

**EFFECTS OF STRESS ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS  
IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN OREDO LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
AREA, EDO STATE.**

**BY**

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## **CERTIFICATION**

We the undersigned do hereby certify that this project was carried out by Yomade Favour Ebunoluwa with matriculation number EDU 1803748 of the institute of Education, University of Benin, Benin City.

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## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to my parents, Pastor Benson and Mrs Clara Ebuwa Yomade for their contributions towards it's success.

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## ABSTRACT

The study examined the Effects of stress on the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. The study also sought to find out if pupils academic Performance can be grossly affected based on school location and school type, stress being a factor. To carry out this study, three research questions were raised. The population of the study was three hundred teachers in public primary school in Oredo Local Government Area. The sample for the study was (20%) of the total population who use selected using stratified sampling method which gave a sample of (60) teachers. The Instrument used for the collection of data was questionnaire. The reliability of the questionnaire was ascertained using test - retest method. Thereafter, the Pearson's product moment coefficient (Pearson  $r$ ) was determine in it's level of reliability. A correlation coefficient of 0.70 was obtained and it showed the Instrument was reliable. The major findings of the study revealed that stress to a large extent affects the academic performance of pupils in public primary school, teachers expertise plays a vital role in the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools.

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made: parents and teachers should work hand in hand in establishing a relationship that fosters academic growth. Teacher's should be well acquainted with individuals differences.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background to the Study**

Stress is a main source of problems being faced by the pupils during their academic carrier. Pupils struggle to get the academic achievements for their future life. . Stress is the response of mental and action through hormonal signaling, the perception of danger sets off an automatic response system, known as the fight or flight response. Commonly stress refers to two things, the psychological perception of pressure, on the one hand, and the body's response to it, on the other, which involves multiple systems, from breakdown to muscles to memory

Every Childhood programme is saddled with the responsibility to cater for the wellbeing and holistic development of the child. Moreover stress interferes with this and in respect to the academic world, it's incidence among pupils is alarming due to several challenges and events that goes with the academic demands of students (Ashaolu, 2001).

Over the years, stress has been defined as a feeling of emotional or physical tension. Which make pupils to react when they feel under pressure or threatened which marks a state of physical or mental tension often triggered by different life experiences,

actions or events and for the school boy or girl a wide range of activities and factors give rise to stress and in no small way affect their academic performance.

The Academic performance of pupils which is determined by academic activities such as continuous assessment or examination results as a measure of pupils' success or educational outcomes in school suffers no little strain as stress takes its toll on the physical and entire wellbeing of the child. According to Narad and Abdullah (2016) defined academic performance as the knowledge gained which is assessed by marks by a teacher and/or educational goals set by students and teachers to be achieved over a specific period of time. Academic performance is the educational aim that is achieved by a pupil and teacher to achieve over a specific time. The academic performance of pupils heavily depends upon the parental involvement in their academic activities to attain the higher level of quality in academic success. The pupils are quite emotional especially females. They are take stress in everything at school level. Academic performance is the educational aim that is achieved by a student, teacher or institution achieves over a specific time. This is measured either by examinations or continuous assessments and the goal may differ from an individual or institution to another. Especially teachers play the main role in the academic achievement. Academic achievement is a period used in school when a student does well in academic performance. Academic performance is the successes which demand from parent's family and friends. They achieve or do well in an area of the

school and do well in their studies. Academic performance is not only degree it is the identification of any students. All the successes in every field of life depend on the academic achievement. This study focuses more on the harm than good stress does to pupils in relation to their academic performance at school. It is common for pupils , individual or in groups, to interact with their environment, these experience one way or another affect pupils academic performance(chemers 2001). Stress has generated a lot of interest in recent years. It has been of great concern to members of the academic world and other researchers. For most people, stress is bad and should be avoided but the position is not always true.

Pupils in rural area have more stress than their counterpart in urban schools for example the Children in urban area are exposed to better opportunities in terms of transportation aid, good school structure, conducive/hygienic environs among others that strengthens the chance of a smooth educational experience which yields a good response as regards their educational performance. Overall, it is easier and more productive for a child to be tutored and more receptive in a well-managed and structured learning center than those in rural schools that walks for about a mile before arriving at school with poorly equipped facilities ,less efficient and productive in comparison to education lifestyle in the city. The issue of bad roads poses the tendency for pupils to be stressed as they find their way to school on foot. Most parents cannot afford to provide for their wards the comfort of going to school via

transit even if roads are fairly motorable since they struggle to make ends meet.

Stress must be managed not simply avoided

Effective classroom experience is greatly influenced by teaching methods. Teacher→ experience in terms of quality use of effective teaching methods, Ability to vary teaching methods in order to ascertain the stated objectives for the lesson greatly affects pupils→performance such as poor handling of instructional materials, improper use of the various methods of teaching puts a hold on smooth transition of the learning process, and in some cases it allows no learning at all because the medium equals the message. Stress ranges from so many factors and it causes physical and mental health problems. Although a little bit of stress is good, and can help us perform daily activities as being challenged makes you learn new things and keeps your brain functioning, it becomes an issue when it interferes with development.

When it comes to the school environment, work overload, teaching methods, school location, parental response, child labour and others are considerable factors leading to stress which has an overall effect on the academic performance of pupils in school.

### **Statement of the Problem**

One of the problems of low academic performance in primary school is stress such as extracurricular activities, upscale teaching materials for a lower class level, long reading hours, high parental expectations and others are jointly associated contributors

to the creation of stress for pupils which in response translates into poor academic performance.

Learning, especially for young learners in public schools isn't much effective due to a world of stressors. Some primary schools lack the facilities to handle the population of pupils present the chairs and desks are not enough for pupils for teaching and learning which lead to more stress for pupils and lead to poor academic performance. Study have revealed the stress primary school pupils in Oredo local government are passing through such as bad roads and lack of instructional materials for teaching which leads to poor performance of pupils. This study therefore is to investigate the effect of stress on the academic performance of pupils in public primary school in Oredo local government area of Edo State

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study

- 1) How does stress affect academic performance of pupils in public primary school?
- 2) To what extent does stress affect academic performance of pupils in public primary school based on school location/ type?
- 3) To what extent does stress affect academic performance of pupils in public primary school based on teacher's experience?

### **Purpose of the Study**

This Study is aimed at investigating academic stress and exploring its effect on the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Oredo local government area, Edo state.

The specific objectives were:

- 1) Identity the concept of stress and ascertain its effect on the pupils academic performance.
- 2) To ascertain the effect of stress on the academic performance of pupils in public primary school
- 3) To ascertain the effect of stress on the academic performance of pupils in public primary based on school location

### **Significance of Study**

Findings of this study will make known the effect of academic stress on primary school children academic performance. It is hoped, therefore, that the study will be a great value to the state and the local governments in their effort to promote good pupil performance and ensure that stress is well minimized to further stimulate pre-school children's academic performance in Benin City. This study would enable parents to have adequate knowledge of the impact of stress on pupils→ grade and overall

performance. The study would also serve as reference point to other researchers who may likely research on a similar topic in the nearest future

### **Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

The scope of the study is on effect of stress on academic performance of pupils in public primary school. The study is delimited to all public primary school in Edo State finding may not be generalized to other local government area in the state.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Stress** ➔ is define as the natural and inevitable aspects of contemporary human life

**Academic Performance** - Academic performance is the scores pupils obtain to show how well a pupil does or perform based on their learning experiences

**School Location** -This refers to the particular place or physical environment either urban or rural where the school is geographically situated in.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter presents a review of literature under the following sub- headings

- Concept of Stress.
- Concept of Academic Performance.
- Stress and Its Effect on the Academic Performance of Pupils
- Stress and its Effect on the Academic Performance of Pupils in Public Primary School Based on School Location.
- Stress and its Effect on the Academic Performance of Pupils in Public Primary School based on School Type.
- Summary of Literature Review

#### **Concept of Stress**

Selye (1976) explained stress as "the non-specific response of the body to any demand, he defined the stress syndrome, which is also known as general adaptation syndrome (G.A.S), which has three phases: the alarm stage, stage of resistance, and stage of exhaustion. The alarm stage is where the body recognizes some threat and physiological arousal rises or levels off when the body adapts to the stressors (Gadzella & Masten, 2005). In the stage of resistance, an individual fights the threat. When an individual cannot adapt to the stressors, the body's resources will continue to be taxed and lead to the stage of exhaustion. Their two different kinds of stress:

eustress (good stress) and distress (bad stress). He stated that both eustress and distress go through the same phases in the G.A.S (General adaptation syndrome). The eustress has no negative consequences and is beneficial to humans. The eustress does not lead the body to the stage of exhaustion, and the person learns how to adapt to the threat. The distress has negative consequences to one's body and is viewed to be harmful (Gadzella, Masten, & Zascavage, 2009). If one could not adapt to the stress and it is prolonged enough, the stage of resistance can lead to the stage of exhaustion, where the stressors become distress. Whether stress is eustress or distress it is "how you take it that determines, ultimately, whether one can adapt successfully to change (Selye1976). Stress is a part of day-to-day living. In our daily lives, this can often exposed to situations that produce stress. The interpretation and reaction to events that make stress are different for different people. For example, speaking in public can be stressful for some people and relaxing for others. However if our stress level is too high, it can result in serious medical and social problems. Any event or circumstance that strains or exceeds an individual ability to cope is called stress (Lahey, 2004, P.500). The term stress can be defined in many ways.

Stress is in terms of pressure, tension, unpleasant external forces or an emotional response (Ogden, 2004, P.234). Stress is an abnormality in behavior, psychology, and emotional outburst, restraint in performing day-to-day routine work or physiological changes in human being.

Stress is a complex concept. It can be routine stress at home, at school, and at work might be fairly begun individually, but collectively they could create great strain. Different things cause stress in different people. It is also a part of every pupil daily life. Different styles of education and its diverse demands cause stress. Pupils life is subjected to different kinds of stressors, such as the pressure of academics with an obligation of success, uncertain future and difficulties envisaged for integration in to the system. These students face, social, emotional and physical and family problems which may affect their learning ability and academic performance (Fish & Nies, 1996; Chewgrahan, Rogers & Yassin, 2003).

Stress prevents pupils from focusing and enjoying learning from behaving harmoniously, and from unfolding their unique talents. Accumulate stress causes frustration; depression and anxiety, and can lead to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, substance abuse, antisocial behaviors and even violence. Stress has become an important topic in academic circle as well as in our society. Now it has become common among pupils especially, and it can be controlled by stress management strategies because stress in academic institution can have both positive and negative consequences if not well managed. School might be stressful for children and adolescents (Klinger et al., 2015) as it is brings some amount of social and academic pressures (Santrock, 2002).The pressure may sometimes come from a large amount of workload, too much activities to be covered in a short while, the need for pupils to

show their best academic performance (Chraif, 2015, Huan, See, Ang, & Har, 2008). Academic demands which stirs up pressure from parents, schools, and peers (Kim, Kwak, & Lee, 2016, Deb, Strodl, & Sun, 2014) class conditions, inadequate resources available to achieve learning objectives (Awino & Agolla, 2008). Children learn how to respond to stress as they grow and develop in different ways. Less stressful events that an adult can manage will cause stress in a child. This is to say that for every small changes that occurs has an impact on the child's feelings of safety and security.

Stress in the early stages of learning can result from a variety of reasons, which might vary depending on personal traits and contextual circumstances. High academic standards, parental pressure for academic and extracurricular success, social interaction difficulties, learning difficulties, bullying and teasing experiences, a lack of adequate support from teachers and parents, overscheduling, adjusting to new environments, stressful home environments, and test anxiety are all common stressors. Parents, teachers, and other caregivers must identify and address these stressors in order to provide children the support and coping skills they need to successfully navigate the challenges of early learning. Research suggests that increased stress and subsequent increase in glucocorticoids disrupts the filtering process of irrelevant stimuli and negatively affects components of working memory. Stress reduce cognitive functioning, affects individuals experiences across a wide range of environments, including academic settings.

Notably, increased stress levels have been associated with decreased ability to engage in productive critical reasoning and other scientific thinking process. Pupils cannot engage in precise problem solving process when stress levels have skyrocketed.

There's a limit to mental productivity due to stress events. Because chronic stress impairs working memory abilities, an individual who experiences stress for a long period of time is less able to participate in learning than a pupil who does not experience this stress such as :

- **Physical well-being:** Physical signs of chronic stress include weariness, headaches, and stomachaches. Children may become more susceptible to infections as a result of the immune system being compromised.
- **Behavioral Changes:** Stress can cause behavioral changes such as disruptive behavior, hostility, or regress in developmental milestones.
- **Attention span:** Children who are under stress may have trouble focusing and paying attention, which affects their capacity to take in and retain knowledge.
- **Confidence:** Persistent stress can damage a child's self-esteem and confidence, which might impact their belief in their potential and talents.
- **Creativity and curiosity level:** Stress can impair a child's creativity and curiosity, preventing them from exploring and participating in educational activities.

- **Emotional effects:** Young learners who are under stress may exhibit increased irritability, mood fluctuations, and emotional outbursts. Their general emotional health may suffer as a result of them being more reclusive, nervous, or sad leading to difficulties in learning, reduced academic performance/achievements, and overall quality of life.

### **Coping strategies**

Coping strategies are techniques and behaviors individuals use to manage and reduce stress, anxiety, and various emotional challenges. Effective coping strategies help improve overall well-being and resilience which includes.

- (a) **Limit Exposure to Stressors:** Exposure to stress-inducing situations or people should be minimized whenever possible. Definite boundaries in protecting mental and emotional well-being should be put in place. Work load at school should be properly organized and less bulky for effective learning experience. Often time  $\rightarrow$  children in school are mask up with tons of assignments to do and other exercises to cover so much that there's little or no time to grasp knowledge but just to complete exercises. When pupils are bombarded with excessive workload or school related exercise that are beyond their level and interests, stress is inevitable and participation/ pupils active involvement withers.

- (b) **Healthy Diet:** Consumption of balanced diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins manages stress at certain levels. Excessive consumption of sugar can exacerbate stress especially when on burnt out. Healthy eating nourishes the body with sufficient nutrients that aids the body when affected with stress.
- (c) **Sleep hygiene:** Observing healthy habits such as quality sleep plays a crucial role in managing stress. Maintaining a consistent sleep schedule and creating a relaxing bedtime routine for young children relieves stress and helps stabilize the brain.
- (d) **Reduce workload:** Avoid overloading a child's schedule with too many activities, allowing them enough time for rest and relaxation. Provide children with designated safe spaces where they can take a break and calm down when feeling overwhelmed. Reading books or telling stories about characters facing challenges can help children understand emotions and how to cope with them. Take time out and make learning process flexible for effective educational experience. It's important to note that every child is different, so some tactics could be more beneficial for some kids than others. Thus to develop coping mechanisms that are appropriate for each child, it is crucial to watch and comprehend each child's needs to tailor coping strategies accordingly.

## **Concept of Academic Performance**

Academic Performance over the years has been called some other terms such school readiness, academic achievement and sometimes school performance. Nevertheless its meaning stays the same. Several authors agree that academic performance is the result of learning, prompted by the teaching activity by the teacher and produced by the student.

From a humanistic approach, Martinez (2007) stated that academic performance is the product given by the students and it is usually expressed through school grades, Pizarro (1985) referred to academic performance as a measure of the indicative and responsive abilities that express, in an estimated way, what a person has learned as a result of a process of education or training.

Academic performance is the measurement of student achievement across various academic subjects. It indicates the extent to which a person has accomplished spelt out goals which were the focus of activities in instructional/ learning environments, specifically in school, college, and university, often reflected in grade point .As Caballero (2007) puts it, academic performance involves meeting goals, achievements and objectives set in the program or course that a student attends. These are expressed through grades which are the result of an assessment that involves passing or not certain tests, subjects or courses

School systems mostly define pupils' performance to be based on cognitive goals that either apply across multiple subject areas (e.g., critical thinking) or include the acquisition of knowledge and understanding in a particular intellectual domain for example, numeracy, literacy, science, history. Although many researchers hold that academic achievement should be considered as a multifaceted construct seeing that it cuts across different domains of learning. Academic performance is interdisciplinary in nature. Because the field of academic performance is very wide ranging and covers a broad variety of educational outcomes, the definition of academic achievement or performance depends on the indices used to measure it. There are many criteria that measure academic achievement, there are very general indicators such as procedural (practical) and declarative (theoretical) knowledge ascertained in any learning environment, more curricular based criteria such as grades or performance on an educational achievement test, and cumulative indicators of academic achievement such as grading and certification, all have one thing in common; it is that they represent intellectual endeavors and categorically, mirror the intellectual capacity of a person.

Generally, academic achievement plays an important role in every person's life. Academic achievement, sets the grounds for placement and positioning. Whether it is determined through the formative or summative approach, its end result is a determining factor in pupil's smooth sail from one level to another in the continuation

of their education. Parents ,teachers and researchers are very much interested in this aspect of the schooling system because it depicts to a large extent pupils responsiveness to academic activities and teachers capacity in transmitting knowledge via effective teaching and learning process and the relationship that exist between input and output whether quality or not as the case may be.

Furthermore, Academic performance as a broad field can be affected by and not limited to several factors addressed below. Academic performance is so crucial to pupils→ academic growth as it greatly affects their choice of career, certification/placement and grading. Academic achievement is important for the successful development of young people in society. As Pupils who do well in school are better able to make the transition into adulthood with higher chances of achieving occupational and economic success.

### **Factors Affecting Academic Performance of Pupils**

Various factors can affect students→academic performance such as mental issues, working status, time spent on gadgets, study duration among several others. Some key factors will be discussed below-

- **The teacher factor:** This is more of an external approach in influencing positive response to the attainment of Educational goals. Such as student ratio, teacher's experiences and teaching techniques, professionalism and effectiveness (fluency in putting to good use teaching skills; meeting stated

learning objectives), use of appropriate media, and ability to observe pupils behaviour record and implement changes where needed.

Various studies had been conducted concerning teaching methods, which suggests that the choice of a particular method of teaching by the teacher determined by number of factors which includes the content to be taught, the objectives which the teacher plans to achieve, availability of teaching and learning resources and the ability and willingness of the teacher to improvise if conventional teaching aids are not available, evaluation and follow-up activities and Individual learner differences (Ndirangu, 2007) can make or mar pupils performance. Teaching methodology precisely deals with the teachers → capacity to effectively discharge knowledge through relevant teaching styles. Tailoring instruction to different learning styles, offering hands-on activities, and fostering critical thinking can positively influence pupils learning outcomes but can potentially stress pupils if it's overly rigid, fast-paced, or not suited to their level.

- **Facilities at school:** A well-designed and comfortable learning environment can enhance students' focus and concentration, leading to improved learning outcomes. Structured classroom sizes better accommodates learning experience, health facilities such as sick bays and liaison with health centers, proper and well managed toilet facilities cater for learners health related needs enhancing schooling experience.

- **Learner's factor:** This comprises of learner's internal components which encompasses motivation, value, interests, preparedness and ability to learn. A child that isn't disposed to learn won't be responsive when engaged in the learning process. When learners decide what they want to learn based on their interests and expectations, they have intrinsic motivation to complete tasks (Amabile, 1996). However, when they learn only to get good grades without the expectation to improve themselves, they will develop extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation correspond to learning approach orientation and performance approach orientation, respectively. Compared to learners with performance approach orientation, learners with learning approach orientation are motivated to succeed for longer periods of time and are more successful at associating knowledge in cognitive processes (Potter, Christine & McCormick, 1994).
- **Parental background/ status:** Parents play the role of providing for their wards this implies that the financial state of every parent affects the state of their children such as school fees, health and nutrition are being financed by their guardians. That's to say for a child to enjoy certain educational experiences and partake in better educational practices, there must be a level of financial capability from parents who must be equal to the task of financing them. Thus a child whose basic educational requirements are not addressed

may likely not find himself in the school walls before necessarily performing well.

- **Parenting styles:** In our contemporary society of today, parenting styles differs in every home. The way parents handle their kids, in terms of parenting greatly affects the child's reading culture, and in turn translates into diverse performance results. A child who lives by a pessimistic mode of training, he or she may not see the need to pursue beyond average for academic success. Tyerman (2006) maintained that poor parenting relationship and lack of interest in child's welfare can pose a lot of psychological problems to the child. The author reported the effects of the two major types of parental control (e.g. authoritative, and permissive) on the development of independent behaviour on young children. Children of the authoritative type of control, have more achievement oriented behaviour unlike the pessimistic. Where a parent does not see the need of education especially towards a certain gender, based on certain beliefs or ignorance, wouldn't be disposed to pursue such for their child as they should. This leads learners to exert less effort to acquire high academic performance due to predetermined beliefs of their guardians.
- **Workload/ overcrowding:** Academic performance is influenced by the amount of workload a pupil has to deal with at specific period of time. When pupils are bombarded with so many instructions, the ability to put it all

together and figure it out would be minimal. The case of multiple assignments given at the end of each school should be subsidized. Take home assignments can be given in relation to the learning objectives to be achieved by the day and not piling up duties for children to do in order to keep them busy or to quickly cover up an area of instruction on time. Also home lessons help reinforce learning activities given but in a case of sequentially arranged series of back to back lesson time for young learners disorientates them and may lead to reduced academic performance if not properly structured .This observation was made during the 2020/2021 teaching practice experience. This isn't applicable to all children as some can work under pressure but learning becomes better when it is well structured.

- **Nutrition:** Nutrition also indirectly impacts school performance. Poor nutrition can leave students→ susceptible to illness or lead to headaches and stomachaches, resulting in school absences (Brown, Beardslee, & Prothrow-Stith, 2008). Access to nutrition that incorporates protein, carbohydrates, and glucose has been shown to improve students→ cognition, concentration, and energy levels (Bellisle, 2004; Sorhaindo & Feinstein, 2006) recent studies have demonstrated that nutrition affects students→ thinking skills, behavior, and health, all factors that impact academic performance. Research suggests that the diets high in trans and saturated fats can negatively impact learning and

memory, nutritional deficiencies early in life can affect the cognitive development of school-aged children, and access to nutrition improves students → cognition, concentration, and energy levels.

**Others Includes:**

- a. Peer influence:** positive peer pressure to excel academically may motivate learners but could also lead to excessive stress if the pursuit of high grades becomes overwhelming.
- b. Instructional materials:** Well-designed and appropriate materials can enhance understanding, engagement, and retention of subject matter. Visual aids, and relevant use of models or reliable helps to stimulate learners → interest in arriving at designed objectives. Classroom performance can suffer a negative turn due to the inadequacy of or use of outdated materials.
- c. Performance pressure/ expectations from parents:** Parental expectations creates a positive reinforcement to the young learner as they become motivated to strive for excellence and put in the work. Although when these expectations becomes too high or unrealistic, it creates pressure, causes tension which results in stress, anxiety and fear of failure. Pupils can be overwhelmed in a bid to achieve results that may not be feasible to them.

## **Stress and its Effect on the Academic Performance of Pupils Based on School Location**

In urban areas, students often encounter a fast-paced and competitive environment. The pressure to excel academically, coupled with high societal expectations, can lead to increased stress levels. The constant drive to outperform peers can create a sense of anxiety, impacting students' ability to concentrate, learn effectively, and perform well in exams. Furthermore, urban pupils may have to deal with long commutes, traffic congestion, and noise pollution, all of which contribute to increased stress ( Smith, 2018).

The urban lifestyle can also foster a culture of comparison and social pressure, further contributing to stress among students. The fear of not measuring up to their peers or societal standards can lead to a negative impact on mental well-being and academic achievements. The schools located rural areas pupils pass through a lot of stress compared to their counter parts in urban areas as they face different kinds of stressors which can lead to feelings of isolation and frustration.( Herzog & Pittman (1995) explain that schools in rural areas often face high levels of poverty and subsequently low levels of educational attainment.

Schools in rural communities are associated with factors like low infrastructural facilities such as standard buildings, poor provision of good health and toiletry facilities, inadequate qualified manpower, unhealthy and unsafe learning environment,

low availability of instructional materials, poor funding/support from the government, little or no sensitization for parents and teachers to get them involved in the schooling process, irregular in house training or refresher programs for teachers to up their game as the field of academics witness changes at certain junctures. Most of the times they struggle with commuting challenges as pupils may have to travel longer distances to reach the school, which can lead to transportation challenges, especially if the school is located in remote areas. This has an effect on their willingness to learn and overall general performance. Because due consideration would be given to the stress involved in accessing the school environs before participating in activities it presents. Additionally, lack of exposure to diverse learning opportunities can impact pupils' self-esteem and motivation to excel academically. Also economic challenges prevalent in rural communities, such as job scarcity and income disparities, can add to students' stress levels. Worries about future prospects and financial stability can hinder their focus and engagement in schoolwork (Johnson, L. & Brown, K., 2019).

Economic differences between urban and rural schools can magnify stress effects. Urban schools often have access to more advanced resources and extracurricular activities, creating an environment where students feel compelled to perform exceptionally well to secure future opportunities. On the other hand, rural schools may struggle with funding, leading to limited academic and extracurricular options, which

can impact students' overall sense of well-being and motivation.(Williams, R. et al., 2020).

Stress's impact on academic performance is influenced by various factors unique to each school location. Urban students may face intense competition and social pressures, while rural students might struggle with limited resources and economic uncertainties. By addressing stressors related to school location, we can create a more conducive learning environment that promotes both academic success and students' mental well-being.

### **Stress and its Effect on the Academic Performance of pupils based on School Type.**

Campbell-Phillips, Halder, & Hasib (2020),states that personal inadequacy, fear of failure, interpersonal difficulties with teachers, teacher-student relationships, and inadequate study facilities were concerns of academic stress. Research has shown that high levels of stress can lead to decreased cognitive function, reduced attention span, and impaired memory retention, ultimately affecting learning outcomes. According to Lee et al. (2020) the type of school environment can mediate stress effects. Pupils attending schools with strong support systems and effective stress management programs showed better academic performance even when facing stressful situations. Furthermore, in a study conducted by Johnson et al. (2018) involving students from both public and private schools, it was found that pupils in private schools reported

high levels of stress due to factors such as rigorous academic expectations and competition. Also, pupils in public schools faced stressors related to limited resources and overcrowded classrooms, (Smith & Brown, 2019), geographical isolation, socio economic challenges, limited access to mental health facilities, which can lead to absenteeism, difficulty concentrating, anxiety, reduced motivation, and a lower sense of self-efficacy, all of which can hinder academic achievement.

Analysis shows that the higher the level of stress, the lower the academic performance. Bradshaw, Waasdorp, & Johnson (2015) emphasized that a positive school climate, which includes a safe and supportive environment, is linked to lower stress and better academic outcomes. Lack of resources and negative school environments in government schools can create a cycle of stress and poor achievement. A study by Singh and Billingsley (1996) found that poor school facilities can lead to increased stress among students, as they may struggle to focus and engage in an uncondusive learning environment. Children may be exposed to unfavourable conditions as learning facilities are inadequate enough to meet the required standards of learning effectively. When it comes to resources, adequacy cannot be overlooked. In public primary schools, Classrooms and staff are not properly in correlation with the rising population of students. Materials such as text books to other Instructional aids and are scarcely able to cater for the needs of young learners.

The availability of fewer resources in many rural schools than those in metropolitan areas (Coe et al.,1989a, b) are often related to more limited curricula for these rural schools (DeYoung &Lawrence, 1995; Hall & Barker, 1995; Haller et al., 1992). Little or no resources, equals little or no provision of facilities that'll stimulate learning leading to better educational performance. Thus a non-supportive learning environment yields no productivity in the academic performance of pupils.

### **Summary of Literature Reviewed**

This chapter examines stress as a concept and how it affects the overall academic performance of pupils. It is evident that stress cut across all areas throughout learning experience which hinders school performance. Ranging from school location to school type as a focal point in this study.

Stress refers to the bodies→physiological and psychological response to demands that exceed one's ability to cope. Chronic stress has been linked to various health issues, such as cardiovascular problems and compromised immune function (Cohen et al., 2007). The saying health is wealth stands true. Sickness doesn't only happens in the body but also in the mind which flows on to the body. Stress has its hold on the achievement level of learners at different stages of learning which limits academic results. Factors such as nature of schooling environment, availability of resources, teaching methodology, social- economic status of parents to mention but a few are key

concerns that must be handled to enable young pupils produce more outstanding results.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter describes the methodology of this study under the following sub-heading: Research Design, Population of the Study, Sample and Sampling Techniques, Research Instruments, Validity of the Instrument, Reliability of Instrument, Method of Data Collection. Method of Data Analysis.

#### **Research Design**

This study adopted descriptive survey design. This research design was adopted because it is devoted to the gathering of information about prevailing conditions or situations for the purpose of description and interpretation. It was designed to identify the Effect of stress on the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Oredo Local Government Area, Edo State.

#### **Population of the Study**

The population of this study comprised of three hundred and fifty teachers (300) in public primary school teachers in Oredo Local Government Area, Edo State.

#### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

The sample of the study was 20% of the teachers selected from public primary school in Oredo local government Area, selected using stratified sampling methods which gave a sample size of 60.

## **Research Instrument**

The research instrument used for collection of data is questionnaire. The questionnaire was tagged the effect of stress on the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Oredo Local Government Area, Edo State. It was divided into two parts, Section A and B.

Section A sought the personal data information of the respondents. Section B was on the effect of stress on the academic performance of pupils in oredo local government in Edo State. The questionnaire was a four point scale. It was scored using four points.

Strongly Agree	(SA)	4
Agree	(A)	3
Strongly Disagree	(SD)	2
Disagree	(D)	1

## **Validity of the Instrument**

The validity of the instrument was determined by the researchers supervisor and other lectures in the Institute of Education, University of Benin. This was to ensure the appropriateness of the instrument in eliciting the needed information. Their advice, suggestions and corrections were used to produce the final draft of the instrument that was finally administered.

### **Reliability of the Instrument**

The reliability of the instrument was carried out using test-retest method within an interval of three weeks. Twenty (20) copies of the questionnaire were administered to the pre-school teachers who were not part of the sample schools used for the study. After two weeks, the researcher went back and administered the same instrument to the same teachers to check if the two results correlated. Therefore a Pearson Product Moment Coefficient (Pearson  $r$ ) was used to determine their level of reliability. A correlation coefficient of 0.70 was obtained which showed that the instrument was reliable

### **Method of Data Collection**

The researcher administered the questionnaire with research assistant, with the permission of the school head of the selected schools. A total of 60 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents and retrieve immediately.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

The questionnaire were analyzed using simple percentage method of analysis to represent the data.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter is concerned with the analysis and interpretation of data that was collected from the respondents during the research. The data obtained from the questionnaire was scored and analyzed in simple percentage analysis method by the researcher. This was done in order to provide answers to the research questions on the effect of stress on the academic performance of pupils in public primary school in Oredo local Government area.

**Table 1: Analysis of Respondents by Gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	8	13.3%
Female	52	86.7%
Total	60	100%

In Table 1 above, respondents representing a percentage of 13.3% are males while respondents representing a percentage of 86.7% are females. This shows that the number of male respondents exceeds that of the female respondents. This is a clear indication that there's a higher number of female teachers compared to males who teaches in public primary school in Oredo local government Area.

**Table 2: Analysis of Respondents by Years of Experience**

<b>Years of experience</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Below ten years	15	25%
Ten - twenty years	42	70%
Twenty years and above	3	5%
Total	60	100%

In Table 2 above, respondents representing 25% of the entire population have a teaching experience of below ten years while respondents representing 70% and 5% of the entire population have a teaching experience of above ten to twenty years and twenty years above respectively.

### **Analysis of Data Based on Items in the Questionnaire**

**Research Question1:** How does stress affect academic performance of pupils in public primary school?

**Table 3: Percentage distribution of the effects of stress on the academic performance of pupils in public primary school.**

S/N	ITEMS	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	REMARK
1	Stress affects the academic performance of pupils	35	58.3%	21	35%	3	5%	1	1.7%	Agree
2	Stress causes anxiety which hinders pupils participation in class activities and overall performance	29	48.3%	30	50%	1	1.7%	0	0%	Agree
3	Lack of financial support from parents can lead to academic stress and poor performance	28	46.7%	29	48.3%	0	0%	3	5%	Agree
4	Stress motivates learners to learn and achieve better academic results	4	6.7%	2	3.3%	21	35%	33	55%	Disagree
5	Parents and guardians take specific measures to help manage stress in early childhood years	17	28.3%	28	46.7%	15	25%	0	0%	Agree
6	Pupils who are stressed finds it more difficult to understand and concentrate	38	63.3%	18	30%	1	1.7%	3	5%	Agree

**Decision Rule :** If the positive (SA/A) percentage is higher than the negative(D/SD) percentage, then the decision is agree but if the positive percentage is less than the negative, percentage, the decision is disagree.

In Table 3, item 1 clearly reveals that 31 respondents representing 51.7% strongly agreed that stress affects the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools, 21 respondents representing 35% agreed, 6 respondents representing 10% disagreed and 2 respondents representing 3.5% strongly disagreed making a total of 56(93.3%) respondents to agree and 4(6.7%) to disagree. Item 2 reveals that 29 respondents representing 48.3% strongly agreed that stress causes anxiety and can affect the overall Performance of Pupils, while 30 respondents representing 50% agreed, 1 respondent representing 1.7% disagreed and 0 respondent representing 0% strongly disagreed. This means that a total number of 59(98.3%) respondents agreed and 1(1.7%) disagreed. From Item 3, it could be deduced that 28 respondents representing 46.7% strongly agreed that lack of financial support from parents can lead to academic stress and poor performance, 29 respondents representing 48.3% agreed, 0 respondent representing 0% disagreed and 3 respondents representing 5% strongly disagreed.

In total, 57(95%) respondents agreed, and 3(5%) disagreed. Item 4 reveals that 4 respondents representing 6.7% strongly agreed that stress motivates learners to learn. 2 respondents representing 3.3% agreed, 21 respondents representing 35% disagreed and 33 respondents representing 55% strongly disagreed. In summary, 6(10%) respondents agreed and 53(90%) disagreed.

Item 5 shows that 17 respondents representing 28.3% , strongly agreed that parents and guardians takes specific measures to manage stress in early childhood years.28 respondents representing 46.7% agreed, 15 respondents representing 25% disagreed and 3 respondents representing 5% strongly disagreed. All together, 45(75%) respondents agreed, while 15(25%) disagreed. Item 6 reveals that 38 respondents representing 63.3%, strongly agreed that pupils who are stressed finds it more difficult to understand and concentrate. 18 respondents representing 30%, 1 respondent representing 1.7% disagreed, and 3 respondents representing 5% strongly disagreed. 56(93.3%) respondents agreed, and 4(6.7%) respondents disagreed.

It can be concluded from the table above that the majority of the respondents agreed that Stress affects the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent does stress affect academic performance of pupils in public primary school based on school location/ type?

**Table 4: Percentage distribution on the effects of stress of Pupils in public primary schools based on location.**

S/N	ITEMS	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	REMARK
1	The condition of learning facilities can cause stress in Pupil's educational experience	17	28.3%	40	66.7%	3	5%	0	0%	Agree
2	Pupils in rural areas have limited access to proper school facilities	31	51.7%	21	35%	6	10%	2	3.3%	Agree
3	Pupils in public schools are exposed to high levels of stress	8	13.3%	25	41.7%	22	36.7%	5	8.3%	Agree

From the table, it could be deduced that a total of 17 respondents representing 28.3% in regards to item 1 strongly agreed that the condition of learning facilities can cause stress in Pupil's educational experience. 40 respondents representing 66.7% agreed, 3 respondents representing 5% disagreed, and 0 respondent representing 0% strongly disagreed. A total of 57(95%) respondents to agree and 3(5%) respondents to disagree. Also 31 respondents representing 51.7% strongly agreed that pupils in rural areas have limited access to proper school facilities, while 21 respondents constituting 35% agreed, 6 respondents constituting 10% disagreed and 2 respondents constituting 3.3% strongly disagreed. A total of 52(86.7%) respondents agreed and 8(13.3%) respondents to disagree.

Item 3 shows that 8 respondents (13.3%), strongly agreed that pupils in public primary schools face high levels of stress, 25 respondents (41.7%) agreed, 22 respondents (36.7%) disagreed, 5 respondents (8.3%) strongly disagreed. A total of 33(55%) respondents agreed, and 27(45%) respondents disagreed

**Research Question 3:** To what extent does stress affect academic performance of pupils in public primary school based on teacher's experience?

**Table 5: Effect of stress on the academic performance of pupils in public primary school based on teacher's experience**

S/N	ITEMS	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	REMARK
1	School administrators and teachers work hand in hand to school related stress	24	40%	25	41.7%	8	13.3%	3	5%	Agree
2	Teacher's method of teaching and experience can cause a decrease in pupils academic performance	22	36.7%	17	28.7%	11	18.3%	10	16.7%	Agree
3	Teachers are well informed on possible stressor (s) that can hinder the academic performance of young learners	6	10%	21	35%	30	50%	3	5%	Disagree
4	Teacher's expertise aids learner's ability to overcome school related stress which enhances academic performance	17	28.3%	39	65%	3	5%	1	1.7%	Agree

The table above indicates that 24 respondents (40%) strongly agreed that school administrators and teachers work hand in hand to curb school related stress while

25(41.7%) agreed. 8(13.3%) respondents disagreed, 3(5%) respondents strongly disagreed. That is a total of 49 (81.7%) respondents agreed while 11(18.3%) respondents disagreed.

22(36.7%) respondents strongly agreed that teacher's method of teaching and experience can cause a decrease in pupils academic performance. 17(28.7%) respondents agreed, 11(18.3%) strongly disagreed while 10(16.7%) disagreed. Thus 39(65.4%) respondents agreed while 19(35%) respondents disagreed.

6(10%) respondents strongly agreed that teachers are well informed on possible stressor (s) that can hinder the academic performance of young learners, 21(35%) agreed 30(50%) strongly disagreed, and 3(5%) disagreed. A total of 27(45%) respondents agreed and 33(55%) respondents disagreed. Furthermore, 17(28.3%) respondents strongly agreed that Teacher's expertise aids learner's ability to overcome school related stress which enhances academic performance 39(65%) respondents agreed, while 3(5%) respondents disagreed and 1(1.7%) respondents strongly disagreed. Making it a total of 56( 93.3) respondents agreed and 1(1.7) disagreed.

### **Discussion of Findings**

This study examined the effects of stress on the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Oredo local government Area, Benin City Edo state. The first research question examined the effects of stress on the academic performance of pupils in public primary school. In Table 1, It is revealed that stress grossly affects

pupils performance which is in consonance to (Rogers & Yassin, 2003). Who opined that students face, social, emotional and physical and family problems which may affect their learning ability and academic performance.

Analysis of research question two revealed that respondents agreed to a high extent pupils in public primary schools are exposed to high level of stress. This is in accordance to a study by Singh and Billingsley (1996) found that poor school facilities can lead to increased stress among students, as they may struggle to focus and engage in an non-conducive learning environment. (Smith & Brown, 2019), geographical isolation, socio economic challenges, limited access to mental health facilities, inadequate study facilities, which can lead to absenteeism, difficulty concentrating, anxiety, reduced motivation, and a lower sense of self-efficacy, all of which can hinder academic achievement.

From the findings of research question three, it is deduced that teacher's experience is a factor that affects the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools. It plays a great role is managing activities that can Increase the stress levels of pupils which in turn affects their academic performance. This is in line with (Ndirangu, 2007) who posited that the objectives which the teacher plans to achieve, availability of teaching and learning resources, and the ability and willingness of the teacher to improvise if convectional teaching aids are not available, evaluation and follow-up

activities, adequate use of teaching methodology alongside knowledge Individual learner differences can make or mar pupils performance.

The result of the analysis carried out in this study largely shows that stress is a factor that affects the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools. Thus it is important that attention should be given to every child in order to identify stressor(s) and adopt several coping strategies for a successful academic life especially at this basic level.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

The study investigated the Effects of Stress on the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Oredo Local Government, Edo State. The study reviewed variations among respondents, to carry out the study, three research questions were raised. The study was descriptive survey design. The population of the study consists of three hundred teachers in public primary schools in Oredo local Government Area, Edo state. The sample of this study was to teachers that were selected using stratified sampling procedure. The Instrument used to collect data was questionnaire. The Instrument had two sections. Section A and B. Section A consists of the demographic data while section B contained optioned items. The reliability of the Instrument, was carried out using test - retest method. Thereafter, the Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient (Pearson  $r$ ) was used to determine the level of reliability .A correlation coefficient of 0.70 was obtained which showed that the Instrument was reliable.

Based on the analysis of data, the following findings were made:

- Stress to a large extent affects the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools.

- School location and type affects the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools which have a high level of stressor (s) for pupils in rural areas.
- Teacher's expertise/experience plays a vital role in the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools.

## **Conclusion**

Stress affects the overall academic performance of pupils. It is evident that stress cut across all areas throughout learning experience which hinders school performance. Ranging from school location to school type alongside (but not limited to) teacher's experience.

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that Stress has its hold on the achievement level of learners at different stages of learning which limits academic results. Thus teachers, parents and school administrators should adopt the needed coping strategies in other to aid and ascertain a better academic results for young learners.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- 1) Training and re- training of teachers, especially on how to properly use various teaching techniques and methodology in securing and sustaining learners interests for better academic performance.

- 2) Learners situated in the rural areas should be encouraged to learn through provision of good working facilities that aids the learning process
- 3) School administrators should ensure that learning is procedural and carried out sequentially at all levels. This implies that materials for an upper class shouldn't be used for a lower in a bid to build them better. All workload should match up with their standards.
- 4) Parents should be enlightened or undergo courses on childhood management to help them understand how children can better be assisted during times of stress, able to identify stressors and utilize a couple of coping strategies in the home environment.
- 5) Parents and teachers should work hand in hand in establishing a relationship that fosters academic growth.
- 6) Teachers should be well acquainted with individuals differences. A one - size fit method for learning should not be adopted.

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## APPENDIX

Institute of Education,  
University of Benin.  
Benin City.  
Sept 1st, 2023.

Dear Respondent,

### REQUEST TO COMPLETE A QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is Yomade, Favour Ebunoluwa a final year student of Early Childhood Education of the above named institution. I am conducting a research on the topic "THE EFFECT OF STRESS ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL IN OREDO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, EDO STATE." The research is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Education (B.E.d) Degree in Early Childhood Education.

I will appreciate your cooperation in getting the questionnaire completed in order to facilitate the research. I assure you all the information supplied are strictly for academic purposes and would be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

**Yomade, Favour Ebunoluwa,  
Researcher.**

**SECTION A: Demographic Data**

**Instruction:** Please complete the information requested from you in the section by ticking (√) the appropriate column below

- a. **Gender:** Male ( ) Female ( )
- b, **Year of Job Experience:** Below 10years ( ) 10-20 years( ) 20 years above( )

**SECTION B:**

SA - Strongly Agree, A – Agree, SD - Strongly Disagree, D - Disagree

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1	Stress affects the academic performance of pupils				
2	Stress causes anxiety which hinders pupils participation in class activities and overall performance				
3	Lack of financial support from parents can lead to academic stress and poor performance				
4	Stress motivates learners to learn and achieve better academic results				
5	Parents and guardians take specific measures to help manage stress in early childhood years				
6	Pupils who are stressed finds it more difficult to understand and concentrate				
7	The condition of learning facilities can cause stress in Pupil's educational experience				
8	Pupils in rural areas have limited access to proper school facilities				
9	Pupils in public schools are exposed to high levels of stress				
10	School administrators and teachers work hand in hand to school related stress				
11	Teacher's method of teaching and experience can cause a decrease in pupils academic performance				
12	Teachers are well informed on possible stressor (s) that can hinder the academic performance of young learners				
13	Teacher's expertise aids learner's ability to overcome school related stress which enhances academic performance				