102 | .048 | Rejected |
| Work-based | 248 | 43.30 | 5.23 | | | |

$\alpha = 0.05$

From Table 1, it can be seen that the relationship between home-based and work-based sources of stress of female married secondary school teachers was positive with Pearson’s $r = .102$ which was high and statistically significant with $p\text{-value } .043 < .05$. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is statistically significant relationship between home-based and work-based sources of stress of female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis because the $p\text{-value}$ is less than $.05$ level of significance. Therefore, an increase in home-based stress is accompanied by an increase in work-based stress. Thus, hypothesis which states there is no significant relationship home-based and work-based sources of stress of female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis was rejected.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between personality factor and behavioural factor of marital related challenges of female married Secondary schools’ teachers in Sokoto metropolis

Table 2: Relationship between Personality Factor and Behavioural Factor Marital Challenges

| Variables | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | r-Cal | P-value | Decision |
|--------------------|-----|-------|----------------|-------|---------|----------|
| Personality Factor | 248 | 64.47 | 7.312 | .122 | .046 | Rejected |
| Behavioural Factor | 248 | 40.23 | 12.176 | | | |

$\alpha = 0.05$

From Table 2, it can be seen that the relationship between personality factor and behavioural factor of marital related challenges of female married secondary school teachers was positive with Pearson’s $r = .122$ which was high and statistically significant with $p\text{-value } .046 < .05$. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is statistically significant relationship between personality factor and behavioural factor of marital related challenges of female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis because the $p\text{-value}$ is less than $.05$ level of significance. Therefore, an increase in personality factor is accompanied by an increase in behavioural factor. Thus, hypothesis which states there is no significant relationship personality factor and behavioural factor of marital related challenges of female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis was rejected.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between affectionate factor and social support copying strategies of female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis.

Table 3: Relationship between Affectionate Factor and Social Support Copying Strategies

| Strategies | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | r-Cal | p-value | Decision |
|---------------------|-----|-------|----------------|-------|---------|----------|
| Affectionate Factor | 248 | 62.18 | 3.42 | .136 | .049 | Rejected |
| Social Support | 248 | 20.65 | 1.76 | | | |

$\alpha = 0.05$

From Table 3, it can be seen that the relationship between affectionate factor and social support copying strategies of female married secondary school teachers was positive with Pearson's $r = .136$ which was high and statistically significant with $p\text{-value } .049 < .05$. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is statistically significant relationship between affectionate factor and social support copying strategies of female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis because the $p\text{-value}$ is less than .05 level of significance. Therefore, an increase in affectionate factor is accompanied by increase in social support copying strategies. Thus, hypothesis which states there is no significant relationship affectionate factor and social support copying strategies of female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis was rejected.

Discussion of the Findings

Finding from hypothesis one showed that there is statistically significant relationship between home-based and work-based sources of stress of female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis. Hence the hypothesis is therefore rejected to indicate that there is relationship between home-based and work-based sources of stress of female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis. This is in line with study by Musa (2013) titled: Marital Stress and Job Performance of Senior Secondary school female teachers in Sokoto State metropolis, using correlation research design using 72 female teachers of senior secondary schools under ministry of science and technology as well as Pearson product moment correlation co-efficient to analyze the formulated null hypothesis, the finding indicated that there is significant relationship between time management, household chores, financial desires, relational distress, parenting distress and job performance, of female teachers in secondary schools under ministry of science and technology of Sokoto State their findings confirmed that low job performance of civil servants can be explained as consequences of spillover of marital stress brought from home. Hence the higher the marital stress experienced from home the lower the performance output of the workers. The prominence of workplace factors in the experience of stress may depend on occupational groupings or particular aspects of the workplace. This finding is reflect the role theory model (RTM) is a theory of essential factor in situation of marital crises or discontentment credited to (Mangus cited in Abubakar, 2010) because the expectations are fashioned from different social/family backgrounds, there is therefore the tendency for such roles to conflict, leading in partial terms to the crises of the role strains among the parties.

Hypothesis two which stated that there is no significant relationship between personality factor and behavioural factor marital related challenges of female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis was found rejected, because there is statistically significant relationship between personality factor and behavioural factor marital related challenges of female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis. Thus, the null hypothesis that states there is no significant relationship between personality factor and behavioural factor marital challenges stress of female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis was rejected. Hence, there is relationship between personality factor and behavioural factor marital related challenges of female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis. This shows that female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis experienced personality factor marital related challenges and behavioural factor marital related challenges. This finding agree with that of Borg and Riding in Dumais (2006) sample of 150 school administrators in state primary and secondary schools in Malta completed a self-administered questionnaire on their perceptions of role-related stress. About one-fifth of the respondents found their job as school administrators either very stressful or extremely stressful; 80 per cent indicated that they were fairly satisfied or very satisfied with their job. Some of the demographic characteristics of the sample were related to the level of job stress and satisfaction. Results also showed that respondents who reported greater levels of stress were least satisfied with their role as school administrators. A principal components analysis of 22 listed sources of stress revealed four major stress factors, labeled "lack of support and resolving conflicts", "inadequate resources", "workload" and "work conditions and responsibilities". The demographic variables of "sex", "type of administrative post" and "type of school" interacted significantly with the four stress factors. Borg and Riding cited in Dumais, (2006) uses school administrators in state primary and secondary schools in malta while the current study will use female teachers in secondary school only in Sokoto metropolis. The relationship between job satisfaction and occupational stress related to challenges has been well established in the literature as a negative one That is to say, higher job satisfaction is related to lower occupational stress, and vice versa. This finding is also in line with that of (Gilmore; McCormick cited in Gisele, 2002). Studies that have examined the dimensions of job satisfaction and stress variables, rather than overall measures, have generally provided a more thorough picture of how job stress and satisfaction are related. various analyses have shown that stress factors such as role ambiguity role conflict and role overload have differing strengths of relationships with job satisfaction, though the direction of the relationships are generally still negative For example, report that role ambiguity was more strongly related to job satisfaction than role conflict. This finding is also in line with the Marxist Feminist theory posits that society as unequally structured, dominated and controlled by men and the theory believed that women are exploited in the home and in the work place because their labour is uncompensated.

Hypothesis three stated that there was no significant relationship between affectionate factor and social support coping strategies of female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis. This hypothesis was rejected because statistically significant relationship between affectionate factor and social support coping strategies of female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis. Hence, there is relationship between affectionate factor and social support coping strategies of female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis. This shows that the affectionate factor coping strategy is as important as social support coping strategy to female married teachers in Sokoto metropolis. This is in agreement with previously existing findings of

Landsbergis in Carpenter, (2008) administered the new model of occupational stress developed by Robert Karasek which incorporates control and socialization effects and has successfully predicted the development of heart disease and psychological strain to 771 hospital and nursing home employees in New Jersey, and 289 (37.5 per cent) were returned. Respondents did not significantly differ from non-respondents by age, sex, job tenure, union membership status, job satisfaction, job perceptions and attitude towards employer and union the results support the hypothesis that reported job strain (job dissatisfaction, depression, psychosomatic symptom) and burnout is significantly higher in jobs that combine high workload demands with low decision latitude. This association remained significant after controlling for age, sex, education, marital status, children hours worked per week and shift worked. Other job characteristics (job insecurity physical exertion, social support, hazard exposure) were also associated with strain and burnout. This finding is also in line with the Role Theory Model posits that conflict generated by the inter-partner person's misconception is usually of chronic type where the misperceived member in the marriage fails to see in clear terms the basis for his or her being misperceived.

Conclusion

The study concludes that an increased in Home based stress is accompanied by an increased in Work based stress. An increase in personality factor is accompanied by an increased in behavioural factor. Affectionate factor and social support coping strategies is related and actually serve as support to female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis. This confirms that female married teachers' sources of stress, marital challenges affect the coping strategies of female married secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis. These married teachers may exhibit some physiological sign such as dizziness; emotional signs like agitation, inability to relax which if not well handled may lead to depression.

Recommendations

From the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Home-based and work-based sources of stress should be taken into consideration by Sokoto State Ministry of Education through sensitization, programmes, seminars and workshops to prepare the female married teachers on issues concerning their marital challenges.
2. There should be concerted effort of the counsellors' to the female married teachers to make sure that needs, personality factor and behavioural factor on marital related challenges are taking care of to reduce stress.
3. Stress affectionate factor and social support coping strategies such as sharing of worries, learning on how to cope with every situation, stepping back from issues that cause stress among others should be enhanced with the help of counsellors' to reduce the level of stress among the female married teachers.

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