

# Perceived Occupational Stress On Work Locus Of Control And Teaching Experience Of Secondary School Teachers In Osun State, Nigeria

**Adeboye Titus Ayinde**

Department of Psychology  
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife  
ayindade@oauife.edu.ng and  
adedickson@yahoo.com

**Olawale D. Daramola**

Department of Psychology  
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife

**Abstract**—The study examined work locus of control and teaching experience as predictors of perceived occupational stress among secondary school teachers in Osun State. The aim of the study was to ascertain if work locus of control and teaching experience can independently and jointly predict perceived occupational stress among secondary school teachers in the state.

The study employed the expo-facto research design and used the multistage sampling technique. Firstly, Osun East senatorial district was purposively selected among the three senatorial districts in the state because it has a large number of secondary schools. Five Local Government Areas (Ife Central, Ife North, Atakumosa West, Obokun and Ilesa West ) were selected in this senatorial district using the simple random sampling technique. A total number of 15 private secondary schools and 15 public secondary schools in the selected five LGAs were selected for the study using stratified random sampling technique with school type as an index of stratification. Lastly, ten teachers were selected from each school using convenience sampling technique. The total numbers of respondents are 301 comprising 160 and 141 respondents from both public secondary and private secondary schools respectively in the state. Data was collected from respondents made up of 144 male and 157 female teachers using three standardized instruments (Teaching Experience Scale,

Work locus of Control and Teacher Stress Scale). The hypotheses were tested using the simple linear regression and multiple regression analysis.

The results revealed that work locus of control did not significantly predict occupational stress among secondary school teachers [ $F(1,292) = 0.775, R^2 = 0.003, p > 0.05$ ], while teaching experience significantly predicted occupational stress among the respondents. [ $F(1,294) = 5.675, R^2 = 0.019, p < 0.05$ ]. Again, the two variables (work locus of control and teaching experience) jointly predicted perceived occupational stress among respondents. [ $F(2,288) = 3.178, R^2 = 0.022, p < 0.05$ ].

In conclusion, the study concluded that teaching experience independently predict perceived occupational stress, while work locus control did not. However, both variables jointly predict perceived occupational stress among teachers of secondary schools in Osun state. Thus, it was recommended that the stakeholders should give more attention to the physical and psychological wellbeing of the teachers and constant stress relieving activities should be encouraged among them in the schools.

**Keywords**—Work Locus of Control, Teaching Experience, Perceived Occupational Stress, School Teachers, Nigeria

## Introduction

Occupational stress may also be referred to as stress at work or work related stress. It may be identified as the experience of negative emotion states such as frustration, worry, anxiety and depression attributed to work related factors. It occurs when there is a discrepancy between the demands of the workplace and the expectation of the worker. Work and life stress seem to have become focal points of interest for researchers within the last two decades and this interest has reflected itself in an ever-increasing research into occupational stress and other similar constructs.

Occupational stress is a term used to define on-going stress that is related to the workplace. The stress may have to do with the responsibilities associated with the work itself, or caused by conditions that are based in the corporate culture of the organization and personality conflicts. The profession of teaching is an important one among all professions. A teacher is a kingpin in the entire system of education. Most thinkers and philosophers of the past are still remembered today because they had their disciples and students. Times have changed and the societies and cultures have drastically diversified, but the tasks of teachers are primarily the same, which is the transfer of knowledge to the younger generation.

Changes in the cultural norms and traditions in the societies have resulted in drastic changes in expectations from the teacher. Some of these changes have limited the measures which a teacher in the past could use to discipline a

student and others have put additional burdens on teachers as in their preparation of lessons, adopting and maintaining their teaching styles and so on. This is because most of the modern school systems prefer to maintain uniformity in all of their branches, thus, teaching has now become a very demanding occupation with a lot of stress for the teacher who has many deadlines to meet and a lot of responsibilities to shoulder besides teaching pupils and students.

Teachers teach, support, observe and record the progress of their class. They also plan lessons in line with national objectives with the aim of ensuring a healthy culture of learning. Teachers are also expected to keep up to date with developments in their subject area, new resources, methods and national objectives. The role involves liaising and networking with other professionals, parents and caregivers, both informally and formally. The duties and responsibilities of secondary school teachers also include managing pupil behaviour in the classroom and within the school premises, and applying appropriate and effective measures in cases of misbehaviour; preparing and delivering lessons to a range of classes of different ages and abilities; assessing students' work, giving appropriate feedback and maintaining records of pupils' progress and development; participating in staff meetings and whole school training events. Their activities also include researching new topic areas, maintaining up-to-date subject knowledge, devising and writing new curriculum materials; selecting and using a range of different learning resources and equipment, including

computers and interactive whiteboards and supporting pupils on an individual basis through academic or personal difficulties.

The work of a teacher thus seems to be physically and mentally challenging.

They probably expend a lot of energy in the course of discharging the duties assigned to them coupled with their personal and family commitments. The harsh economic realities of the country do not spare them since they also have to cater for the 'needs' and 'wants' that confronts them. Job demands on teachers may lead to perception of stress at workplace in which the employees do not know how to manage themselves in order to meet their job needs. This perception of occupational stress in teachers may lead to low productivity, dissatisfaction, low commitment, absenteeism and employees' turnover.

Detert, Derosia, Caravella and Duquette, 2006, and Kyriacou, 2001 summarized stress sources of teachers as low motivation in students, discipline problems, the pressure of time and the work load, being assessed by others, colleague relationship, conflict and indefiniteness of roles, bad working conditions and self-respect, students' discipline problems, the inadequate support of colleagues, family and friends. However, little has been heard about factors facilitate stress perception. Thus, it becomes necessary to investigate the sources of perceived stress generally and importantly among teachers who have the important duty of educating individuals.

One way of classifying people is to use as reference criterion, the extent to which they believe that the events going on around them are contingent upon their own actions and interventions. Locus of control is viewed as an important element to consider in dealing with the problem of stress perception, thus it can determine any aspects of work, like location, scheduling, and what kind of tasks and activities should be done. Studies show that employees display different amount of control in different jobs, for example an employee that works in a machine-paced factory must adapt himself with the determined time and specific tasks that have been determined by the machine (Spector, 2002). Therefore, people have ability to control themselves in order to cope with stressful situations, as Chen and Silverthorne (2008) reported; individuals with internal locus of control can cope with job stress easily.

Organizations seem to recognize employees' years of experience as a relevant factor in human resource policies, including compensation systems, benefits packages, and promotion decisions. It is, however, not generally ascertain whether year of experience could be effectively linked with stress perception. In education, teaching experience is probably the key factor in personnel policies that affect current employees. The underlying assumption is that experience promotes effectiveness and adjustment to the work conditions. Teaching ability and tutoring experience, working with youth groups, class presentations that include responsibility for assessing the learning of the

audience, and a variety of related experiences are all helpful for the teacher to better cope with the demands of the teaching occupation.

### **Statement of the Research Problem**

Workers in the teaching profession may not be immune from the negative effects of occupational stress given the seemingly unstable environment in which some teachers conduct their work. This has a propensity to induce stress perception coupled with the fact that working at the secondary school level could be an inherently stressful profession. The teaching profession entails long working hours (official and unofficial), heavy workloads, difficult students, conflicting demands and so on. These physical and psychological demands on teachers at the secondary schools make them more vulnerable. This may result in a number of outcomes such as increased errors in communication, frequent need for medical attention, lateness to work, low productivity and increased sick leaves, employee turnovers and many others. Meanwhile, all these probable side effects have implication(s) for overall poor job delivery which may result in poorly trained students at this significant level of education. Given the potential deleterious effect of perceived occupational stress on this category of workers and the fact that the matter seems not to have been accorded serious attention among researchers and other stake holders, especially, in Nigeria, this study delved into this area with a view to encapsulating the stress experience of secondary school teachers.

A few previous studies have linked various factors with perceived occupational stress among workers. The most reported of these factors are: job requirements, many different activities within the school environment, lack of professional recognition, discipline problems in the classroom, bureaucracy, lack of support, workload, time pressure and lack of benefits, (Mearns and Chain, (2003); Van Horn, Schaufeli, and Taris, (2001); Tytherleigh, Webb, Cooper, and Ricketts (2005). Although work-related and environmental factors are linked with occupational stress on the individual worker and work performance but individual teacher seems to resort to self management of stress levels. However, previous studies have only paid little attention to the possibility of a relationship between personal factors and perceived occupational stress. The matter becomes worrisome with dearth of scholastic works on the matter among Nigerian teachers. It thus becomes imperative to investigate factors (experience and locus of control) within the individual which may predict perceived occupational stress among secondary school teachers in Osun State, hence this study.

### **Literature Review**

#### **i Theories of Occupational Stress**

Many attempts have been made to identify causes of stressful job events. There are essentially three different, but overlapping, approaches to the definition and study of stress, (Cox 1990). The engineering and physiological approaches are obvious among the earlier theories of stress, while the more psychological

approaches characterize contemporary stress theory. The first approach conceptualizes occupational stress as an aversive or noxious characteristic of the work environment, and, in related studies, treats it as an independent variable, the environmental cause of ill health. This has been termed the “engineering approach”.

The second approach, on the other hand, defines stress in terms of the common physiological effects of a wide range of aversive or noxious stimuli. It treats stress as a dependent variable, as a particular physiological response to a threatening or damaging environment. This has been termed the “physiological approach”. The third approach conceptualizes work stress in terms of the dynamic interaction between the person and their work environment. When studied, stress is either inferred from the existence of problematic person-environment interactions or measured in terms of the cognitive processes and emotional reactions which underpin those interactions. This final approach has been termed the “psychological approach”. Stress more than an optimum limit, decreases performance and creates disorders within the individual. Occupational stress is the inability to cope with the pressures of the job. It is a mental and physical condition which affects an individual's productivity, effectiveness, personal health and quality of work (Comish and Swindle, 1994). The workplace stands out as a potentially important source of stress purely because of the amount of time that is spent in this setting

The engineering approach has treated stress as a stimulus characteristic of the person's

environment, usually conceived in terms of the load or level of demand placed on the individual, or some aversive (threatening) or noxious element of that environment (Cox and Mackay 1981, Fletcher 1988). Occupational stress is treated as a property of the work environment, and usually as an objectively measurable aspect of that environment. The physiological approach to the definition and study of stress received its initial impetus from the work of Selye (1971). He defined stress as “a state manifested by a specific syndrome which consists of all the non-specific changes within the biologic system” that occur when challenged by aversive or noxious stimuli. Stress is treated as a generalized and nonspecific physiological response syndrome. For many years, the stress response was largely conceived of in terms of the activation of two neuroendocrine systems, the anterior pituitary-adrenal cortical system and the sympathetic-adrenal medullary system. Selye argued that the physiological response was triphasic in nature involving an initial alarm stage (sympathetic-adrenal medullary activation) followed by a stage of resistance (adrenal cortical activation) giving way, under some circumstances, to a final stage of exhaustion (terminal reactivation of the sympathetic adrenal medullary system). Repeated, intense or prolonged elicitation of this physiological response, it has been suggested, increases the wear and tear on the body, and contributes to what Selye has called the “diseases of adaptation”. This apparently paradoxical term arises from the contrast between the immediate and short-term advantages bestowed by

physiological response to stress (energy mobilization for an active behavioral response) to the long-term disadvantages (increased risk of certain 'stress related' diseases).

Two specific criticisms have been offered of these two approaches: the first empirical and the second conceptual. First, engineering and physiological models do not adequately account for the existing data. The criticism is that the engineering and physiological models of stress are conceptually dated in that they are set within a relatively simple stimulus-response paradigm, and largely ignore individual differences of a psychological nature and the perceptual and cognitive processes that might underpin them. These models treat the person as a passive vehicle for translating the stimulus characteristics of the environment into psychological and physiological response parameters. They also ignore the interactions between the person and their various environments which are an essential part of systems based approaches to biology, behavior and psychology. In particular, they ignore the psychosocial and organizational contexts to work stress.

The third approach to the definition and study of stress conceptualizes it in terms of the dynamic interaction between the person and their work environment. When studied, it is either inferred from the existence of problematic person-environment interactions or measured in terms of the cognitive processes and emotional reactions which underpin those interactions. This has been termed the "psychological approach". The development of psychological models has

been, to some extent, an attempt to overcome the criticisms leveled at the earlier approaches.

There is now a consensus developing around this approach to the definition of stress. For example, psychological approaches to the definition of stress are largely consistent with the International Labour Office's definition of psychosocial hazards (ILO 1986) and with the definition of wellbeing recommended by the World Health Organization (1986). These consistencies and overlaps suggest an increasing coherence in current thinking within occupational health and safety. Variants of this psychological approach dominate contemporary stress theory, and, among them, two distinct types can be identified: the interactional and the transactional; the former focus on the structural features of the person's interaction with their work environment, while the latter are more concerned with the psychological mechanisms underpinning that interaction.

Interactional theories of stress focus on the structural characteristics of the person's interaction with their work environment. Two particular interactional theories stand out as seminal among the various which have been offered: the Person-Environment Fit theory of French, Caplan, and Harrison (1982) and the Demand-Control theory of Karasek (1979). Neither is, however, without criticism (Warr 1992). On the first one, several researchers have suggested that the goodness of fit between the person and their (work) environment frequently offers a better explanation of behaviour than individual or situational differences. French and

his colleagues formulated a theory of work stress based on the explicit concept of the Person-Environment Fit. It has been argued that stress is likely to occur, and well-being is likely to be affected, when there is a lack of fit in either or both respects. On Demand-Control theory, Karasek (1979) drew attention to the possibility that work characteristics may not be linearly associated with workers' health, and that they may combine interactively in relation to health. He initially demonstrated this theory through secondary analyses of data from United States and Sweden, finding that employees in jobs perceived to have both low decision latitude and high job demands were particularly likely to report poor health and low satisfaction. The combined effect of these two work characteristics is often described as a true interaction, but despite the strong popular appeal of this suggestion there is only weak evidence in its support (Warr 1992). Criticisms have been leveled against Karasek's model. For instance, it was claimed that the model was too simple and ignores the moderating effect of social support on the main variables. The expanded "Demand-Control-Support" model has also been criticized for its failure to consider individual differences in susceptibility and coping potential. The relationship between the dimensions of the model and the outcome measures may depend upon workers' individual characteristics.

Transactional models are primarily concerned with cognitive appraisal and coping. In a sense they represent a development of the interactional models, and are essentially

consistent with them. Most transactional theories of stress focus on the cognitive processes and emotional reactions underpinning the person's interaction with their environment. For example, Siegrist's transactional model of "effort-reward imbalance" Siegrist (1990) argued that the experience of chronic stress can be best defined in terms of a mismatch between high costs spent and low gains received. In other words, according to the model, stress at work results from high effort spent in combination with low reward obtained. Two sources of effort are distinguished: an extrinsic source, the demands of the job, and an intrinsic source, the motivation of the individual worker in a demanding situation. Three dimensions of reward are important: financial gratifications, socio-emotional reward and status control (i.e., promotion prospects and job security). Adverse health effects, such as cardiovascular risk, are most prevalent in occupations where situational constraints prevent workers from reducing "high cost - low gain" conditions.

## ii. Attribution Theory

Attribution theory is a social psychology theory developed by Heider (1958). The theory is concerned with the ways in which people explain (or attribute) the behaviour of others or themselves (self-attribution). This theory explores how individuals "attribute" causes to events and how this associated perception affects their usefulness in an organization (Woolfolk, 2007). Attribution Theory of Motivation describes how the individual's explanation, justification, and excuses about self or others influence motivation.

Attribution theory (Weiner, 1992) is probably the most influential contemporary theory with implications for academic motivation. It incorporates behaviour modification in the sense that it emphasizes the idea that learners are strongly motivated by the pleasant outcome of being able to feel good about themselves. It incorporates cognitive theory and self-efficacy theory in the sense that it emphasizes that learners' current self-perceptions will strongly influence the ways in which they will interpret the success or failure of their current efforts and hence their future tendency to perform these same behaviours.

A major concept in the study of attribution theory is locus of control, whether one interprets events as being caused by one's own behaviour or by outside circumstances. A person with an internal locus of control, an "internal," for example, will believe that her performance on a work project is governed by her ability or by how hard she works. An "external" will attribute success or failure by concluding that the project was easy or hard, the boss was helpful or unhelpful, or some other rationale. In general, an internal locus of control could be associated with optimism and physical health. People with an internal locus of control also tend to be more successful at delaying gratification.

There are two basic implications of attribution theory for education: attributional training hypothesis, in which students who are trained to attribute academic success or failure to effort are more likely to work hard than students who attribute their performance to ability and

attributional feedback hypothesis, when teachers who show sympathy or pity when students fail convey the idea that students lack ability (Mayer, 2002). Weiner (1992) said that all causes for success or failure can be categorized within these three dimensions in some way. This is because the dimensions affect expectancy and value. Some examples of success or failure could be luck, effort, ability, interest, clarity of instruction, and much more. For example, the internal/external locus seems to be closely related to feelings of self-esteem, while stability relates to expectations about the future and controllability is connected to emotions such as anger, pity or shame. When one succeeds, one attributes successes internally ("my own skill"). When a rival succeeds, one tends to credit external (luck). When one fails or makes mistakes, we will more likely use external attribution, attributing causes to situational factors rather than blaming ourselves. When others fail or make mistakes, internal attribution is often used, saying it is due to their internal personality factors. It is important to remember for example in the classroom; a student usually does not have one attributional style.

### **iii. Implications of Theories to the Study**

All the theories discussed in the study have either direct or indirect implications for the study on locus of control, teaching experience and occupational stress of teachers. The theories on occupational stress offered different explanation and view on the origin of occupational stress in workers. While the



engineering approach sees it in terms or level of load or demand placed on the individual or some other elements of the work environment, the physiological approach explains stress as a generalized and non-specific physiological response to stimuli. The psychological approach conceptualizes stress in terms of the dynamic interaction between the person and their work environment. Besides these, there are the Interactional theories that focuses on the structural characteristics of the person's interaction with their work environment, and the transactional theories positing that stress at work results from high effort spent in combination with low rewards obtained. All these explanations and theories of occupational stress provided different perspectives to the view of the individual worker in perceiving occupational stress in the workplace.

There are other theories applicable to the current study; the attribution theory concerned with the way people explain causes to events and how the associated perception affects their usefulness in an organization. The implication of the attribution theory to the current study on occupational stress of teachers is in two forms; Woolfolk (2007) explained that Attribution theory explores how individuals "attribute" causes to events and how this associated perception affects their usefulness in an organization. Teachers make attributions on the causes and sources of perceived occupational stress among them and this attributions could be to factors that are external to them and beyond their own control or to internal and personal

factors ranging from personal characteristics to values, skills and experience which determines their specific responses to environmental stimuli and job demands.

When teachers attribute outcomes at work to forces outside of themselves, they are more likely to feel unable to act in any way capable of controlling the situation and therefore report higher levels of perceived occupational stress. Similarly, those who attribute outcomes at work as having a link with internal and personal factors believe they can direct the cause of actions that generate occupational stress by taking pro-active steps to prevent unwanted outcomes and thus be able to manage occupational stress better than the externals.

### **Review of Empirical Studies**

Occupational stress in the human service professions, particularly in teachers, has been a focus of study in the last decade. Most surprisingly, school teachers have been considered to be under stress (Boyle, Borg, Falzon, and Baglioni, (1995); Kinnunen and Salo 1994; Malik, Pithers 1995), undergoing the process of burnout (Beer and Beer 1992; Burke and Greenglass 1995) or suffering from depressive symptoms (Beer and Beer 1992). There exists a substantial body of literature describing teaching as stressful occupation and suggesting that teacher stress appears to be an increasing problem (Antoniou, Polychroni and Vlachakis 2006; Guthrie 2006; Kyriacou 2001; Munt 2004; Punch and Tuetteman 1996). In recent time, some studies have examined

occupational stress in the teaching profession. Haastrup and Adenike (2013) have linked factors like poor working conditions, poor relations with super-ordinates and late payment of teachers' salaries with stress among teachers. Other studies have suggested that teachers experience disproportionately high level of stress (Adeyemo and Ogunyemi, 2005).

### **i. Locus of Control and Occupational Stress**

Studies have shown that individuals with internal locus of control can cope better in stressful situations or on the other hand they have more abilities to adapt themselves with problems and events that they experience in their work place (Lam and Schaubroeck, 2000). Similarly, Meier, Semmer, Elfering and Jacobshagen (2008) found that people with an internal locus of control do not suffer musculoskeletal pain; in fact they display high job control to avoid physical illnesses. In contrast people who have low job control suffer musculoskeletal pain. Additionally, increasing internal locus of control is related positively to adaptation in stressful work places (Parkes, 1986). Finally, Work Locus of Control has been found to be related to health outcomes like stress (Berg, Hem, Lau, Håseth, and Ekeberg, 2005) as well as well-being (Spector, 2002). It is viewed as an element to deal with work demands and provide a better well-being and performance for employees (Daniels, Beesley, Cheyne, and Wimalasiri, 2008).

### **ii Teaching Experience and Competency Performance.**

Gede and Lawanson (2011) in their study, show that there is a significant relationship

between experience and job performance of employees. According to their findings this relationship exists probably due to the fact that the more experienced the employee gathers as a result of long years of service, the higher the performance of the employee because he/she has to put into practice all the experiences he/she has acquired over the years. This is in support of the findings of Ruggai and Agih (2008) who found a high relationship between teacher experience and their job performance. They explained that the longer a teacher works in a school, the greater probability that his productivity will be higher. According to Koledoye (2011), teaching is an act that can be refined by training and practice; and that the availability of competent teacher is very important in the reconstruction of the educational system.

### **iii. Summary of Review of Empirical Studies**

This chapter provided existing literature related to work locus of control, teaching experience and occupational stress. The review reveals that the concepts of work locus of control, teaching experience and occupational stress have received some attention in the past. It is evident from the review of literature in this study that work locus of control and occupational stress relate and that individuals with internal locus of control can cope better in stressful situations or on the other hand they have more abilities to adopt themselves with problems and events that they experience in their work place.

Despite the number of studies that have been conducted on occupational stress with different variables at one time or the other, there

are still many questions that need responses in this area. This research therefore will be of utmost importance by providing answers to some of these questions. Although previous researchers have worked on the concept of occupational stress studying to observe its relationship with locus of control; however, there are no similar reviews that have concurrently examined the three variables (Work Locus of Control, Teaching Experience and Occupational Stress) together, and no other as well carried out among teachers of private secondary schools, which is the focus of this study.

## METHODOLOGY

### i. Research Design

This study employed ex-post facto design to investigate the variables of interest. The independent variables are work locus of control and teaching experience, while the dependent variable is perceived occupational stress.

### ii. Study Population

Secondary School teachers in 30 selected secondary schools in Osun State constituted the population for this study. This includes 15 public secondary schools and 15 private secondary schools drawn from 5 local government areas in Osun East Senatorial district which are; Ife Central, Ife North, Atakumosa West, Obokun and Ilesa West.

### iii. Sample and Sampling Procedure

The multistage sampling procedure was employed in this study. Osun East senatorial district was purposively selected among the three senatorial districts in the state because it has a

large number of secondary schools. Five Local Government Areas (LGAs) were selected in Osun East senatorial district which are; Ife Central, Ife North, Atakumosa West, Obokun and Ilesa West Local governments using the simple random sampling technique. A total of 15 private secondary schools and 15 public secondary schools in the selected five LGAs were selected for the study using stratified random sampling technique with school type as an index of stratification. Ten teachers were selected from each school using convenience sampling technique. Thus, the total number of respondents, which is three hundred and one (301), was used in the study.

### iv. Research Instrument

For the purpose of this study, a questionnaire containing four sections A-D was used as the research instrument. Section A of the research instrument contains items measuring the socio-demographic profile of the respondents such as Name of school in which the teacher is working and the gender of respondents, job entry qualification and other personal details. Section B is Teaching Research Scale, which contains items measuring factors that culminate in teaching experience. The scale contains two sections; the first section is a five-item scale measuring the teachers experience in the activities related to teaching while the second section is a self rating scale in likert format. The respondents are required to rate themselves on the statements in the items. A total score of 0-13 indicates no teaching experience. A score of 14-26 indicate a moderate experience while a higher score (>26)

indicate that the respondent is highly experienced. The researcher found that the teaching experience scale has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.75 and a split half correlation of 0.72.

The Section C of the research instrument is the Spector's Work Locus of Control Scale developed in 1988 and adopted for this study. The Work Locus of Control Questionnaire (WLCS) was introduced and validated by Spector (1988) and is a domain-specific instrument to assess locus of control in organizational settings. The questionnaire consists of 16 questions measured on a six-point Likert scale. The scale ranges from one (1) indicating "disagree very much" to six (6) indicating "agree very much". A high total score (maximum 96) indicates external locus of control, and a low total score (minimum 16) indicates internal locus of control. Eight questions (question 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 11, 14 and 15) are reverse scored. A low average score indicates internal locus of control, whilst a high average score indicates an external locus of control.

Work locus of control scale has Cronbach alphas ranging between 0.75 and 0.85, indicating acceptable reliability (Spector, 1988). High reliability was confirmed by Rothmann and Van Rensburg (2001) with alpha coefficients of 0.70 and 0.85 respectively. Spector (1988) and Maram and Miller (1998) confirmed construct validity of the instrument. Spector (1988) also found that the Work Locus of Control scale correlated strongly (0.75) with Rotter's Locus of Control Scale. The Work Locus of Control questionnaire is the only existing scale for measuring locus of control in organizational settings and meeting the terms of

the theoretical concept of domain-specific locus of control.

The section D of the questionnaire contains Teachers Occupational Stress Scale. This scale is a combination of two standardized scales adapted for this study. It was a merger of the Workplace Stress Scale designed by the American Institute of Stress and the Perceived Stress Scale designed by Cohen (1994). The scale is an 18-item scale designed to measure perceived occupational stress of respondents. The scale is in Likert format (0-4) and respondents were required to describe how they feel by rating how each of the items applied to them. The researcher found out that the Teachers Occupational Stress Scale has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.77 and a split-half coefficient of 0.70 indicating acceptable reliability. The total number of items in the Likert format scale is 18 altogether.

#### **v. Data Collection Procedure**

The respondents for this study were contacted at their respective places of work (schools) and given the questionnaire. Necessary permissions were sought and granted from each school authority to administer the research instrument to the respondents who were intimated with the purpose of the study and detailed explanations were offered to respondents who found any item on the questionnaire difficult to understand. There was no time limit for completing the questionnaire because the respondents were at their work hours and attended to the researcher's request during their free periods. Thus the questionnaires were allowed to stay with the respondents for a day

after which the completed copies of questionnaire were collected by the researcher for data analysis. Out of the 350 copies questionnaire distributed altogether, only 316 copies of questionnaire were returned and subjected to sorting to remove those ones that were not properly filled, thus out of those returned only 301 copies of the questionnaire representing 86% of distributed questionnaire were used for data analysis.

#### vi. Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in analyzing the data gathered in this study. Socio-demographic data was analyzed using descriptive statistics while inferential statistics was used to test the hypotheses and thereby provide answers to the research questions that have been formulated. The first and second hypotheses were tested using linear regression analysis, while the third hypothesis was tested using multiple regression.

### Analysis of Results

#### i. Descriptive Statistics

The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, based on their school type and overall distributions, showed that the study featured 141 private secondary school teachers and 160 public secondary school teachers. The frequency distribution of respondents based on gender, marital status and age revealed a total of 144 participants constituting 47.8% of the total respondents were male. With 82 males which is 58.2% of the total number of male teach in private schools, while the remaining 62 males which is 38.8% of the total number of male teach

in public schools. It is also observed that a total of 157 respondents constituting 52.2% of the total number of respondents were female. 59 of these female teachers which make 41.8% of total female respondents teach in private school, while 98 of the female teachers which make 61.3% of the total female respondents teach in public school.

#### ii. Hypotheses Testing

Three hypotheses were stated to guide the direction of the data analysis for this study. These hypotheses were tested using appropriate analysis techniques.

***Hypothesis One: Work locus of control will significantly predict perceived occupational stress among secondary school teachers in the State.***

This hypothesis was tested using linear regression analysis at a significance level of 0.05%. The result of the analysis is presented in table 1

**Table 1: Linear regression analysis of the relationship between work locus of control and perceived occupational stress**

|                            |                       |            |                    |          |             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------|--------------------|----------|-------------|
| R                          | =                     | 0.051      |                    |          |             |
| R Square                   | =                     | 0.003      |                    |          |             |
| Adjusted R Square          | =                     | -0.001     |                    |          |             |
| Std. Error of the Estimate | =                     | 10.05925   |                    |          |             |
|                            | <i>Sum of Squares</i> | <i>Df</i>  | <i>Mean Square</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>Sig.</i> |
| Regression                 | 78.391                | 1          | 78.391             | 0.775    | .379        |
| Residual                   | 29547.06              | 292        | 101.189            |          |             |
| Total                      | 29625.45              | 293        |                    |          |             |
|                            | <i>B</i>              | <i>S.E</i> | <i>Beta</i>        | <i>t</i> | <i>Sig.</i> |
| (Constant)                 | 31.603                | 3.216      |                    | 9.826    | 0.0001      |
| Work Locus of control      | -0.054                | 0.061      | -0.051             | -0.88    | 0.379       |

Table 1 revealed that the model did not significantly predict occupational stress among teachers [ $F(1,292) = 0.775, R^2 = 0.003, p > 0.05$ ]. There was no relationship between work locus of

control and occupational stress. The model could only explain 0.3% of the variation in the occupational stress of the teachers. Further examination showed that work locus of control did not significantly predict occupational stress of the teachers ( $\beta = -0.054, t = -0.88, p > 0.05$ ). Based on the above, the hypothesis which states that work locus of control will predict perceived occupational stress among teachers in the state is rejected.

**Hypothesis Two: Teaching experience will significantly predict perceived occupational stress among secondary school teachers in the State.**

To test this hypothesis, linear regression was carried out between the variables at a significance level of 0.05%. The result of the analysis is presented in table 2

**Table 2: Linear regression analysis of the relationship between teaching experience and perceived occupation stress.**

|                            |   |         |
|----------------------------|---|---------|
| Multiple R                 | = | 0.138   |
| R Square                   | = | 0.019   |
| Adjusted R Square          | = | 0.016   |
| Std. Error of the Estimate | = | 9.98446 |

  

|            | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F     | P    |
|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Regression | 565.704        | 1   | 565.704     | 5.675 | .018 |
| Residual   | 29308.67       | 294 | 99.689      |       |      |
| Total      | 29874.38       | 295 |             |       |      |

  

|                     | B      | S.E   | Beta  | t     | p     |
|---------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| (Constant)          | 16.905 | 5.015 |       | 3.371 | 0.001 |
| Teaching experience | 0.367  | 0.154 | 0.138 | 2.382 | 0.018 |

Table 2 indicates that teaching experience significantly predicted occupational stress among teachers [ $F(1,294) = 5.675, R^2 = 0.019, p < 0.05$ ]. There was a weak although positive relationship between teaching experience and occupational stress which implies that the higher years of teaching experience the more perception of occupational stress. Teaching experience explained 1.9% variation in the occupational

stress of the teachers. Further examination showed that teaching experience significantly predicted occupational stress of the teachers ( $\beta = 0.367, t = 2.382, p < 0.05$ ). Based on the above, the hypothesis which states that teaching experience will significantly predict perceived occupational stress among teachers in the state is accepted.

**Hypothesis three: Work locus of control and teaching experience will significantly jointly predict perceived occupational stress among secondary school teachers in the State.**

To test this hypothesis, multiple regression analysis was carried out on variables at a significance level of 0.05%. The result of the analysis is presented in table 3

**Table 3: Multiple regression analysis of the relationship between the three variables.**

|                            |   |          |
|----------------------------|---|----------|
| R                          | = | 0.147    |
| R Square                   | = | 0.022    |
| Adjusted R Square          | = | 0.015    |
| Std. Error of the Estimate | = | 10.02694 |

  

|            | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F     | p     |
|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------|
| Regression | 639.079        | 2   | 319.54      | 3.178 | 0.043 |
| Residual   | 28955.36       | 288 | 100.539     |       |       |
| Total      | 29594.44       | 290 |             |       |       |

  

|                       | B      | S.E   | Beta   | T      | P     |
|-----------------------|--------|-------|--------|--------|-------|
| (Constant)            | 19.002 | 6.254 |        | 3.039  | 0.003 |
| Teaching experience   | 0.367  | 0.156 | 0.138  | 2.355  | 0.019 |
| Work Locus of control | -0.04  | 0.062 | -0.038 | -0.655 | 0.513 |

Table 3 revealed that the model significantly predicted occupational stress among teachers [ $F(2,288) = 3.178, R^2 = 0.022, p < 0.05$ ]. The model explained 2.2% of the variation in the occupational stress of the teachers. Based on the above, the hypothesis which states that work locus of control and teaching experience will

jointly predict perceived occupational stress among teachers in Osun State is accepted.

### Discussion of Findings

The primary focus of the present study is to contribute to the knowledge in the area of understanding the relationship between work locus of control, teaching experience and perceived occupational stress among teachers. Specifically, it aims to contribute to knowledge in the area of determining personality factors that could serve as predictors to perceived occupational stress among secondary school teachers in the State. Some empirical investigations have recorded relationship between work locus of control and occupational stress among different category and class of workers, other studies revealed the dynamic relationship between perceived occupational stress and factors that are external to the individual worker, but it may not be sufficient to explain perceived occupational stress from the view of external factors alone. This study therefore developed a model to try explaining the variable of interest from the internal perspective. The conceptual framework also proposed that internal and personal factors can act as predictors to perceived occupational stress in teachers.

With regard to the hypotheses formulated to guide this study, the first hypothesis, which sought to examine work locus of control as a predictor of perceived occupational stress among secondary school teachers showed that work locus of control does not significantly predict perceived occupational stress among teachers.

This implies that work locus of control cannot be taken as a predictor of perceived occupational stress of the teachers in Osun state. The result of this study suggested that perceived occupational stress of teachers is not a function of the direction of work locus of control, internal or external. This finding is in agreement with the report of Ilevbare (2014) who found no correlation between work locus of control and occupational stress among policemen. However, the finding of this study negates the reports of Lam and Schaubroeck, (2000), Chen and Silverthorne (2008) who reported that the individuals with internal locus of control can cope better in stressful situations and they perceive lower levels of job stress and show higher level of job performance, or on the other hand they have more abilities to adapt themselves with problems and events that they experience in their work place. Similarly Ayinde, Ajila and Akanni (2010) reported a significant relationship between employees work locus of control and commitment to work among federal civil servants in the aftermath of downsizing exercise in Nigeria. A plausible reason for this finding is that external factors rather than personal and internal factors serve as better predictors for the perception of occupational stress among secondary school teachers in the state.

The second hypothesis which sought to examine teaching experience as a predictor of perceived occupational stress among secondary school teachers in the state was confirmed. This is an indication that staying longer on the job could increase the level of stress perception that is, the longer a teacher works in a school, the greater the

possibility of reporting a higher level of perceived occupational stress. This finding further explained the importance of teaching experience as it has also been found to be a significant predictor of job satisfaction (Kristen, Lorraine & David 2012). A possible explanation of this is that staying long on the teaching job may have led to gradual accumulation of fatigue in the teacher who develops more perception of occupational stress. This in turn may be triggered by the monotonous nature of the teaching job. For example, having to follow the same syllabus or teaching curriculum for some sessions in a row may create a boring atmosphere and thus lead to reporting of occupational stress.

The finding of this study on the joint predictive ability of work locus of control and teaching experience on perceived occupational stress among secondary school teachers in the state which forms the basis for the third hypothesis revealed that work locus of control and teaching experience jointly predicted perceived occupational stress of the teachers under study. What this implies is that perception of occupational stress also subscribed to the influence of combination of both factors within and outside the individuals, even though the external factor (work experience) has better predictive ability. A possible explanation of this finding is that the extent to which the individual believes that outcomes at work place is contingent upon his or her input coupled with number of years of experience on the job has a strong potential of determining the strength of stress perception in the individual teacher.

### **i. Implication of the study**

The findings of this study have advanced the knowledge based in the area of perceived occupational stress of secondary school teachers in Osun State. The study specifically showed that workers teaching experience is a significant predictor of employees' perception of occupational stress. The implication of this is that school administrators should ensure that working conditions of the workers under their administration are improved to help them have favourable teaching experience while doing their job. The study also revealed that public school teachers do not differ significantly from private school teacher when accessed on the variables of interest in the study. The implication of this is that teaching experience does not differ across schools, thus policy makers and school administrators should make policies and decisions that will enhance the working conditions of teachers of both public secondary and private secondary schools in Nigeria.

### **ii. Limitations of the study**

Teachers from selected public and private secondary schools in the state constitute the population for this study; thus, it can affect the generalizability of the findings of this study. Another limitation experienced in the course of this study is the scarcity of empirical literature on the combinations of the variables of interest in the study. Many of the related researches done in this area were carried out in foreign countries and there were no similar combination of variables as used in this study. A notable limitation is the general attitude of some respondents to the



research instruments and the formalities involved in getting the approval to administer the research instrument in each school.

### iii. Recommendations

There is need for further investigation in this area of study. Understanding the factors that contribute to the prediction of perceived occupational stress of teachers could help in taking decisions and actions towards mitigating the prevalence of perceived occupational stress of teachers. Policy makers and school administrators should give more attention to the physical and psychological wellbeing of the teachers so as to (where possible) reduce the occurrence of negative outcomes that may affect employees productivity in the workplace. Constant stress relieving activities should be encouraged in the schools for teachers while check on the perception of stress in teachers should be carried out periodically. Doing this effectively should involve making the teachers participate in making policies and decisions that concerns them, their work and rewards. This will reflect in the way they evaluate the job and might reduce significantly the perception of stress in their chosen occupation.

Moreover, further studies should include other factors that are not yet investigated but may act as predictors to perceived occupational stress in secondary school teachers. Policy makers and school administrators should help identify potential job stressors to workers in the teaching profession and help mitigate them in ensuring a conducive workplace for teachers to enhance their teaching experience and work performance.

### References

- Adeyemo, D. A., and Ogunyemi, B. (2005): *Emotional intelligence and self-efficacy as predictors of occupational stress among academic staff in a Nigerian university*. Retrieved on May 6, 2010 from [www.leadingtoday.org/weleadinlearning/da05.htm](http://www.leadingtoday.org/weleadinlearning/da05.htm)
- Antoniou, A. S., Polychroni, F., and Vlachakis, A. N. (2006): Gender and age differences in occupational stress and professional burnout between primary and high-school teachers in Greece. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 21 (7), 682-690.
- Ayinde A.T., Ajila C.O. and Akanni A.A. (2012): Locus of Control and Job Status as Mediators of Employees' Perception of Downsizing and Organizational Commitment in Selected Ministries and Parastatals in Nigeria. *Journal of Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 2, No. 8, 2012.
- Beer, J., and Beer, J., 1992, "Burnout and Stress, Depression and Self-esteem of Teachers", *Psychological Reports*, 71 (3), pp. 1331-1336.
- Berg, A. M., Hem, E., Lau, B., Håseth, K., and Ekeberg, Ø. (2005). Stress in the Norwegian police service. *Occupational Medicine*, 55(2), 113.
- Boyle, G. J., Borg, M. G., Falzon, J. M., and Baglioni, A. J. (1995). A structural model of the dimensions of teacher stress. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 65(1), 49-67.
- Burke, R. J., and Greenglass, E. (1995). Job stressors, type A behavior, coping responses, and psychological burnout among teachers. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 2, 45-57.
- Chen, J. C., and Silverthorne, C. (2008). The impact of locus of control on job stress, job performance and job satisfaction in Taiwan. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 29(7), 572-582.
- Cohen S. (1994): Perceived Stress Scale. Retrieved from <http://www.mindgarden.com/documents/PerceivedStressScale.pdf>
- Comish, R. and Swindle, B. (1994)., "Managing stress in the Workplace", *Journal of Independent Studies and Research*, 26, pp. 130-142.

- Cox T, Mackay C J. 1981: *A transactional approach to occupational stress*. In: Corlett EN and Richardson J. (eds).
- Cox T. 1990: The recognition and measurement of stress: conceptual and methodological issues. In: Corlett E. N. and Wilson J. (eds). *Evaluation of Human Work*. Taylor and Francis, London, pg 31-39.
- Daniels, K., Beesley, N., Cheyne, A., and Wimalasiri, V. (2008). Coping processes linking the demands-control-support model, affect and risky decisions at work. *Journal of Human Relations*, 61 (6), 845.
- Detert, R. A., Derosia, C., Caravella, T. and Duquette, D. (2006). Reducing stress and enhancing the general well-being of teachers using T'ai Chi Chih® movements: A pilot study. *Californian Journal of Health Promotion*, 4(1), 162-173.
- Fletcher B C. 1988: *The epidemiology of occupational stress*. In: Cooper CL and Payne R. (eds). *Causes, Coping and Consequences of Stress at Work*. Wiley and Sons, Chichester, pg 57-81.
- French J.R.P, Caplan R. D, van Harrison R. 1982: *The Mechanisms of Job Stress and Strain*. Wiley and Sons, New York, pg 11-33.
- Gede, N. T. and Lawson, O. A. (2011). *Employee Characteristics and Job Performance of Staff of Bayelsa State Ministry of Education*. Proceeding of the 2011 International Conference on Teaching Learning and Change (c) International Association for Teaching and Learning (1A).
- Guthrie, R. (2006). Teachers and Stress. *Australia and New Zealand Journal of Law and Education*, 11 (1), 5-18.
- Haastrup T. E. and Adenike O. K. (2013): Stress among Secondary School Teachers in Ekiti State, Nigeria. *Journal of Educational and Social Research* Vol. 3 (2) May 2013.
- Heider, F. (1958). *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations*. New York: John Wiley and Sons. ISBN 0-471-36833-4. Retrieved March 14, 2009, from [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attribution\\_theory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attribution_theory)
- Ilevbare F. M. and Ogunjimi A. I. (2014). Psychosocial Factors Predicting Perceived Workplace Stress among Policemen in a Zonal Division. *European Scientific Journal* June 2014 edition vol.10, No.17.
- International Labour Organization [ILO] 1986: *Psychosocial Factors at Work: Recognition and Control*. *Occupational Safety and Health Series* no: 56, International Labour Office, Geneva, 1986: 54-64.
- Job Satisfaction of University Teachers in South India*", UGC Major Research Project, Dept. of Education, Dravidian University, Kuppam.
- Karasek R.A. 1979: *Job demands, job decision latitude and mental strain: implications for job redesign*. *Adminis Sci Quarter*, vol 24: pg 285-308.
- Kinnunen, U., and Salo, K. (1994). *Teachers stress: An 8-year follow-up-study on teachers work, stress, and health*. *Anxiety Stress Coping*, 7, 319-337.
- Koledoye, J. D. (2011) *Effect of Teachers' Academic Qualification on Students' Performance at the Secondary Level*. Retrieved from <http://www.academia.edu>
- Kristen F., Lorraine F., and David H., 2012: Predicting Anxiety, Depression and Job Satisfaction. *Journal of Teaching and Learning*, 2012, Vol. 8 No 1
- Kyriacou, C. (2001). *Teacher Stress: Directions for Future Research*. *Educational Review*, 53 (1), 27-35.
- Lam, S. S. K., and Schaubroeck, J. (2000). The role of locus of control in reactions to being promoted and to being passed over: A quasi experiment. *Academy of Management Journal*, 66-78.
- Malik, J. L., Mueller, R. O., and Meinke, D. L. (1991). *The effects of teaching experience and grade level taught on teachers stress: A LISREL analysis*. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 7(1), 57-62.
- Maram, A., and Miller, K. (1998). An empirical assessment of the construct "Work Locus of Control". *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 24(3), 48-51.
- Mayer, R (2002). *The Promise of Education Psychology* Pearson Education, Inc. retrieved from [http://wik.edu.uiuc.edu/index.php/Attribution\\_theory](http://wik.edu.uiuc.edu/index.php/Attribution_theory)
- Mearns, J., and Cain, J. E. (2003). *Relationships between teachers' occupational stress and their burnout and distress: Roles of coping and negative mood regulation expectancies*. *Anxiety, Stress and Coping*, 16, 71-82. doi:10.1080/1061580021000057040
- Meier, L., Semmer, N., Elfering, A., and Jacobshagen, N. (2008). The double meaning of control: Three-way

interactions between internal resources, job control, and stressors at work. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 13(3), 244-258.

Munt, V. (2004). The Awful Truth: A Microhistory of Teacher Stress at Westwood High. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 25 (5), 578-591.

Parkes, K. R. (1986). Coping in stressful episodes: The role of individual differences, environmental factors, and situational characteristics. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(6), 1277.

Punch, K. F., and Tuetteman, E. (1996). *Reducing Teacher Stress: The effects of support in the work environment*. Research in Education, 56, 63-72.

Rothmann, S. and Van Rensburg, P. (2001). *Suicide ideation in the South African Police Services*. Paper presented at the 10th European Congress of Work and Organisational Psychology, Prague, Czech Republic.

Ruggai, J. R. and Agih, A.A. (2008). Experience and Qualification as Correlates of Teacher Job Performance in Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State. *African Journal of Education Research and Development* 2(1) September, 2008.

Selye H. 1971: *Stress of Life*. McGraw- Hill, New York, pg 7-12.

Siegrist J. 1990: *Chronischer Distress und koronares Risiko: Neue Erkenntnisse und ihre Bedeutung für die Prävention*. In: Arnold M., Ferber C. v., and Henke K.-D. (Hrsg.) *Ökonomie der Prävention*. Bleicher, Gerlingen, pg 34-44.

Spector, P.E. (1988). Development of the work locus of control scale. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 61: 335-340.

Spector, P. E. (2002). *Employee control and occupational stress*. Current Directions in Psychological Science, 11(4), 133.

Tytherleigh, M.Y., Webb, C., Cooper, C.L. and Ricketts, C. (2005). *Occupational stress in UK Higher Education Institutions: a comparative study of all staff categories*. Higher Education Research and Development, Vol 24:1, pp 41-61.

Van Horn, J. E., Schaufeli, W. B., and Taris, T. W. (2001). *Lack of reciprocity among Dutch teachers: Validation of reciprocity indices and their relation to stress and well-being*. Work and Stress, 15, 191- 213. [doi:10.1080/02678370110066571](https://doi.org/10.1080/02678370110066571)

Warr P.B 1992: *Job features and excessive stress*. In: Jenkins R. and Coney N. (eds). *Prevention of Mental Ill Health at Work*. HMSO, London, pg 13-21.

Weiner, B. (1992). *An attributional theory of emotion and motivation*, New York: Springer-Verlag. Retrieved Dec 12, 2009, from [http://education.calumet.purdue.edu/vockell/EdpsyBook/Edpsy5/edpsy5\\_attribution.htm](http://education.calumet.purdue.edu/vockell/EdpsyBook/Edpsy5/edpsy5_attribution.htm)

Woolfolk, Anita (2007). *Educational Psychology*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc. Retrieved May 5, 2009, from [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attribution\\_theory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attribution_theory).

World Health Organization [WHO] 1986: *Constitution of the World Health Organization*. In: Basic Documents (36th ed). World Health Organization, Geneva, pg 29-37.