STRESS FROM ROLE CONFLICT: CONSEQUENCES FOR PROFESSIONAL EFFECTIVENESS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

An ex-post facto data collected from 600 teachers and 2400 senior secondary two students from Cross River State were analyzed to determine the influence of stress arising from role conflict on professional effectiveness. One hypothesis was tested using One-Way Analysis of Variance. The result of the data analyses showed that stress arising from role conflict has a significant influence on professional effectiveness (Classroom management and supervision of co-curricular activities).Teachers who experience low level of stress are more effective than those who experience moderate and high level of stress. Based on the finding, some recommendations were made.

KEY WORDS: Stress, Role Conflict, Professional Effectiveness, Teachers, Cross River State.

INTRODUCTION:

Education occupies the most strategic position in Nigeria's struggle for national development. Without a well run school system no nation can make adequate impact on national development. However, for a system to achieve the objective of aiding national development it must be endowed with teachers who are adequately effective (Ajayi, 2000).Their roles in the development of manpower and in the achievement of national goals are very vital. Teaching is considered to be effective when learning takes place and the teacher acts in a way that creates understanding in the students and develops skill and competencies that are necessary for effective integration of the students. This is in effect, means that the professional effectiveness of the teacher is the degree to which the teacher facilitates the accomplishment of educational goals by students. The effective teacher establishes an environment which is conducive to learning. He uses appropriate instructional and interpersonal skills to produce educated students who are motivated to continue to learn (Brothers, 1993).

Teaching at all levels aims at attaining set or stated objective and one of the ways by which this can be done is by the students assessing the professional effectiveness of their teachers. They are able to do this because Rao (1989) affirms that students spend time with their teachers in school. They interact with their teachers in class, co-curricular activity and many other situations, therefore they are in better position to know their teachers and assess them more accurately. Students themselves have their own way of identifying effective teaching, they build criteria or have preconceived ideas ranging from teachers'command of knowledge of subject matter, method of delivery of the subject, the teachers' personality, his ability to motivate students, his concern for interest and interaction with the students. A secondary school teacher is in a profession that requires high intelligence, concentration dedication and commitment. He has to teach his students, evaluate them, and maintain discipline. He is expected to motivate the students to learn and help them mature into responsible adults. From observation, it is evident that some teachers are non-challant and less

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committed in the discharge of their official duty. These teachers come to school late, teach the students sparingly, hardly conduct tests and assignment even when they are given, they refuse to mark them, do not participate in supervising co-curricular activities in schools. All these promote indiscipline as well as level of ineffectiveness. According to Denga (1988) some of them hardly evaluate their lessons or encourage students to participate in classroom learning, such teachers never entertain questions in class or praise a student who has answered questions rightly. While Uzoeshi (1994) observed that most teachers do not put in their best in the classroom as they never reward or give enough incentives to their students while teaching. Some of the teachers do not attend class and even if they do, they are always in a hurry to finish what they have in the scheme. Others engage in part time business in order to make ends meet as a result of high inflation in the country. The result of this according to him is that students are hardly given enough attention, individual differences are neglected while continuous assessment suffers. Cross River State Post Primary School Management Board (2005) also observed that despite the seeming improvement of teachers' salaries, one continues to observe truancy, lack of dedication to duty and declining productivity. We hypothesized that stress arising from role conflict does not have any significant influence on professional effectiveness.

Theoretical background:

Stress can lead to professional ineffectiveness. This statement is hinged on a House theory of occupational stress (1974).House studied the personality of workers in an organization by understanding the situation that workers go through. He summarized that experiencing of stress is subjective which result from the combination of particular objective conditions of work and personal characteristics (e.g. abilities and needs).Characteristics of social situations (e.g. highly competitive peers) may also combine with conditions of work e.g. heavy workload, role conflict and role ambiguity) to produce stress. The theory holds that features of social situation like harmonious working relationship with co-workers may also determine or influence the extent to which a potential stressful situation may result in perceived stress. The theory also holds that a number of people who experience the same amount of subjective

stress will not show the same type of outcome. According to House (1974) coping with perceived stress may be physiological, psychological and or behavioral. Where a teacher is ignorant of the fact that the way he interprets a situation in the school system determines how stressful the situation will be, might end up being ineffective as a result of pressure from the different roles

Statement of the problem

Every society irrespective of its level of development needs productive workers. This means the most economical and effective use of human resources. It also means that happiness is a factor of efficiency. However, factors such as work overload, work under load, role conflict role uncertainty, work pressure, responsibility, performance evaluation, lack of feedback concerning performance, lack of contract, monitoring measure, quality and over control in work organization have been identified as militating against workers' happiness, efficiency and maximum productivity.

The teacher is a trained professional with knowledge and skill as well as a level of competence in the task of teaching and re-molding the children under his care. He is expected to teach his students motivate, counsel, advice and maintain discipline so that they can mature into responsible adults. In the role performance, some teachers do not seem to exert themselves adequately, so it is common to see students loitering about in the school compound and even nearby street when they are supposed to be in their classes for lessons. Teachers' professional ineffectiveness and their consequences do not however pass unattended to. For example, the Secondary School Education Board has tried to push teachers to improve upon their present level by seeing that the principals provide time book in the school for teachers to indicate the time they report for work and also sign off when leaving the school. This is to help check lateness to school and lack of seriousness in role performance. In order to encourage teachers to be effective and stay on the job, Government of Cross River State had approved science allocation for science teachers, as well as some stipend for teachers whose students perform well in Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE).Efforts are made to ensure that salaries are paid promptly and annual leave allocation is paid to teachers yearly.

Despite all these efforts and other good gestures by State Secondary Board, State Government, Governor, School Principal Parents, educationists, even teachers themselves complain about truancy, lack of dedication to duty. Poor academic performance of students has remained a recurrent issue on our educational system. This situation is what has motivated the need for this study, which is aimed at helping the school system solve this problem of teacher professional ineffectiveness.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to determine if stress arising from role conflict could be an explanation for the level of professional effectiveness of some secondary school teachers in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Significance of the study

This study will enable the teachers realize that as a result of the multiple roles they play; as teachers, fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, pastors etc. conflict may arise which if not well managed can lead to professional ineffectiveness. It also enable them to realize that for them to be effective, they have to manage conflict and learn to construct their duties to embrace all facets of teacher and care of the students and should endeavour to achieve the highest possible standard in all professional duties.

Most of the studies conducted in the areas of stress arising from role conflict drew their data from industrial settings. In this study, the focus was on the secondary schools. For the researchers, the study shall help to ascertain and clarify whether the findings of earlier studies on related issues can be generalized to all categories of schools.

Lastly, the study will also significantly contribute to academic literature in education and social psychology. Similarities may exist between the findings of this study and earlier studies and it is hoped that this will spur the interest of other researchers.

Literature Review

In every type of organization, people play certain roles. Roles according to Huse (1984) is the set of activities that an individual is expected to perform. Lomotey (1994) defines it as the sum total of expectations placed on individuals supervisors, peers, subordinates vendors, customers and others, depending on the particular job. This also according to him includes the individuals perception of his or her relationship to the organization. Polite (1997) regards roles as the level of commitment that a person is willing to give to the organization. Weick (1977) sees organizational roles as sets of expectations and behavior that apply to each organizational member. While according to Katz and kahn (1978) roles consist of set of activities people are expected to perform as a function of their positions within a social system.

Todays workers are faced with continual changeq budget cuts and downsizing, frequent organizational change and new technological departments that require new skill are common occurrences. In addition, networking across traditional boundaries is increasingly necessary to develop innovative solution for todays complex problems. Previous research has shown that roles in changing organizations can be ambiguous because role expectations change frequently Katz and Kahn (1978). During periods of change, organizational members may experience a lack of understanding of their new roles (role ambiguity as well as role conflict while roles and responsibilities are renegotiated. Difficulties in attempting to satisfy conflicting or incompatible job demands (role conflict) and unclear expectations are two causes of occupational stress (Rizzo 1971), and these according to Igbaria and Guimaraes (1993); Lamble (1980) have been shown to be associated with decreased job satisfaction and ineffectiveness.

Mouse and Litzman (1970) conducted a study on role conflict and from it they concluded that conflict occurs when individuals must assume various roles covering different situations that are inconsistent with one or more role(for example a teacher is both a principal and a class teacher).Role ambiguity on the other hand, results when the individual has insufficient knowledge of the expectation of an assigned position (Huse 1984). It can also occur when focal persons (role incumbents) are uncertain or unclear about product-to-evaluation contingencies and are aware of their own uncertainty about them. Breaugh and Colihan (1994) have further refined the definition of role ambiguity to be job ambiguity and indicate that job ambiguity possesses three distinct aspects: work method, scheduling and performance criteria. In addition, it has been hypothesized to

possess multidimensional properties (Sawyer, (1992); Singh and Rhoads, 1991). Robin (1998) asserts that conflict certainly can hurt an organizations performance as well as lead to the loss of many employees in the work.

Burnard (1991) in agreement with Robin (1998) indicates that when people are placed in jobs that make multiple and conflicting demands or in which there is lack of clarity as to the incumbent duties, authority and responsibilities, stress, dissatisfaction and ineffectiveness are increased. Jehn (1994) and Volkemia (1995); Soriano and Stanberg (1984), in their respective studies concluded that adequate or excessive level of conflict can hinder the effectiveness of a group or organization. Stanberg and Soriano (1984) reported that this would result in reduced satisfaction of group members, increased absenteeism, turnover rates and eventually lower productivity.

Kahn and Wolfe (1978) reported that the effect of role ambiguity and role conflict include low job satisfaction, high level of tensions and ineffectiveness. House and Rizzo (1972) added reduced organizational effectiveness and increased tendency to quit to list of negative side effects of role ambiguity and role conflict Schwab and Iwanicki (1982) found that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization linked role conflict and burnout. Lunenburg and Cadavid (1992) extended Schwab and Iwanickis work by establishing a linkage between teacher burnout and a decrease in teachers ability to cope with classroom situations. Hart (1994) examined role conflict as teachers and administrators at two different school sites attempted to implement teacher career ladders In one school, teachers were empowered to be instructional leaders. Their new roles were clearly defined as the new system was implemented, and these teachers worked as a cohesive group. At the other schools, new roles were not defined. Role conflict and role ambiguity resulted, little change occurred and teachers continued to work in isolation.

Lowell (1980) and Lamble (1980) in their separate research studied the relationship of role conflict and role ambiguity to job satisfaction and effectiveness. One of the research questions posed was. Are role conflict and role ambiguity related to job satisfaction and effectiveness? The questionnaire for the study was developed to gather data on (1) role conflict and role ambiguity (2) job satisfaction (3) effectiveness. Role

ambiguities were measured by a 7-point Likert-type scale using a slightly modified version of the scales developed by Rizzo et al (1970). These scales were selected because they have been widely used in research on role conflict and role ambiguity. The reliability of the role conflict role ambiguity scales was established by Schuler, et al (1977).Data were also collected on the independent variables that are representatives of personal job characteristics and effectiveness that were previously found to be related to role conflict and role ambiguity. Role conflict and role ambiguity were treated as independent variables While the various dimensions of job satisfaction and effectiveness were treated as dependent variables. In their findings, role conflict emerged as significant predictor in the six of the eight effectiveness models while role ambiguity emerged as a significant predictor in two models.

Scholars in Communication, Psychology and Management according to Brief and Aldag (1970) have studied role conflict and role ambiguity in a variety of setting for well over 30 years. Interest in these two constructs resides in the negative consequences such as tension, anxiety, dissatisfaction, absenteeism and lowered level of commitment, performance involvement and autonomy that are associated with role conflict and ambiguity.

Literature so far reviewed showed a significant gap in the absence of local empirical studies on role conflict and professional effectiveness. This is an area that has been of great concern to the schools, parents, teachers and society because of the tremendous impact stress arising from role conflict has on the professional growth and development of teachers and indirectly on the students. This study therefore will be very strategic in providing local literature.

Sample and sampling technique

60 schools out of 230 public secondary schools, 600 teachers out of 1008 teachers teaching senior secondary school two students, and 2400 SS11 students out of 15646 students (to assess the professional effectiveness of their teachers) were selected using simple and stratified random sampling.

Data Collection:

Two instruments used for data collection in this study were structured questionnaires: Occupational Stress Inventory (OSI) and

Professional Effectiveness Questionnaire (PEQ).These questionnaires were constructed by the researcher.

The first instrument had two sections. Section A elicited from the respondents demographic information such as sex, age, highest educational qualifications, marital status, year of teaching experience, area of specialization. While section B was designed to measure pattern of stress arising from role-conflict. It consisted of 19 item Likert- type scale such as conflict between home and work, conflict between teaching and administrative responsibilities, conflict between teaching and school welfare activities, conflict between teaching and participation in co-curricular activities etc. with four alternative responses-Very stressful, stressful, less stressful and not stressful. A total of 660 copies of the questionnaires were administered but 600 copies were correctly filled and returned.

The second questionnaire (PEQ) had two sections. Section A consisted of demographic information such as sex, name of school, class of respondent, age of the student. Section B comprised 28 items Likert type scale which sought to determine how effective the subject teachers are in performing the professional duties such as lesson presentation, use of instructional aids classroom management, evaluation, learning motivation, supervision of co-curricular activities, professional and personal qualities with four alternative responses-Very effective, Effective, Ineffective, Very ineffective. A total of 2420 copies of questionnaire were administered but 2400 copies were correctly filled and returned

Each of the selected subject teachers was given a code using Roman numerals written at the back of each validated instrument in such a way that it was hardly noticed by the respondent. While the names of the subject whose teachers were assessed was written on each of the students questionnaire (PEQ).600 teachers were assessed by 2400 students. Four students assessed a teacher and scores obtained were divided by four in order to get the score for a teacher. With the code written on each of the teacher\$s questionnaire (OSI) it was easy for the researcher to match the codes with names of subject whose teacher was being ranked on the Professional Effectiveness Questionnaire (PEQ) by the students.

RESULT:

The data generated were analyzed using the one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis: Table 1 shows the means and the standard deviation for the level of professional effectiveness. The lower part shows that the calculated value of 3.76and 3.25 for classroom management and supervision of co-curricular activities are greater than the critical F-value of 3.00 at 0.05 level of significance with 2 and 597 of freedom. With this result the null hypotheses are rejected for classroom management and supervision of co-curricular activities. This implies that stress arising from role conflict has significant influence on classroom management and supervision of co-curricular activities. The nature of the influence is further explored using the Fisher\$s Least Significant Difference (LSD).Pair-wise multiple comparism analysis.The result of which is shown in Table2.It shows that the Fisher\$s t-value of -2.66, -2.74 are each significantly higher than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significant. With these results, the null hypothesis of equality of the three level of stress is rejected. A significant value of -2.66 indicates that mean value for group 2(which is x=10.05) is significantly higher than the mean value for Group1(x=8.00). The interpretation is that the teachers who experience low level of stress arising from role conflict are significantly more effective in their class management than those who experience moderate level of stress.

Similarly, a significant Fisher\$s t- value of -2.74 implies that teachers who experience low level of stress arising from role conflict are significantly more effective than those who experience high level of stress. However, a non-significant Fisher\$s t- value of 0.09 implies that the professional effectiveness(class management) of teachers who experience high and moderate level of stress arising from role conflict are less effective in class management than teachers who experience low level of stress.

The entries in Table 3 shows that the two of the three Fisher\$s values are greater than the critical values of 1.96 at .05 level of significance, thus indicating significant group value difference. A significant t-value of -2.67 indicates that the mean value of Group2 (x=9.95) is significantly

higher than the mean value for Group1(x=8.00). The interpretation is that the teachers who experience low level of stress arising from role conflict are more effective in the supervision of co-curricular activities than those who experience moderate level. Similarly, a significant Fishers t-value of .2.48 implies that teachers who experience low level of stress arising from supervision of co-curricular activities are more effective than those who experience high level of stress. However, a non-significant Fishers t-value of 0.52 implies that the professional effectiveness (supervision of co-curricular activities) of teachers who experience moderate level of stress arising from supervision of co-curricular activities is not significantly different from teachers who experience high level of stress. Thus, the teachers who experience moderate and high level of stress are less effective in the supervision of co-curricular activities than their counterpart who experience low level of stress.

Table 1: Group Means and Standard Deviation of respondent based on the influence of stress arising from role conflict on professional effectiveness of teachers

S/N	Professional Effectiveness	Level of stress	N	Mean	S.D
1	Lesson Presentation	1.Low	125	10.00	1.00
		2.Moderate	101	10.51	2.12
		3.High	374	10.59	2.33
		Total	600	10.58	2.31
2	Use of instructional Aids	1.Low	125	10.40	3.58
		2.moderate	101	9.58	1.38
		3. High	374	10.18	1.88
		Total	600	10.13	1.87
3.	Classroom Mgt	1.Low	125	8.00	1.87
		2.Moderate	101	10.05	1.64
		3.High	374	10.03	1.65
		Total	600	10.07	1.66
4.	Evaluation of Students	1.Low	125	10.00	1.00
		2.Moderate	101	10.51	2.12
		3.High	374	10.63	2.32
		Total	600	10.61	2.29

5.	Learning motivation	1.Low	125	8.60	1.52
		2.Moderate	101	9.95	1.52
		3.High	374	9.86	1.58
		Total	600	9.88	1.60
6.	Supervision of co-	1.Low	125	8.00	1.87
	Curricular activities	2.Moderate	101	9.95	1.52
		3.High	374	9.82	1.64
		Total	600	9.84	1.66
7.	Professional and	1.Low	125	9.60	1.52
	Personal qualities	2.Moderate	101	10.31	2.48
		3.High	374	10.33	2.07
		Total	600	10.33	2.12

Table 2: Result of analysis of Variance of the influence of stress arising from role conflict on professional effectiveness

S/No	Professional effectiveness	Source of variance	SS	DF	MS	F
1.	Lesson Presentation	Between group	2.021	2	1.02	
						.192
		Within groups	3184.12	597	5.33	
		Total	3186.16	599		
2.	Use of Instructional	Between groups	18.32	2	9.16	
						2.65
	Aid	Within groups	2066.80	597	3.46	
		Total	2085.12	599		

3.	Classroom Mgt	Between groups	20.53	2	10.27	
		Within groups	1631.30	597	2.73	3.76*
		Total	1651.83	599		
4.	Evaluation of student	Between Groups	2.62	2	1.31	
		Within groups	3145.67	597	5.27	.25
		Total	3148.29	599		
5.	Learning Motivation	Between groups	8.33	2	4.17	
		Within groups	1485.34	597	2.49	1.68
		Total	1493.67	599		
6.	Supervision of co-Curricular activities	Between groups	17.43	2	8.71	
		Within groups	1585.77	597	2.66	3.28*
		Total	1603.20	599		
7.	Professional and Personal activities	Between groups	2.68	2	1.34	
		Within groups	2.654.95	597	4.45	0.30
		Total	2.657.83	599		

Significant at 0.05level (F =597=3.00)

Table 3:

Result of Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison analysis of the influence of level of stress arising from role conflict on professional effectiveness(Classroom management)

(Level of stress	Low	Moderate	High
	N=125	n=101	n=374
Low	8.00a	-2.50b	-2.03
Moderate	2.66*c	10.05	0.02
High	-2.74*	0.09	10.03
		MSW=2.732	

a=Group means are along the diagonal
b=Difference among groups are the diagonal
c=Fisher's t-value are below the diagonal
*significant at 0.05 level (critical t=1.96)

Table4:

Result of Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison analysis of the influence of stress arising from role conflict on professional effectiveness (Supervision of co-curricular activities)

Level of stress	Low	Moderate	High
	N=125	n=101	n=374
Low	8.00a	-1.95b	-1.82
Moderate	-2.67*c	9.96	0.12
High	-2.48*	0.52	9.82
		MSW=2.656	

a= Group means are along the diagonal
b=Difference among groups are above the diagonal
c=Fisher's t-values are below the diagonal
*significant at 0.05 level (critical t=1.96)

DISCUSSION

The result of the finding showed a significant influence of stress arising from role conflict on classroom management and supervision of co-curricular activities. It further showed teachers who experience low level of stress are more effective in classroom management and supervision of co-curricular activities than their counterparts who experience moderate or low level of stress. The reason for

this, being that a little stress spurs an individual to work hard Melogosa (2004). This result agreed with the findings of some scholars like Robin (1998); Burnard (1991); Jehn (1994) and Volkemia(1995). They assert that when people are placed in jobs that make multiple and conflicting demands will result in reduced satisfaction of group members, increased absenteeism, lower productivity and loss of many employees in the work.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions drawn from this study were that the level of stress arising from role conflict has significant influence on the effectiveness with which some the teachers manage the their class and supervise co-curricular activities. Multiple roles performed by some teachers result to conflict which may be stressful for the teacher ,and this may affect the way he controls the students both inside and outside the classroom.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Government at all level should carry out an awareness campaign and organize workshops, seminars for teachers on the effect of stress on role performance effectiveness. And also to keep them abreast on the importance of classroom management and its effect on teaching-learning processes

Teachersq themselves should learn to manage stressful situations in their work place by the use of self-monitoring technique which enables an individual control a situation.

School heads should supervise and query teachers who do not participate in the supervision of co-curricular activities.

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