

Teacher Stress in Primary Schools in One Education District in Trinidad and Tobago

George Gowrie

The University of Trinidad and Tobago

Mala Ramdass

The University of Trinidad and Tobago

Ronald Birbal

The University of Trinidad and Tobago

Natasha Dass

The University of Trinidad and Tobago

Vashti Singh

The University of Trinidad and Tobago

Judy Rocke

The University of Trinidad and Tobago

Abstract

The study explored teachers' perceptions of the most common indicators of teachers' stress in primary schools in the St. George East Education Division of Trinidad and Tobago. It sought, also, to develop separate teacher stress categories and make comparisons among schools. The sample consisted of randomly selected 219 teachers from a sample of government and government -assisted schools primary schools from the St. George Education taking into account variables such as size, school type, location, sex and years of teaching experience. The study examined the relationship between the school-level teacher stress factors as well as the predictive power of each independent factor on overall teachers' stress. The study employed a quantitative method using a cross-sectional design. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS-SPG2). T-tests and ANOVA were used to examine teachers' stress based on school type, location, sex and years of teaching experience. Correlation and regression analysis were employed to examine the relationship between each of the stress factors as well as their influence on the overall dependent teacher stress. The findings suggested that there were no significant differences in teacher stress based on school type and location, However, there were some significant differences in teachers stress based on age, sex and years of teaching experience on some stress factors Also, there was a high to moderate inter-correlation of the school level stress factors. Teacher workload and student behavior had the strongest relationship to overall teacher stress.

Key words: teachers' perceptions, teacher stress in, primary schools

INTRODUCTION

Trinidad and Tobago, a twin-island state, is the most southerly of all the Caribbean islands. The island, after five centuries of foreign domination, gained its independence from Britain in 1962. The island possesses a British-oriented model of bureaucracy, which is reflected in the education system. Within the Trinidad and Tobago's education system, there are government

schools, which are fully owned and operated by the state; government-assisted or denominational schools, which are managed by a private body(usually a religious denomination) but given financial assistance by the state; private schools, which are maintained and operated by private bodies without the assistance from the state; and special schools, which are designed for educating children with special needs and which provide education mainly at the primary level. Generally speaking the government-assisted schools are regarded as the better schools and there is a great demand for placement in these schools.

At present there are approximately 454 public primary schools in eight Education Districts in Trinidad and Tobago. Of these 322 are government assisted or denominational and 132 are government schools. Primary schooling is compulsory from age six to fourteen, but children may be admitted from age five and may remain enrolled until fifteen unless selected for secondary schooling at 11+. The transition from primary to secondary school is largely determined by performance at the Secondary Entrance Assessment((SEA). Students at 11+ are examined in three subject areas Mathematics, Language Arts and Creative Writing, the results of which determine whether students are placed in schools of their choice or at the discretion of the Ministry of Education.

Teacher stress can be defined as the experience by a teacher of the unpleasant, negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, and depression resulting from some aspect of their work as a teacher (Kyriacou, 2001). Teacher stress issues in Trinidad and Tobago have received considerable attention decades ago. The Ministry of Education, Educational Policy Paper (1993-2003), for example, described many of our schools as 'organizational pathologies' with low levels of student and teacher motivation, teacher 'burnout,' teacher absenteeism, poor teacher leadership and bad working conditions. The physical and social conditions of many primary schools still do not facilitate the teaching and learning process. Primary school buildings vary severely in quality. Over the years, the focus on the expansion of the secondary level has been at the cost of the neglect of the primary sector. Many school plants at the primary level are still dilapidated and ill-suited for the type of curriculum required to deliver the knowledge, skills, values and experiences required by students who must cope with the demands of a competitive and changing world. In addition to concerns of inadequate facilities, there are increasing problems of vandalism, robberies, and violence in our schools that negatively impact on the effective delivery of the curriculum by teachers. Some schools are labelled "high-risk" because of their locale. A study on delinquency in schools (Deosaran, 2004) identified an alarming increase in student delinquent behaviour such as bullying, truancy, verbal abuse, fighting, and disrespect of teachers.

Another challenge teachers face in our primary schools is the lack of guidance officers to assist them with students' social and emotional problems. In the past, the focus used to be on prevention and management of auditory and visual impairment (Ministry of Education, Trinidad and Tobago 2008). The increasing diversity of our student population and changing family demographics mean that many students are in need of a wider variety of academic and behavioural programs, services and supports to succeed. According to Maharajh and Konings (2005), no means of comprehensive assessment of physical and mental disabilities of children exist at schools in Trinidad and Tobago. Students are identified for disabilities only when these are indirectly brought to the attention of their teachers through poor academic performance or abnormal behaviour.

Teachers at the primary level are general practitioners. That is, each teacher is expected to teach all of the subjects on the prescribed syllabus for primary schools. In some primary

schools, there is some degree of specialist teaching as many teachers have pursued further professional training beyond the Teacher's Diploma. The Ministry of Education is currently engaged in reforming the current system of teacher recruitment and selection to ensure teachers possess both academic and pedagogic qualifications. The academic qualification for entry requirements into the teaching service has been upgraded from the two- year Diploma programme to a four year Bachelor level degree. Many of our teachers are pursuing the Bachelor of Education four year degrees at different tertiary institutions such as the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT), University of the West Indies, University of Southern Caribbean, and other tertiary institutions. The training of these teachers is at two levels. At one level, there are the pre-service teachers who have no prior experience. There are also in-service teachers with a two year Diploma, who are being sent by the Ministry of Education to pursue the four year programme. These teachers pursue specializations in Special Education, Early Childhood Care and Education and primary education. Also, at UTT, teachers are exposed to core curricular courses and foundation courses. Indeed, the Ministry has just approved funding for 498 assistant teachers to pursue their Bachelor of Education at the University of Trinidad and Tobago in September, 2011.

At present, over eighty percent of primary school teachers are trained at the basic level but it is not uncommon to find a hierarchy of teachers with different levels of professional and academic qualifications. The more experienced teachers are allocated to the standard five classes while the less experienced are placed at the lower class levels. Such disparities in professional status, teacher allocation and academic qualifications may have some degree of impact on teacher efficacy and the quality of teaching and learning in these schools on the whole.

Concern has been expressed within recent times from all sectors of our society about the failure of our education and the near collapse of our school system. There is a feeling that our primary schools in particular are in a serious state of disrepair and have been neglected in many critical areas. Some of these critical areas seem to include, inter alia, intolerable physical conditions, overcrowding, poor staff quality, low teacher morale; teacher stress, vandalism, inadequate instructional materials; weak community relations; an alarming increase in indiscipline and violence in school involving principals, teachers, students and parents; and ineffective leadership. Indeed, the Teaching Service Commission of Trinidad and Tobago as reported in a recent article of the Daily Express noted that over 600 teachers are being investigated for delinquency such as sick leave abuse and high teacher absenteeism. Lawyers representing some of these teachers have indicated that these teachers are under severe stress and have medical problems such as high blood pressure and a lack of sleep (Daily Express, 28/2/15. Page 3). Given such a state of 'organizational pathology' (Education Policy Paper, 1993 -2003), there is a renewed call for organizational change and renewal with numerous attempts to create conditions to mobilize and make most of our human potential to improve the quality of life and reduce stress in the work place and our society by extension.

The study has both theoretical and practical significance. This study will, hopefully, help build on existing knowledge in the field and provide a culturally relevant framework to formulate a coherent body of knowledge to help evaluate school quality with the aim towards institutional building. The findings will also be shared with other researchers towards theory building in this field of study.

The research is also timely and consistent with the current mood of educational reform in our school system which focuses on teacher stress issues such as school effectiveness, cultures of

excellence, school improvement, inclusive schools, Continuous Assessment Programmes and other performance appraisal schemes. The study hopes to highlight whatever concrete evidence of malaise that seems to pervade our schools as well as significant teacher stress factors so that our teachers and principals will be in a better position to gauge schools' readiness for change and innovation.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The study was guided by a range of theories and perspectives such as the social-ecological (Bronfenbrenner, 1977), social cognitive (Bandura, 2001), the transactional model of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), psychological distress (Mirowsky & Ross, 2003), and motivational (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959) theories.

The social-ecological theory is a systems approach that emphasizes the complex environmental system where people live and operate and carefully defines the multilayered environment in which individual actions occur. Bronfenbrenner depicts the environment through four unique subsystems each one nested within the other. The first subsystem is the micro system which is immediate classroom where the teacher works and carries out the majority of his or her activities. At this level a major component of stress is teacher workload. Teachers' workloads include a vast array of tasks that are not limited to instruction, such as learning new teaching approaches, keeping current of technological innovations, student behavior problems, staff meetings and parent/school commitments. Butt and Lance (2005) found that teachers named the most excessive workload concerns associated with non classroom tasks that take over their personal lives, especially those related to teacher accountability. The second subsystem is the meso system which is the school, the third system is the exosystem which is the community in which the teacher operates, and the final system is the macrosystem the larger school districts, the nation and the various laws and regulations that govern teaching. This approach allows for interactions between the individual and each subsystem and for interactions between subsystems to be studied. This systems approach defines the different components that make up the school environment. To study teachers effectively, the complex environment in which they work must be taken into account and carefully analyzed. Moreover, because teacher stress and dissatisfaction is a complex phenomena with a myriad of causes, each subsystem should be considered carefully for its particular influence, be it directly or indirectly through another source such as teacher efficacy or burnout. According to Bronfenbrenner, each layer, such as the classroom the school, the community and the country contribute to the overall environment where teachers experience satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Indeed, the socio-ecological theory is useful in explaining how the school environment can be related to teacher stress in terms of the afore-mentioned environmental factors.

Bronfenbrenner's social-ecological theory has been applied to the study of teachers. For example, Miller, Bronwell and Smith, 1999, used this theory to highlight teacher dissatisfaction among special education to predict teachers staying in, leaving, or transferring from special education.

Bandura's social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2001) addresses the human aspect of the school system and the dignity of teachers that could lead to greater job satisfaction and increased school productivity. Bandura proposed that there were four general sources of efficacy building information : verbal expression, vicarious experiences, psychological arousal and mastery experiences (Bandura, 1977). According to Bandura, efficacy beliefs are explicitly self-referent in nature and directed toward perceived abilities, given specific tasks, and were

powerful predictors of behavior (Bandura, 2001). Bandura argued that human behavior is influenced by the individual's beliefs regarding two classes of expectations : an outcome expectation, 'a person's estimate that a given behavior will lead to certain outcomes,' and an efficiency expectation, 'the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce an outcome'. Bandura further noted that teachers who have a high sense of efficacy visualize scenarios that provide positive guides and support for performance (Bandura, 1993). Indeed, Bandura's theory demonstrates that self efficacy is very important in order for teachers to be able to cope effectively with the demand of teaching. If teachers have confidence in themselves and their ability to deal with challenging tasks, self- efficacy can act as a protective factor against teacher stress and burnout. Numerous studies on teacher efficacy (Pajares, 1996., Sewell and St. George, 2000., Goddard, Hoy and Hoy, 2000., Cousins and Walker, 1995)) have found that teachers with high efficacy enhance student motivation, encourage student autonomy and increase student self- esteem.

Another potentially powerful paradigm for better understanding teacher stress and coping is the transactional model proposed by Lazarus and Folkman, 1984. They suggested that when a person encounters life demands, a cognitive process is triggered in which perceived demands of the event are weighted against a person's perceived capabilities for coping with these demands. When this transaction results in a perception that one is facing demands that exceed the resources one has for coping the stress response ensues. Teachers who experience excessive demands vis-a-vis their resources are at risk for the negative effects of stress, which can include health problems and burnout Sapolsky, 1998., McCarthy, Kissen, Yadley, Wood & Lambert, 2006). Using the transactional model of stress Mc Carthy & Lambert (2006) examined levels of elementary teachers' burnout symptoms and their personal resources and experience from a sample of 481 teachers and 13 schools. Their findings supported the transactional model as individual differences among teachers within schools in perceptions of demands and resources were predictive of burnout symptoms. Additional studies have also found that stress symptoms occur when perceived demands exceed perceived resources (Kyriacou, 2001).

The theory of psychological distress (Mirowsky & Ross, 2003) is also pertinent in getting a firmer grasp in understanding stress. According to Mirowsky and Ross, psychological distress can take two forms : depression and anxiety. Teachers encounter many potential negative events in their everyday professional lives over which they have little or no control or power. Students' behaviours and lives outside the school , school board, and government initiatives, job security and promotion are just a few examples of situations over which such situations can become distress to teachers (Cedoline, 1982).

The theory of motivation, as espoused by Herzberg, Mausner,& Synderman, 1959, has significantly contributed to a better understanding of the motivating forcrs that enhance job satisfaction. Their Motivation-Hygiene Theory makes a distinction between two sets of job factors. One set is related to the actual doing of the job, or the intrinsic aspects of the job. These factors are called 'motivators' which produce satisfaction and include : achievement recognition, work itself, responsibility and advancement. The other set of job factors is related to the environmental setting or extrinsic factors of the job. These factors are termed 'hygiene ' and include : policy and administration, supervision, salary, status and security. The lack of 'hygiene' factors produce dissatisfaction. According to Herzberg et al highly motivated and satisfied teachers can create a healthy, social, psychological and physical climate of the school.

In the empirical literature Perrachione, Rosser and Peterson (2008) attempted to identify intrinsic and extrinsic variables that influence job satisfaction among elementary school teachers. Their findings suggested three intrinsic motivators (job satisfaction, personal teaching efficacy, and working with students) were perceived to significantly satisfaction and retention, while two extrinsic motivators (low salary and teacher workload) did not have any significant effect. Further research by Dinham and Scott (2000) has suggested that teacher satisfaction is thought to be connected to factors associated with intrinsic rewards (student-teacher relationship, and student achievement) while teacher dissatisfaction is linked more closely to with extrinsic factors (school leadership, teacher workload and communication). Further research by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011) found six variables : value consonance, supervisory support, relations with colleagues, relations with parents time pressure and discipline problems were related to job satisfaction and motivation. Other research studies have examined the relationship between job satisfaction and teacher stress. These studies found working conditions, employment conditions, professional challenge, reward and control over work were strong predictors of teacher stress (Decker, 1997; Flanagan, 2006; and Rout, 2000).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study :

1. Which teacher stress factors teachers perceived as affecting them the most?
2. Were there differences in each of the teacher stress factors based on school type and location?
3. Were there differences in each of the teacher stress factors based on sex, age and years of teacher experience?
4. What was the relationship between the four teachers stress factors?
5. Which teacher stress factors had the strongest relationship to overall teacher stress?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was quantitative using a cross-sectional design. Such a design was considered appropriate since was it exploratory and a large sample of schools and teachers participated in the study.

The teacher sample consisted of 219 teachers from a sample of Government, Roman Catholic, other Christian and non Christian schools. These teachers were randomly chosen from the Teachers' Register lists in the respective schools. The study used disproportionate random sampling since the number of schools and teachers sampled varied given the size of the school and the teacher population. These teachers were a mixture of male, female, experienced and inexperienced . The variables of urban, rural, small and large, age and experience of teachers were taken into account in the study. The table below shows the sample of school type, number of teachers and schools used in the study.

Table 1 : School type, Number of Selected Schools, and Number of Teachers

School type	Number of selected schools	Number of teachers
Government	13	69
Roman Catholic	12	60
Other Christian	10	56
Non Christian	09	34
Total	44	219

QUESTIONNAIRE DESCRIPTION AND VALIDITY

The teacher stress questionnaire used in the study was developed by a team of teacher stress researchers. The questionnaire consisted of four teacher stress categories (teacher workload, student behavior, employment conditions and leadership and management) and forty items related to the four teachers stress categories (Ferguson, Frost and Hall, 2012). Principal Component Analysis was performed to test the validity of the questionnaire and the factor pattern of the four stress factors (figure 1).

Figure 1: Factor pattern of the four stress factors

Factor 1 Teacher workload	loading
inadequate preparation time	.591
supervising duties	.483
changes in curriculum	.618
balancing home-school responsibilities	.511
lack of time to assist individual students	.583
increase in workload	.575
administrative paperwork	.526
not enough time to do work	.642
lack of time marking	.692
accountable for student achievement	.566
dealing with parent	.608
completing record and forecast	.667
undergoing teacher performance appraisal	.637
taking courses while working fulltime	.592
implementing new policies/mandates	.587
Factor 2 : Student behavior	
Maintaining class discipline	.697
Inclusion of students with special needs	.516
Class size	.505
Student attitude to work	.648
Student constantly misbehaving	.638
Lack of respect for school teachers	.564
Impolite and disruptive student behaviour	.660
Undeserved criticism of teacher and school	.586
Poorly motivated students	.684
Mixed ability of students in class	.567
Students with difficulties at home	.692
Factor 3 : Employment conditions	
Extra curriculum responsibility	.708
Little promotion opportunities	.631
Inadequate salary	.677
Poor physical space	.543
Relationship with principal	.685
Lack of training and professional Development	.559

Relationship with other teachers	.629
Job security	.631

Factor 4 :Leadership and management

Relationship with supportive staff	.725
Inadequate discipline policy in school	.617
Lack of recognition for teacher	
Contribution	.689
Principal attitude	.699
Lack of communication	.712
Lack of participation	.624
in decision-making	

The first factor was teacher work load with nine items ranging from .483 to .692. Teacher workload items included supervisory activities, lack of time to assist students, administrative paper work and increase in workload. The second factor was student behavior ranging from .505 to .697. Student behavior items included student attitude to work, disruptive student behavior, poorly motivated students and students with difficulties at home. The third factor was employment conditions ranging from .543 to .708. Employment conditions items included inadequate salary, extra curricular activities and lack of opportunities for promotion. The fourth factor was leadership and management ranging from .617 to .725. Items on this factor included relationship with staff, lack of participation in decision making and lack of communication with administration (Figure 1).

The Cronbach Alpha was further used to test the reliability of the questionnaire (Table 2).

Table 2 : Number of Items and Cronbach Coefficient of the Three Stress Factors.

Stress Factors	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Teacher workload	16	.882
Student behaviour	10	.844
Employment	11	.828
Leadership/ Management	05	.799

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

A total of 219 questionnaires were analyzed using an up-dated version of the Statistical Package for Social Scientists with a recent guide. Each school was given a numerical code from 01 to 54 to ensure the anonymity of the schools and to facilitate analysis. A 1-2-3-4-5 Likert Scale was used to arrive at numerical values for use in the data analysis. Since the unit of analysis was the school means were used in the data analysis. The following were the research questions that were quantitatively analyzed.

Research question 1 : Which teacher stress factors teachers perceived as affecting them the most?

This research question used factor and item means and frequencies to ascertain the importance teachers placed on each teacher stress factor. Factor means and the corresponding item means for each factor were computed. The importance teachers placed on each teacher stress factor ranged from 1.00 to 5.00, 1.00 being the lowest and 5.00 the highest value. There were five interval ranges : 1.00 to 2.00, 2.01 to 3.00, 3.01 to 4.00, 4.01 to 5.00 to arrive at the

importance on each of the four teacher stress factor. The teacher stress items means associated with each factor were arranged across the total sample to represent each factor. The factor mean for teacher workload was the highest (46.96), followed by student behavior (30.43) and employment conditions (29.38), and leadership and management (14.38) respectively (table 3). These findings suggested that teachers perceived teacher workload as the stress factor affecting them the most followed by student behavior.

Table 3 : Teacher Stress Factors, N, Mean, SD. and Variance

Teacher Stress Factors	N	Mean	SD	Variance
Teacher Workload	219	46.96	11.888	141.320
Student Behavior	219	30.43	7.775	60.458
Employment Conditions	219	29.38	8.167	66.704
Leadership/ Management	219	14.38	4.840	23.421

Research question 2 : Were there differences in each of the teacher stress factors based on , location, school type, sex, age and years of teaching experience?

i. Differences based on location

With regard to significant differences based on location the study found that there were no significant differences between teachers on each of the stress factors in urban and rural schools (table 4).

Table 4 : Differences Between each of the Four Teacher Stress Factors in Urban and Rural Schools

Factor	Location	N	Mean	SD	F	Significance
Teacher Workload	urban	132	47.06	11.468	1.675	.197
Student Behavior	rural	82	48.41	12.590		
Employment Conditions	urban	132	29.79	7.989	.031	.859
Leadership and Management	rural	82	31.28	7.447		
Teacher Workload	urban	132	25.56	7.274	.031	.860
Student Behavior	rural	82	27.05	7.709		
Employment Conditions	urban	132	14.27	4.830	.006	.939
Leadership and Management	rural	82	14.53	4.813		

p>0.05 significance

*Significant at the 0.05 level.

ii. Differences based on school type

No significant differences were found in each of the stress factors of teachers in Government, Roman Catholic, Other Christian and Non Christian schools (table 5).

Table 5 : Teacher Stress Factors and Differences Based on School Type

Factor	School type	N	Mean	SD	F	Significance
--------	-------------	---	------	----	---	--------------

Teacher Workload	Gov't	96	47.50	13.548	.951	.331
	R.C.	49	45.97	9.957	.163	.687
	OC	31	50.57	12.33	.000	.996
	NC	36	48.69	12.149		
Student Behaviour	Gov't	96	30.56	8.052	.861	.355
	R.C.	49	30.24	7.061	.457	.500
	OC	31	31.26	7.348	.006	.939
	NC	36	30.83	8.164		
Employment Conditions	Gov't	96	25.69	7.356		
	R.C.	49	24.73	6.360	.004	.948
	OC	31	28.32	8.463	2.788	.097
	NC	36	26.75	7.519	.374	.601
Leadership and Management	Gov't	96	14.48	4.726	.	
	R.C.	49	13.59	4.695	.302	.583
	OC	31	15.52	5.656	.060	.781
	NC	36	14.11	4.774		

*significant at.05 level
P< 0.05 sig.

iii. Differences based on sex

There were a significant difference between male and female teachers with regard to student behaviour (table 6).

Table 6 :Teacher Stress Factors and Differences Based on Sex

Factor	Sex	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig
Teacher Workload	male	43	47.63	10.224	1.305	.255
	female	175	47.79	12.218		
Student Behaviour	male	43	31.37	5.928	4.042	.036*
	female	175	30.26	8.148		
Employment Conditions	male	43	26.35	6.328	1.168	.281
	female	175	26.13	7.652		
Leadership and Management	male	43	15.51	4.284	1.164	.282
	female	175	14.11	4.952		

*Significant @0.05 probability level
P<0.05 sig.

iv. Differences based on age

Significant differences were found in two teacher stress factors (teacher workload, student behavior) in under 25 and 26-49 teacher categories (table 7).

Table 7 : Teacher Stress Factors and Differences Based on Age

Factor	Age	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig.
Teacher Workload	under 25	28	46.43	17.439	12.537	.000*
	26-49	183	48.07	10.967		
Student Behavior	under 25	28	28.68	10.961	7.457	.007*
	26-49	183	30.68	7.260		
Employment Conditions	under 25	28	26.75	10.021	1.950	.164
	26-49	183	26.31	6.966		
Leadership and Management	under 25	28	14.07	6.122	1.501	.222
	26-49	183	14.49	4.666		

*Significant @ 0.05 level
P<0.05 sig.

v. Differences based on years of teaching experiences

There were significant differences in 6-10 and over 10 teacher categories in three teacher stress factors (teacher workload, employment conditions and leadership and management (table 8)).

Table 8 : Teacher Stress Factors and Differences Based on Years of Teaching Experience

Factor	Years of Teaching	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig		
Teacher Workload	under 5	93	47.10	13.347	.706	.402		
	6-10	54	50.78	11.261				
	Over 10	71	46.11	10.124			2.030	.018*
Student Behaviour	under 5	93	29.48	8.401	.141	.708		
	6-10	54	32.06	7.644				
	Over 10	71	24.46	6.456			.703	.002
Employment conditions	under 5	93	26.10	7.943	.208	.649		
	6-10	54	28.44	7.179			.703	.002*
	over 10	71	24.46	6.456				
Leadership / Management	under 5	93	13.71	4.813	.280	.598		
	6-10	54	16.06	4.939			.902	.242
	Over 10	71	14.04	4.581				

*Significant @ the 0.05 level
P<0.05 sig.

Research Question Three : What was the Relationship between each of the School –level Teacher Stress Factors ?

The Pearson Moment Correlation was the statistical tool technique used to measure the degree of relationship between the four teacher stress factors. There were moderate statistical significant correlations between teacher workload and leadership and management (r=.603,p.0.01), student behavior and employment conditions (r=.603, p>0.01), student

behavior and leadership and management ($r=.599$, $p>0.01$). There were high statistical correlations between teacher workload and student behavior ($r=.740$, $p>0.01$), teacher workload and employment conditions ($r=.756$, $p>0.01$), and employment conditions and leadership and management ($r=.793$, $p>0.0$) (table 9).

Table 9 : Pearson Moment Correlation Among the School-Level Stress Factors

Stress Factors	Teacher Workload	Student Behaviour	Employment Conditions	Leadership and Management
Teacher Workload	1.00			
Pearson Corr.		.740*	.756*	.636*
Sig(2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
Student Behaviour		1.00		
Pearson Corr.			.603*	.599*
Sig(2-tailed)			.000	.000
Employment Conditions			1.00	
Pearson Corr.				.793
Sig(2-tailed)				.000
Leadership and Management				1.00

Research question 4 : What was the strength of the relationship between each of the four stress factor and overall teacher stress?

Regression analysis was employed to examine the strength of the relationship between each of the four school-level teacher stress factors and overall teacher stress. Teacher workload (Beta=.219) and student behavior (Beta=.172) appeared to have the strongest influence on overall teacher stress. This was followed by employment conditions (B=.094) and leadership and management (B=.160) (table 10).

Table 10 : Zero Order, Partial and Part Correlation, Beta and Significance:

Factor	Zero order	Partial correlation	Part correlation	Beta	Sig
Teacher work load	..933	.967	,219	.403	.000*
Leadership Management	..843	.980	.094	.157	.000*
Student behavior	. .894	.977	.160	.265	.000*
Employment Conditions	.813	.937	.172	.304	.000*

*Sig at .05 probability level.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This was an exploratory study of teachers' perceptions of stress in an Educational District in Trinidad and Tobago. The sampled teachers were of that the stress factors - teacher workload and student behavior affected them the most. Mirowsky & Ross (2003) have noted that,

although teachers may not have full control over workload, the management of workload is essential for teachers. New curriculum and the implementation of new initiatives may add to a feeling of work overload. Many teachers may have difficulty and this may lead to stress. Further stress studies by Revicki, Gallery, Whitley, and Allison, 1993, have found that teacher workload may be difficult to manage without definitive boundaries and a feeling of there always being work to do. While teachers can manage classrooms, in reality they have little control over individual student behavior. Chan (2002) has posited that administrative support is essential in helping teachers manage workload as well as student behavior concerns. Having supports in the school for both teachers and students and working with parents, while not totally eliminating distress, may reduce many of the stress symptoms teachers experience. In Trinidad and Tobago, at present, a new curriculum has been introduced in our primary school. Teachers are now expected to engage in a Continuous Assessment Programme (CAP) from Standards 4 and 5 in mathematics, language arts, the visual arts and the creative arts. This assessment will comprise 40% of the entry mark to secondary school placement. Teachers are complaining of this excessive workload that is negatively affecting them physically and psychologically.

With respect to demographic factors such as school type and location teachers perceived that these factors did not affect them significantly. However, sex and years of teaching experience did have some impact on teacher stress especially with the younger teachers with regard to teacher workload, student behavior and employment. Research by Qusar (2011) has found that younger teachers report higher levels of increased stress and pressures than older teachers. The significant differences found with regard to employment conditions suggest younger teachers appeared more concerned with their job security and opportunities for professional advancement. While job security and opportunities for advancement may be out of a teacher's control, support through career counselling and education about teacher collective agreements may help in reducing stress and anxiety. The findings also indicated that there was a moderate to high positive correlation between the four stress factors, especially with regard to teacher workload, employment conditions and student behavior. These findings suggested that teachers recognized that the interplay of these stress factors contributed significantly to overall teacher stress. With regard to the strength of the influence of the four independent stress factors on overall stress teacher workload such as overburden curriculum, too much administrative duties, student discipline and uncertainty with regard to job security and promotion have the greatest influence on their stress levels.

The results of this teacher stress study have significant implications for all stakeholders in education. Issues such as teacher workload, student behavior and employment conditions must be urgently addressed to help reduce stress and by extension increase job satisfaction. Further research on the relationship between job satisfaction and teachers stress needs to be undertaken as increased motivation and job satisfaction would improve teachers' quality of work life and contribute to more positive student outcomes. Although a causal relationship may not be established, such a relational study may provide a useful framework to guide administrators and policy makers in school improvement and effectiveness.

References

- Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory : an agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 1-26.
- Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development. *Educational Psychologist*, 28, 117-58.
- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy : toward a unifying theory of behavioural change. *Psychology Review*, 84(2), 191-215.

- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. *American Psychologist*, 32(7), 513-531.
- Butt, G., & Lance, A. (2005). Secondary teacher workload and job satisfaction : do successful strategies for change exist? *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership*, 33(4), 401-22.
- Cedoline, A.J. (1982). *Job burnout in public education :symptoms, causes and survival skills*. New York, NY :Teachers' College.
- Chan, D.W. (2002). Stress, social support, and psychological distress among Chinese teachers in Hong Kong. *Educational Psychology*, 22(5), 557-69.
- Decker, F.H. (1997). Occupational and non-occupational factors in job satisfaction and psychological distress among nurses. *Research in Nursing and Health*, 20(5), 453-64.
- Deosaran, R. (2004). *Benchmarking violence and delinquency in secondary schools : towards a culture of peace and civility*. Centre for Criminology, UWI. St. Augustine, Trinidad.
- Dinham, S., & Scott, C. (2000). Moving into the third outer domain of teacher satisfaction. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 38(4), 379-96.
- Ferguson, K., Frost, L., & Hall, D. (2012). Predicting teacher anxiety, depression and job satisfaction. *Journal of Teaching and Learning*, 8(1), 27-42.
- Flanagan, N. A. (2006). Testing the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction in correctional nurses. *Nursing Research*, 55(5), 316-27.
- Goddard, R. D., Hoy, W.K.,& Hoy, A.W. (2000). Collective teacher efficacy : its meaning, measure and impact on student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 37(2), 479-507.
- Herzberg, F., Mausner, B., & Snyderman, B. (1959). *Motivation and work*. Wiley, New York : NY.
- Kyriacou, C. (2001). Teachers stress : directions for future research. *Educational Review*, 53(1), 27-35.
- Lazarus, R.S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress appraisal and coping*. New York : Springer.
- Maharajh, H.D., & Konings, M. (2005). An assessment of school children with mental disabilities and their mainstream integration into the education system in Trinidad and Tobago. *Journal of Disease and Human Development*, 4(2), 95-101.
- McCarthy, C.J., & Lambert, R.G. (2006). Helping teachers balance demands and resources in an era of accountability. In R. Lambert and C. McCarthy (Eds.). *Understanding teacher stress in an age of accountability*. Greenwich, C.T : Information Age Publishing.
- Miller, M.D., Brownell, M.T., & Smith, S.W. (1999). Factors that predict teachers staying in, or leaving or transferring from the special educational classroom. *Exceptional Children*, 65, 203-18.
- Ministry of Education, Trinidad and Tobago. (1994). *Report on the National Task Force on Education (1993-2003)*. Education Policy Paper, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.
- Ministry of Education, Trinidad and Tobago. (2001). *National Report on the Development of Education in Trinidad and Tobago*. 40th session of the International Conference on Education. Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.
- Mirowsky, J., & Ross, C.E. (2000). *Social causes of psychological distress (2nd Edition)* Hawthorne, NY : Aldine, De Greyther.
- Pajares, F. (1996) self efficacy beliefs in academic settings. *Review of Educational Research*, 66(4),543-78).
- Perrachione, B.A., Roger, V.T., & Peterson, G.T. (2008). Why do they stay? Elementary teachers perceptions of job satisfaction. *The Professional Educator*, 32(2).
- Qusar, N. (2011). A study of occupational stress among school teachers. *International Journal of Disability, Development, and Education.*, 3(1), 31-36.
- Rout. U.R. (2000). Stress amongst district nurses: a preliminary investigation. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 9(2), 303-9.
- Revicki, D.A., Gallery, M.E., Whitley, T.W., & Allison. (1993). Impact on work environment characteristics on work-related stress and depression in emergency medicine students. :a longitudinal study. *Journal of Applied Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 3(4), 273-84.

Sapolsky, R.M. (1998). *Why zebras don't get ulcers? An update on stress, stress-related diseases and coping*. New York :W.H. Freeman.

Sewell, A., & St. George, A. (2000). Developing efficacy beliefs in the classroom. *Journal of Educational Enquiry*, 1(2), 58-70.

Skaalvik, E.M., & Skaalvik, S. (2011). Teacher job satisfaction and motivation to leave the teaching profession : relations with the school context, feeling of balancing and emotional exhaustion. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27, 1029-1036.