



## Occupational Stress, Job Satisfaction, and Administrative Effectiveness Among School Principals

Israel Olusegun Adedeji

Department of Educational Foundations, School of Education, Federal College of Education (Technical) Gusau, Zamfara State, Nigeria

ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6440-7991>

Corresponding Author Email: official [segdeji2014@gmail.com](mailto:segdeji2014@gmail.com)

### Article Info.

#### Article history:

Receive 5 December 2025  
Revised 30 December 2025  
Accepted 13 February 2026  
Published 25 February 2026

#### Keywords:

occupational stress; job satisfaction; administrative effectiveness; school administrators; secondary schools

#### How to cite:

Israel Olusegun Adedeji (2026). Occupational Stress, Job Satisfaction and Administrative Effectiveness Among School Principals. Aca. Intl. J. Soc. Sci. H. 04 (01) 01-15.

<https://doi.org/10.59675/S411>

#### Copyright:

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0)

### Abstract:

**Background:** Occupational stress is widely perceived as a key negative emotional reaction that affects the health and well-being of individuals and organizations.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the study was to find out the effect of occupational stress on job satisfaction and administrative efficiency of secondary school principals.

**Methods:** The study adopted a correlational survey design. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 108 school administrators of 36 secondary schools in Gusau Metropolis, Zamfara State, Nigeria. The data collected was analysed through the Pearson correlation and regression analysis.

**Findings:** The study's findings revealed that occupational stress has a negative and significant relationship with job satisfaction ( $r = -.52$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and administrative effectiveness ( $r = -.41$ ,  $p < .001$ ); while administrative effectiveness and job satisfaction are positively and significantly related ( $r = .56$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

**Implication:** The results imply that occupational stress can significantly predict job satisfaction and administrative effectiveness.

**Conclusion:** The study concluded that poorly managed stress can hinder leadership performance, as stress can threaten people's well-being and the job satisfaction of school leaders.

**Recommendations:** The paper recommended that education authorities should develop stress coping strategies to reduce its negative impact on school administrators.

# الإجهاد المهني والرضا الوظيفي والفاعلية الإدارية لدى مديري المدارس

Israel Olusegun Adedeji

قسم الأسس التربوية، كلية التربية، الكلية الفيدرالية للتربية التقنية في غوساو، ولاية زامفارا، نيجيريا.

[officialsegdeji2014@gmail.com](mailto:officialsegdeji2014@gmail.com)

## الخلاصة

**الخلفية:** يُنظر إلى الإجهاد المهني على نطاق واسع بوصفه أحد أبرز الاستجابات الانفعالية السلبية التي تؤثر في صحة الأفراد ورفاههم، فضلاً عن تأثيره في أداء المؤسسات وفعاليتها. **الهدف:** هدفت الدراسة إلى التعرف على أثر الإجهاد المهني في الرضا الوظيفي والكفاءة الإدارية لدى مديري المدارس الثانوية.

**المنهجية:** اعتمدت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي الارتباطي. وتم جمع البيانات الأولية باستخدام استبانة منظمة من 108 إداريين يمثلون 36 مدرسة ثانوية في مدينة غوساو بولاية زامفارا في نيجيريا. وقد جرى تحليل البيانات باستخدام معامل ارتباط بيرسون وتحليل الانحدار. **النتائج:** أظهرت نتائج الدراسة وجود علاقة سلبية ذات دلالة إحصائية بين الإجهاد المهني والرضا الوظيفي ( $r=-.52, p<.001$ )، وكذلك بين الإجهاد المهني والفاعلية الإدارية ( $r=-.41, p<.001$ ) في المقابل، وُجدت علاقة إيجابية ذات دلالة إحصائية بين الفاعلية الإدارية والرضا الوظيفي ( $r=.56, p<.001$ ).

**الدلالات التطبيقية:** تشير النتائج إلى أن الإجهاد المهني يُعد متغيراً تنبؤياً مهماً يمكن أن يؤثر بصورة جوهرية في الرضا الوظيفي والفاعلية الإدارية. **الاستنتاج:** خلصت الدراسة إلى أن سوء إدارة الإجهاد قد يعيق الأداء القيادي، إذ يمكن أن يشكل تهديداً لرفاه الأفراد وللرضا الوظيفي لدى القيادات المدرسية. **التوصيات:** أوصت الدراسة بضرورة قيام الجهات التربوية المختصة بوضع استراتيجيات فعّالة للتعامل مع الإجهاد المهني، بما يسهم في الحد من آثاره السلبية على الإداريين في المدارس.

## Introduction

In contemporary education systems, the expectations and price of school leadership are becoming increasingly demanding and painstaking. Principals in secondary schools are facing increasing administrative responsibilities, pressure for accountability of the school, staffing, and public scrutiny in most education systems. Education reform worldwide places more expectations on school leaders while giving them less support from institutions. Reports from international organisations on education point out that the school leaders are overloaded with work, facing role conflict and under continuous psychological strain to the same extent as senior executives in high-stress and demanding sectors (OECD, 2020; UNESCO, 2023). In this context of rising demand and pressures, the occupational stress of secondary school principals has become a perennial issue with potential effects on the effectiveness of leadership and school performance. School principals are becoming increasingly recognised, according to the emerging evidence, as multipliers and stabilisers of instructional quality and organisational stability in schools. However, there is a significant gap in the policy and research discourse relating to the well-being and job satisfaction of principals. As a result, their professional stress has not been adequately examined.

For school principals, it is almost like they are doing two full-time jobs. Occupational stress means the physiological, behavioural and psychological impact when job demands do not meet workers'

capabilities, behavioural and resource (Cooper, Dewe & O' Driscoll, 2001). Job satisfaction is a positive emotional state resulting from one's appraisal of his job or job experience (Locke, 1969). According to Spector (2020), job satisfaction refers to the individual's general orientation towards his or her work role or experience. Furthermore, it is a summary of valences determined by the balance a person has achieved between the various extrinsic and intrinsic facets of the job. Intrinsic facets betoken features like autonomy and achievement; extrinsic facets betoken conditions like pay, support and a facility's physical milieu. Administrative effectiveness is the degree to which the individual is successful at planning, coordinating, supervising and evaluating the activities of the school organisation and its personnel in order to achieve the school goals and objectives (Hoy & Miskel, 2018).

The findings from previous researches have been useful but remain fragmented when showing relationships between stress, satisfaction and leadership outcomes. According to Klassen and Chiu (2018), there is a significant prediction of reduced job satisfaction of school leaders from administrative workload and emotional exhaustion. Principal leadership practices and school climate were negatively affected by the prolonged stress of the principals, according to Harmsen et al. (2018), Wang, Hall and Rahimi (2019) conducted a cross-national study which found that job satisfaction mediated the relationship between leadership stress and organisational commitment. Empirically, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2020) found that high stress experienced by principals predicted burnout and reduced engagement in leadership activities. Adeyemi (2021) and Ofojebe and Okeke (2022) attributed administrative overload with poor administrative efficacy in Sub-Saharan African. However, the psychological mechanism was examined in the studies along with the inclusion of measures of job satisfaction in the causal study. In a recent study, Collie (2023) points to the need to integrate variables of well-being in educational leadership models and tested the association between leaders' traits, quality of leadership and well-being among educational leaders in Australia. However, most of the earlier studies were either concerned with occupational stress or job satisfaction but not both. Furthermore, the focus was mainly on teachers rather than principals.

The integrated nature of the study essentially separates it from other studies that use job satisfaction as simply a predictor of occupational stress or organisational outcome. The study regards job satisfaction as a process through which occupational stress continually exerts an influence administrative effectiveness. This construct is important for explaining leadership behaviour and performance within a challenging work environment. Theoretically, this study contributes significantly to the literature on leadership and stress by employing a multi-dimensional system that seeks to connect occupational stress, job satisfaction and administrative effectiveness. Moreover, the inquiry demonstrates a remarkable empirical contribution in that it offers on the ground or context-based evidence of the actual administrative challenges that beset secondary school principalship; a largely under researched area in leadership studies. In practical terms, the research offers beneficial advice to social policymakers, educational administrators, and training institutions. This relates to the requirement of job satisfaction performance enhancement. Also, it recommends undertaking proper management of the occupational stress of in-service secondary school principals. This will ensure proper well-being and sustain effective administration.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to examine the relationships among occupational stress, job satisfaction and administrative effectiveness of school principals. The goal of this study is to assess the association between principals' job stress and administrative effectiveness and between job stress and job satisfaction, and between job satisfaction and administrative effectiveness. This study ultimately

evaluates if the relationship between occupational stress and administrative effectiveness among school principals is mediated by job satisfaction.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the level of occupational stress among school principals?
2. What is the level of job satisfaction among school principals?
3. What is the level of administrative effectiveness among school principals?
4. What is the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction among school principals?
5. What is the relationship between occupational stress and administrative effectiveness among school principals?
6. What is the relationship between job satisfaction and administrative effectiveness among school principals?
7. To what extent does job satisfaction mediate the relationship between occupational stress and administrative effectiveness among school principals?

### **Hypotheses**

- H01: Occupational stress has no significant relationship with job satisfaction among school principals.  
H02: Occupational stress has no significant relationship with administrative effectiveness among school principals.  
H03: Job satisfaction has no significant relationship with administrative effectiveness among school principals.  
H04: Job satisfaction does not significantly mediate the relationship between occupational stress and administrative effectiveness among school principals.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study adopted two contrasting theories. The two theories introduced in this study are Job Demands-Resources Theory (JD-R) and Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping proposed by Lazarus and Folkman.

#### **Job Demands–Resources Theory.**

The JD-R Model Explains Influence of Working Conditions on Employees' Well-being and Performance of Individuals and Organization The theory suggests that each profession has distinct combinations of job demands and resources in every occupation. Job demands refer to the physical, psychological, social, or organisational attributes of a job which require uninterrupted effort and hence associated with physiological or psychological costs. Common examples are workload, time pressure, role conflict as well as emotional demands and administrative burden. According to Bakker and Demerouti (2017), job resources are those aspects of the job that help individuals to attain their work goals, reduce the job demands and stimulate personal growth and development. For example, autonomy, supervisory support, role clarity and opportunities for development and training.

The JD–R model states that excessive job demands use up the employee's mental and emotional resources, which lead to strain and reduced motivation and work outcomes. On the other hand, job resources are motivational in nature because they promote work engagement and job satisfaction, while playing a key role in ongoing performance. In contexts of school leadership, principals are under high

job demands. Principals under accountability pressure supervise staff and instructional. As well, they deal with communities and educational policies. When these demands exceed available resources, there is likely to be an increase in occupational stress that jeopardises job satisfaction and administrative effectiveness. Research on school leadership has highlighted that high demands and low resources predict burnout, satisfaction and leadership functioning (Marsh et al., 2023). This study leverages the JD-R theory to show how occupational stress can emerge from an imbalance of leadership demands and available organisational resources.

### **Stress and Coping have a Transactional Theory**

According to the Transactional Theory of Stress, stress is not an effect – it is a process which is dynamic in nature, which occurs during the interaction between the person and the environment. The theory highlights cognitive appraisal and coping processes, instead of seeing stress as directly caused by external demands. Stress occurs when people consider the demands placed upon them by their environment to be greater than their personal and organisational capabilities (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The first step in appraisal is assessing whether the event is perceived as dangerous or challenging whereas the second step refers to what can be controlled. Under this framework, the occupational stress experienced by school administrators is dependent on job demands and their interpretation and handling of those demands. Two coordinators may have the same work load but will experience a different levels of stress depending on perceived locus of control, institutional support, professional competency, and past experience. The coping response, whether problem- or emotion-focused, will shape follow-up attitudes and behaviours, like job satisfaction and job performance. When resources for coping are inadequate, and the stress continues for a long time, it hampers motivation, reduces satisfaction, and makes the person ineffective in adhering to administrative demands.

When implemented into school leadership, the transactional theory can assist in understanding why over a longer time period, stress on policy, staff, and community effectiveness reduces principals' sense of achievement. Recent leadership research supports this pathway, whereby attitudinal and motivational mechanisms translate perceived stress into leadership outcomes (Collie et al., 2022). In the current study, the JD-R model experts a psychological process through which occupational stress brings about diminished job satisfaction and reduced administrative effectiveness of school leaders. The study uses the Transactional theory of stress and coping.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

A correlational survey research design was adopted to investigate the relationships among occupational stress, job satisfaction and administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals and vice principals in Gusau Metropolis, Zamfara State. An appropriate design was chosen for the study that examined the existing relationships among the variables without manipulation. Data was collated at a single point in time using the tools of correlation and regression to examine the intensity and direction of relationships and the predictive role of occupational stress and job satisfaction.

### **Participants**

The focus group of the investigation was the school administrators within the thirty-six Secondary Schools in Gusau Metropolis, Zamfara State, Nigeria. Gusau. The participants consisted of all principals (one principal per school, n=36). Every school has two vice principals. This includes the Vice Principal (Academics) and Vice Principal (Administration). As a result, the target population

amounted to 108 respondents (36 principals and 72 vice principals). The size of the studied population was too large, but covering all schools with the studied setting was important. As a result, the census approach was used. Consequently, all the 108 eligible administrators were contacted to participate in the survey.

### **Instrumentation**

A structured self-administered questionnaire titled The Occupational Stress, Job Satisfaction and Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (OSJAEQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was further sub divided into three parts. Section A consists of 12 items related to occupational stress. Occupational stress items included workload pressure, time constraint, role conflict, administrative burden and work-related strain. Section B will consist of 10 questions related to job satisfaction. The elements of job satisfaction included the condition of work, supervision, recognition, control and opportunity. Section C: Contains 14 items regarding administrative effectiveness. The response options for items in each section were Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1) on a four point Likert scale. Negative statements were reverse scored. The questionnaire was subjected to face and content validity. It was evaluated by experts in education administration and measurement and evaluation. The questionnaire was checked for ambiguity, relevance, and its representation of the construct. The feedback and recommendations from the experts led to alterations in the products after the removal of repetitions. In order to critically evaluate the item clarity and internal consistency of the instrument, a pilot study was performed. The study was carried out among administrators in secondary schools outside Gusau Metropolis so as to reduce the risk of sensitisation on the main study sample. To assess internal consistency reliability, Cronbach's alpha was computed (Yu, 2013). The reliability coefficients show satisfactory internal consistency on the subscale level of occupational stress ( $\alpha = 0.86$ ), job satisfaction ( $\alpha = 0.83$ ) and administrative effectiveness ( $\alpha = 0.88$ ).

### **Data Analysis**

Data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. To answer the research questions, mean and standard deviations were used as descriptive statistics. In the same manner, Correlation and regression analysis in statistics were utilised to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

### **Ethical considerations**

Survey research is conducted by using standard ethics code. The researcher took administrative permission from the concerned authorities before data collection. Prior to beginning the data collection exercise, the researcher visited each of the selected schools to explain the study to the principal and vice principals. The researcher managed the distribution and collection of questionnaires. Any questions raised during a visit by the respondents were also answered. In addition, the selected schools were paid follow-up visits to enhance the level of completion and return of questionnaire. Participation in this research was voluntary and informed consent was taken. Moreover, throughout the research, the right to secrecy and anonymity were respected. The participants were informed that participation is optional.

## Results

### Analyses of Research Questions 1-3

**Table 1: Summary of Descriptive Statistics for RQ1–RQ3 (n = 69)**

Research Variable	No. of Items	Cluster Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	Std. Dev.	Level
Occupational Stress	20	3.07	0.72	High
Job Satisfaction	15	2.54	0.81	Moderate
Administrative Effectiveness	20	3.02	0.71	High

#### **Research Question 1: What is the level of occupational stress among secondary school principals and vice principals in Gusau metropolis?**

According to Table 1, the occupational stress had a cluster mean of 3.07 which is below the criterion mean of 2.50. This suggests that secondary school administrators experience high occupational stress. According to the findings, the pressure the principals and vice principals of secondary schools are facing is coming from the workload as well as the administrative requirements, poor facilities as well as people management responsibilities.

#### **Research Question 2: What is the level of job satisfaction of secondary school principals and vice principals?**

As per table 1 above, the result for job satisfaction has a cluster mean of 2.54. Thus, it is slightly above the criterion meaning. It shows that the respondents are moderately satisfied with their job and that the administrators are motivated by the inherent factors of their work. This comprises the duties as leader and their success as professional. Nonetheless, they are dissatisfied with the external job factors. This involves salary, working conditions and educational support which lessen their overall satisfaction.

#### **Research Question 3: What is the level of administrative effectiveness among secondary school principals and vice principals in Gusau metropolis?**

The cluster mean of administrative effectiveness was 3.02 indicating that the administrators were highly effective. So, it means that even if they were faced with much occupational stress and not so much high job satisfaction, they still feel effective in planning, supervision, making decisions, and overall administration of the school. The findings show that leaders in this context experience high stress, moderate satisfaction, and high administrative effectiveness, which shows school administrators' strong professional commitment despite adverse working conditions.

#### **Analysis of Research Questions 4–7**

Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to determine the direction and strength of relationships among the variables.

**Analysis of Research Questions 4–7:**

**Table 2: Relationships and Predictive Effects (N = 108)**

Research Question	Analysis	Model / Relationship	Statistic	p-value	Decision ( $\alpha = .05$ )	Interpretation
RQ4	Pearson correlation	OS ↔ JS	$r = -0.52$	$< .001$	Significant	Higher occupational stress is associated with lower job satisfaction.
RQ5	Pearson correlation	OS ↔ AE	$r = -0.41$	$< .001$	Significant	Higher occupational stress is associated with lower administrative effectiveness.
RQ6	Pearson correlation	JS ↔ AE	$r = 0.56$	$< .001$	Significant	Higher job satisfaction is associated with higher administrative effectiveness.
RQ7a	Regression	Model 1: AE = $b_0 + b_1(OS)$	$\beta(OS) = -0.41, R^2 = 0.17, F(1,106) = 21.40$	$< .001$	Significant	Occupational stress significantly predicts administrative effectiveness.
RQ7b	Regression	Model 2: JS = $b_0 + b_1(OS)$	$\beta(OS) = -0.52, R^2 = 0.27, F(1,106) = 39.20$	$< .001$	Significant	Occupational stress significantly predicts job satisfaction.
RQ7c	Multiple regression	Model 3: AE = $b_0 + b_1(OS) + b_2(JS)$	$\beta(OS) = -0.15 (p = .080); \beta(JS) = 0.49 (p < .001), R^2 = 0.34, F(2,105) = 26.50$	$< .001$	Mediation supported	Job satisfaction predicts effectiveness, and it accounts for much of the stress–effectiveness link.
RQ7 (Indirect)	Mediation (bootstrap)	Indirect effect $a*b$	$a*b = -0.26, 95\% CI [-0.38, -0.14]$	$< .001$	Significant	The indirect effect is supported because the confidence interval excludes zero.

Key: OS = Occupational Stress, JS = Job Satisfaction, AE = Administrative Effectiveness

Research Question 4 investigated into relationship between occupational stress (OS) and job satisfaction of school administrators. A Pearson correlation revealed a moderate negative relationship between OS and job satisfaction ( $r = -0.52, p < .001$ ) indicating that in our sample, greater levels of reported occupational stress related to lower levels of job satisfaction. The fifth research question aimed to check the link between OS and administrative effectiveness. The correlation result shows a statistically significant negative relationship between OS and administrative effectiveness ( $r = -0.41, p < .001$ ). Higher levels of stress were associated with lower levels of successful execution of administrative tasks. The link between job satisfaction and administrative effectiveness was studied in research question 6. The results indicated that there is moderate positive correlation between job satisfaction and administrative effectiveness ( $r = 0.56, p < .001$ ). In simpler terms, those with regard to administrators’ “coefficients of job satisfaction” reported higher ratios of administrative effectiveness. The mediation role of job satisfaction was examined under research question 7, which tried to establish

a link between occupational stress and administrative effectiveness. Model 1 showed that OS was a significant predictor of administrative effectiveness ( $\beta = -0.41$ ,  $R^2 = 0.17$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The results of Model 2 shown below indicate that OS significantly predicted job satisfaction ( $\beta = -0.52$ ,  $R^2 = 0.27$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

In Model 2, the variables of occupational stress and job satisfaction were simultaneously entered. Subsequent to this, job satisfaction was a significant predictor of the admin effectiveness variable ( $\beta = 0.49$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Moreover, there was a decrease in the effect of the occupational stress variable, and it was not a significant predictor ( $\beta = -0.15$ ,  $p = .080$ ). Moreover, the bootstrapped estimate ( $a*b = -0.26$ ) and CI (95%) value which does not include 0 ( $-0.38, -0.14$ ) suggested its indirect effect. So, it can be concluded that job satisfaction mediates.

## Hypotheses Testing

The hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression analysis at the 0.05 level of significance.

**Table 3: Summary of Hypotheses Testing Results (n = 108)**

Hypothesis	Variables	Test Statistic	Value	p-value	Decision
H01	Occupational Stress → Job Satisfaction	Pearson r	-0.56	0.001	Rejected
H02	Occupational stress → Administrative Effectiveness	Pearson r	-0.48	0.003	Rejected
H03	Job Satisfaction → Administrative Effectiveness	Pearson r	0.62	0.000	Rejected
H04	Occupational Stress & Job Satisfaction → Administrative Effectiveness	Regression ( $R^2$ )	0.51	0.000	Rejected
H05	Job Satisfaction as mediator between Occupational Stress and Administrative Effectiveness	Indirect effect	Significant	<0.05	Rejected

A significance test was performed to assess the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction. Based on the findings, a null hypothesis was tested that states there is no relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction of secondary school principals and vice principals and vice versa. The findings reveal that the coefficient of correlation for occupational stress and job satisfaction is -.56 at .01 level of significance. Thus, the findings suggest that occupational stress and job satisfaction have a fair negative relation with one another. As the correlation is significant the null hypothesis can be rejected. The negative relationship implies that occupational stress is negatively related to job satisfaction.

Hypothesis two implies that there is no significant relationship between occupational stress and administrative effectiveness among the principal and vice principal of the secondary school and vice

versa. As revealed by the outcome, a notable inverse connection exists between occupational stress and administrative efficiency, as indicated by a value of  $r = -0.48$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . As the stress rises, the capacity of school administrators to discharge their functions drops. Consequently, the aforementioned null hypothesis will be rejected, indicating that occupational stress significantly affects the efficiency of administrative performance.

The third hypothesis (H03) states that job satisfaction does not have a significant relationship with administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals and vice versa. The result indicates that there is high significant positive association between job satisfaction and administrative effectiveness ( $r = 0.62$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This means that the administrators, who are more satisfied with their jobs, are better at the performance of their jobs. Since there is a positive correlation, job satisfaction is a strong predictor of administrative effectiveness thus the above null hypothesis stands rejected.

Hypothesis four (H04) states that occupational stress and job satisfaction do not jointly predict the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals and vice-principals and vice versa. Based on the findings of the multiple regression analysis, it is shown that occupational stress and job satisfaction simultaneously predict administrative effectiveness ( $R^2 = 0.51$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). 51% of administrative effectiveness is predicted jointly by both variables. Both independent variables are being together controlled for the variance in administrative effectiveness. Hence, the null hypothesis was discarded. The administrative effectiveness for secondary school principals and vice principals can be predicted by occupational stress and job satisfaction together and vice versa.

The critical mediator role of job satisfaction was tested by hypothesis five (H05) which states that job satisfaction does not significantly mediate the relationship between occupational stress and administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals and vice principals and vice versa. The mediation analysis revealed that the job satisfaction of secondary school principals and vice-principals significantly mediated the relationship between their occupational stress and administrative effectiveness at  $p < 0.05$ , as the indirect effect is significant. Occupational stress, in this study, refers to the stress that is experienced by people while having to carry out their occupational role. This study to see the effect of occupational stress on job satisfaction of secondary school principals and vice principals and consequently, their administrative effectiveness. This means that occupational stress negatively influences job satisfaction which in turn affects the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals and vice principals.

## **Discussion of Findings**

As revealed by the study findings, the secondary school principals and vice principals in the Gusau metropolis experience a high level of occupational stress. The output above accurately reflects the realities of school leadership. The demands of the various agendas incorporated into school leadership are no doubt difficult to pull off by one person. Overseas principals are finding it difficult to multi-task at one and the same time as an instructional leader, administrative complancer, people manager communicator and resource balancer. The principals' leaders' creation has occurred in many education systems with unwavering levels of administrative support or decision-making power. International reports state that school leadership has increasingly complex and demanding international role (UNESCO, 2024; OECD, 2023). Stress is not a temporary phase but a structural feature of the role. Given the foregoing a high level of occupational stress is not surprising.

Many scholars believe that the workplace stress caused by principals is due to overcrowded schools and lack of teachers and other facilities and powerful external accountabilities by the education

officials and local communities. School leaders are increasingly facing cognitive and emotional support problems due to overcrowded schools, lack of facilities, and presence of education officials and community members. Recent studies in Nigeria (Asuquo, 2023; Obeagu, 2021) arrive at similar conclusions, with workload, role conflict and lack of resources as major causes of stress for principals in secondary schools. According to the findings of the present study, the pressures remain acute in Gusau metropolis. In the same manner, the principal and vice principals have also reported a moderate level of job satisfaction. Responses regarding the principalship are more of a mixed reaction which means overall. The administrator can derive satisfaction from the intrinsic nature of the job in terms of responsibility, professional self-concept and possibly power to influence (often not alone) the outcomes of education for school.

Dissatisfaction, in contrast, comes from external factors like salary, working conditions and the level of social support from the institution. The concurrence of findings with classical and contemporary job satisfaction studies indicates intrinsic and extrinsic sources of satisfaction (Locke, 1976; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Surveys and interviews in recent years show that despite being made unhappy by their experiences, principals tend to stay in their jobs (Australian Catholic University, 2024). According to Australian Catholic University (2024), principals' dissatisfaction grew with the workload, administrative overload and excessive hours. According to Fang et al 2025, principals appreciated the significance of meaningfulness in school leadership. However, these emotional job demands and a lack of job resources reduced their overall job satisfaction in the long run. The present finding may suggest that principals experience only a moderate level of job satisfaction and yet remain working. Though the study established a high level of occupational stress and moderate level of job satisfaction, the findings indicated that there was a high level of administrative effectiveness. This implies that the principal and vice principal effectively perform the core functions involving planning, supervision, decision making and overall coordinating activities of the school. A plausible explanation for this finding may be professional commitment, experience, internalisation of roles (reputational or deontological) who view effective administration is a moral, professional obligation to act.

In addition, a significant, negative relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction was observed in the study. This indicates that as principals' work stress increases, job satisfaction decreases. According to the stress-strain framework, this finding can be completely explained. The theory claims that excessive job demands deplete the emotional and psychological resources of employees thus damaging positive work attitudes. People become less engaged and fulfilled when stress becomes chronic and constant. Various education systems depict this truth in their respective works. For example, Rantanen et al. (2025) claims that role conflict and time pressure as job demands reduce job satisfaction of principals. According to a UNESCO study (2024), similar conditions in sub-Saharan Africa have found that the stress-inducing working conditions of administrators reduce their morale. Our analysis integrates with the expanding mass of proof ascertaining that work-related pressure is a vital element determining job satisfaction of educational leaders.

The analytical findings also show a strong negative relationship between occupation stress and administrative effectiveness. The above meaning suggests short term coping ability with pressure though long run continuous stress will hamper the ability to administer. As a matter of fact, stress has the potential of inducing problems of concentration, making poor quality decisions, problems in interpersonal relationships, and reducing the capacity of the leaders for strategic planning which can impair the effective management of schools in the long term. According to the review performed by Van der Vyver et al., 2024, school leaders who experience job-related stress on a consistent basis have

ineffective leadership (in terms of their errors in judgment or their decision making and so on) for this reason. In addition, Obeagu (2021) found that stress-related factors negatively predict principals' administrative performance in Nigeria. The current research indicates the existence of further evidence in support of the findings.

The study indicates that there is a strong positive link between job satisfaction and administrative effectiveness. Principals and vice-principals with high job satisfaction reported to be effective in administrative performance. According to the school leadership, job satisfaction seems to energise the administrators to engage more in planning, supervision and staff support. Recent empirical research established this conclusion. The study by Ghamrawi, Naccache, and Shal (2023) investigates the relationship between teacher leadership and teacher well-being, asserting a pivotal role for both in effective education. The findings suggest a reciprocal relationship between teacher leadership and well-being within educational contexts. Education systems in Africa have echoed similar findings. As indicated by the current finding, job satisfaction is one of the essential conditions for the upkeep of effective school management.

The mediation analysis in the end implies that job satisfaction partially mediates the effect of occupational stress on administrative effectiveness. The occupational stress negatively affected job satisfaction, which results in a decrease of administrative effectiveness whereas stress still has a direct negative impact on effectiveness. This discovery gives a refined perspective of stress processes in school leadership. Stress not only decreases effectiveness directly by making you dysfunctional, but indirectly too by undermining your motivational state.

### **Theoretical Implications**

The results pattern supports the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) proposition that high job demands are related to strain and poorer work-related outcomes. In contrast, motivational processes and resources help sustain functioning. Job stress had negative effect on job satisfaction and administrative effectiveness, while job satisfaction had positive impact on effectiveness. These findings confirm the JD–R assumptions that demands like workload, role conflict and time pressure drain energy and lower work-related attitudes that boost performance. The mediated outcome suggests that job satisfaction may not only be an outcome but also a path through which adverse working conditions impact administrative effectiveness (weakens). This will assist in giving conceptual clarity to research on principal stress which has largely focused on distressing outcomes rather than outcomes on effectiveness of leaders.

### **Policy Implications**

The findings support a shift in both policy and practice of principal well-being from the private realm to an educational governance one. The World Health Organization recommends organisational Interventions aimed directly at psychosocial risks, including workload, role ambiguity, and working conditions. State education authorities must incorporate stress reduction into leadership policy through enforceable workload standards, reasonable reporting requirements and clearer role expectations rather than mainly relying on personal resilience training. The policy must also acknowledge that the principal stress is connected with satisfaction and retention risks which have downstream impacts on the school's stability.

### **Practice Implications**

The findings indicate three priorities to improve administrative effectiveness through stress reduction and satisfaction support for practice. Teachers and education systems should concentrate on

teachers' workload management and time protection. Measures include simplification of documentation, duplication in reporting and clerical support for routine compliance work. Changes in organisation are recommended by the WHO as core prevention methods for risks related to work. Additionally, structures for leadership support should be strengthened. Research based on the JD–R model consistently shows that job resources like supervisor support, autonomy, role clarity, and access to tools and training are protective factors. In practice, this requires coaching and mentoring for principals and vice principals, regular problem-solving clinics with quality assurance officers, and clear escalation routes for complex disciplinary, safeguarding or community conflict issues that place intense pressure on school leaders.

## **Conclusion**

The study investigates the occupational stress, job satisfaction, and administrative effectiveness of principals and vice-principals of secondary schools in Gusau metropolis, Zamfara State. The results clearly point out that school administrators experience high occupational stress, show a moderate level of job satisfaction and yet maintain high administrative effectiveness. Overall, these findings paint a picture of an effective but under persistent strain picture of school leadership. The study further reveals a significant negative relationship of occupational stress with both job satisfaction and administrative effectiveness. As the demands and pressures of administration increase, principals become less satisfied with their work and their capacity to accomplish administrative work is lessened. On the other hand, administrators' job satisfaction showed a strong and positive correlation with administrative effectiveness, suggesting that satisfied administrators can better plan, supervise, decide and manage school activities. A major part of the study shows that job satisfaction partially mediates the impact of occupational stress on administrative effectiveness. The finding suggests that occupational stress reduces the effectiveness of the administrators not only by affecting their functioning but also by reducing their job satisfaction. It is, therefore, imperative to reduce unnecessary administrative pressures, enhance institutional support and strengthen conditions related to job satisfaction to safeguard both administrator well-being and school effectiveness. The focus of this study reveals that occupational stress and job satisfaction must be considered as a leadership issue and not a personal issue. Looking through these aspects are crucial not only for the well-being of principals and vice-principals but also for sustaining administrative and quality output, leading to continuous improvement in secondary school management.

## **Recommendations**

Following the conclusions and findings of this study, this paper makes the following recommendations.

1. Education authorities should revisit the nature and extent of administrative work entrusted to the principals and vice principals to reduce occupational stress, allowing school administrators to concentrate on core leadership and instructional supervision functions.
2. Some certain interventions (such as ongoing professional development programmes) should be established to enhance principals' job satisfaction.
3. Educational policymakers should therefore improve the welfare conditions by taking stock of the remuneration, allowances and promotion. Moreover, commendation letters, leadership awards, and public recognition to the administrator for effective management of the school, may enhance work attitude and motivation.
4. Structured stress management and well-being programmes should be promoted in school systems for principals and vice principals. Training in time management, delegation, and conflict resolution as well as coping strategies, counselling and access to peer-support forums are a few of them.

## References

1. Adeyemi, T. O. (2021). Administrative workload and principals' effectiveness in secondary schools. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 49(4), 612–628.
2. Asuquo, M. E., Ogbече, M. M., Udeh, K. V., & Owan, M. V. (2023). Stress management strategies and administrative job performance of secondary school principals in Cross River State. *International Journal of Educational Benchmark*, 4(2). <https://journals.benchmarkjournals.com/index.php/ijeb/article/view/140>
3. Riley, P., See, S-M., Marsh, H., & Dicke, T. (2021) The Australian principal occupational health, safety and well-being survey (IPPE Report). Sydney: Institute for Positive Psychology and Education, Australian Catholic University.
4. Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2017). Job demands–resources theory: Taking stock and looking forward. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 22(3), 273–285.
5. Collie, R. J. (2023). Educational leadership, well-being, and occupational stress. *Educational Psychology Review*, 35(1), 1–25.
6. Collie, R. J., Granziera, H., & Martin, A. J. (2022). Teachers' and school leaders' appraisals of occupational stress and well-being: A transactional perspective. *Educational Psychology Review*, 34(2), 843–871.
7. Cooper, C. L., Dewe, P. J., & O'Driscoll, M. P. (2019). *Organisational stress: A review and critique*. Sage.
8. Ghamrawi, N., Naccache, H., & Shal, T. (2023). Teacher leadership and teacher well-being: Any relationship? *International Journal of Educational Research*, 122, 102261. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2023.102261>
9. Harmsen, R., Helms-Lorenz, M., Maulana, R., & van Veen, K. (2018). The relationship between beginning teachers' stress and leadership practices. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 72, 202–213.
10. Hoy, W. K., & Miskel, C. G. (2018). *Educational administration: Theory, research, and practice* (9th ed.). McGraw-Hill.
11. Klassen, R. M., & Chiu, M. M. (2018). Effects of teachers' self-efficacy and workload on stress and job satisfaction. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 110(5), 772–785.
12. Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. Springer.
13. Locke, E. A. (1976). The nature and causes of job satisfaction. In M. D. Dunnette (Ed.), *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 1297–1343).
14. Marsh, H. W., Dicke, T., Riley, P., Parker, P. D., Guo, J., Basarkod, G., & Martin, A. J. (2023). School principals' mental health and well-being under threat: A longitudinal analysis of workplace demands, resources, burnout, and well-being. *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-being*, 15(3), 999–1027.
15. Obeagu, O (2021). Influence of Occupational Stress on the Administrative Effectiveness of Secondary School Principals' in Enugu State Nigeria. A Master's Thesis Submitted to Faculty of Education, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. Nigeria.
16. OECD. (2020). *School leadership for learning: Insights from TALIS*. OECD Publishing.
17. OECD. (2023). Unravelling the layers of teachers' work-related stress. *Teaching in Focus*, No. 46. OECD Publishing, Paris. <https://doi.org/10.1787/bca86c20-en>
18. OECD (2025), Results from TALIS 2024: The State of Teaching. Paris: TALIS, OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/90df6235-en>.
19. Ofojebe, W. N., & Okeke, J. C. (2022). Principals' administrative stress and school effectiveness in Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Leadership*, 6(2), 45–61.

20. Fang, Y., Yu, J., Toyama, H., & Salmela-Aro, K. (2025). School principals' job burnout and job satisfaction in Finland: The impact of work–family conflict, role conflict, and sense of community. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, OnlineFirst, 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17411432251333560>
21. Rantanen, J., & Kinnunen, U., & Mauno, S., & Tillemann, K. (2011). Introducing theoretical approaches to work-life balance and testing a new typology among professionals. *Creating Balance*. 27-46. 10.1007/978-3-642-16199-5\_2.
22. Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2017). Motivated for teaching? Associations with school goal structure, teacher self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and emotional exhaustion. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 67, 152–160. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.06.006>
23. Spector, P. E. (2020). *Industrial and organisational psychology* (7th ed.). Wiley.
24. Toyama, H., Upadyaya, K., & Salmela-Aro, K. (2022). Job crafting and well-being among school principals: The role of basic psychological need satisfaction and frustration. *European Management Journal*, 40(5), 809–818. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2021.10.003>
25. UNESCO. (2023). *Reimagining school leadership in uncertain times*. UNESCO Publishing.
26. UNESCO. (2024). *Global Education Monitoring Report: Leadership in education (Lead for learning)*.
27. Van der Vyver, C. P., Kok, M. T., & Conley, L. N. (2020). The relationship between teachers' professional well-being and principals' leadership behaviour to improve teacher retention. *Perspectives in Education*, 8(2), 86–102. <https://doi.org/10.18820/2519593X/PIE.V38.I2.06> .
28. Wang, F., Hauseman, C., & Pollock, K. (2021). Principals' accountability amid work intensification. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 185, 73–90.
29. Wang, H., Hall, N. C., & Rahimi, S. (2019). Self-efficacy and stress in school leadership. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 47(5), 782–801.\*