

---

**A Critical Assessment of Age as a Determinant of Stress Management Behavior of Principals in Akwa Ibom State**

---

By

**AKPAN, E. Ebenezer, *Ph.D, FCICN, AP, PPGDCA, PHDCDPM***  
**Corporate Institute of Research and Computer Science**  
**140 Ikot Ekpene Road**  
**Uyo, Akwa Ibom State**

---

**ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the stress management behaviours of younger and older principals in Akwa Ibom State. To achieve this one objective and one research question was developed. The study adopted an Ex-post Facto research design. The study area is Akwa Ibom State which is one of the thirty-six (36) states of Federal Republic of Nigeria. The population of this study comprised of all public secondary school principals in Akwa Ibom State. There are 234 Principals in Akwa Ibom state. A simple random sampling technique was used in selecting 200 out of 234 principals for the studies. The researcher developed one instrument tagged “PRINCIPAL’S VARIABLES AND STRESS MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOURS QUESTIONNAIRE (PVSMBQ) for collection of data. The instrument was validated by two experts in educational administration and planning. Each hypothesis was re-stated and the variables inherent in each were identified and the appropriate statistical analysis/technique used for testing can be seen subsequently as all the hypothesis were stated in their null forms and tested at 0.5 level of significance. Based on the findings of the research work, it was concluded that there is significant difference in stress management behaviours of younger and older principals. It was recommended that the older principals should adopt the type of stress management behaviour of younger principals.*

**Key Words: Stress, Principals, Management behavior.**

---

**Introduction**

The word stress can be defined as the sum of physical and mental responses to an unacceptable disparity between real or imagined personal experiences and personal expectation. According to Rees, 2007, ‘stress’ was derived from an Anglo-Saxon word and was first applied in physics for designating the mechanical force in medical industry stress can happen at any stage of life and through different contexts such as working environment, family commitment and social activities. It is a response which includes both physical and mental components. Mental responses to stress include adaptive stress, anxiety and depression. Stress that enhances physical and mental functions is considered as a good stress. It is needed to promote well-being by serving as catalysts of stimulants to push an individual towards achieving the target goal. If stress persists to an excessive degree, it will eventually lead to the need for resolution. This condition may lead either to anxious/ escape or depressive behaviour. It depletes an individual emotionally, mentally and physically.

In recent years, we have seen a rise in stress across all spheres of life, particularly in the workplace. It is not surprising that we are seeing workplace stress emerging as a major cause of physical and mental problems. Stress is an individual’s physical and mental reaction to environmental demands/pressures. Stress, in general and occupational stress, in particular is a

fact of modern day life that seems to have been on the increase. Occupational (job, work, and workplace) stress has become one of the most serious health issues in modern world as it occurs in any job and is even more present than decades ago. Occupational stress, in particular, is the inability to cope with the pressures in a job (Rees, 2007) because of poor fit between someone's abilities to his/her requirements and conditions.

Today's life is full of challenges. These days' stress is seen across all sphere of life, particularly at the work place. Stress is the sum total of all non-specific biological phenomenon elicited by adverse external influences. One feels stressed when one is confronted with the unexpected results and situations.

In education sector, stress is increasing day by day because teaching today's young people is not only exhausting work but can be very stressful. Particularly, school principals come across many pressures from different directions such as norms and standards set by NCERT, various conditions set by state level agency, expectations of NCERT from the institutions to go hand in hand with the changing times. Management's expectations for optimum utilization of minimum resources, one's own pressure to develop professionally, co-curricular activities to meet the needs of the quality school functioning required in future, all such demands increase the stress level of the leaders as they are expected to fulfill all these in stipulated time with great efficiency.

### **Purpose of study**

The study was carried out to determine how secondary school principals vary in their stress management behaviors on the basis of some specified variables. Specifically, the study has the following objectives.

To determine the differences in stress management behaviors of principals based on their age.

### **Research Questions**

Base on the purpose of the study the research questions will be answered:

What differences exists in stress management behaviours of younger and older principals?

### **Hypotheses**

The hypotheses will be tested:

There is no significant difference between age and stress management behaviours among secondary school principals.

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical frame work is based on transaction Model of stress theory, adaptational stress theory and Blaise's theory of stress Motivation.

#### **Transactional Model of Stress Theory: Lazarus, 1999**

The transactional model defines stress as arising from the appraisal that particular environmental demands are about to tax individual resources, thus threatening well-being (Lazarus, 1999). This definition of stress encompasses a number of themes that capture the

transactional nature of stress and those processes that best express the nature of that transaction. These themes involve the following:

- Stress is a product of the transaction between the individual and the environment.
- The authority and power of the transaction lies in the process of appraisal that binds the person and the environment and, it is this “relational meaning” that the person constructs from the transaction and that lies at the heart of the stress process.
- There are two types of appraisal—primary and secondary. It is through these appraisals that the focus is shifted to what people think and do in a stressful encounter, representing a process-oriented approach (Lazarus, 2001). This reflects “the changing person–environment relationship” and provides an insight into the nature of the stress process itself.
- It is the appraisal process that offers a causal pathway— a bridge to those discrete emotions that best express the nature of the stress experience (Lazarus, 2001; Lazarus & Cohen-Charash, 2001).

As noted above, there are two types of appraisal. The first is described as primary appraisal. This is where the person acknowledges that there is something at stake (Lazarus, 2001).

The idea of whether “anything is at stake” is, as Lazarus points out, fundamental and it is where the person asks, for example, “do I have a goal at stake, or are any on my core values engaged or threatened? “It is where the person considers the significance of the encounter and evaluates it in terms of its personal meaning. Lazarus identifies three types of primary appraisals:

Harm/Loss —something that has already occurred;

Threat —the possibility of some harm in the future; and

Challenge — where the person engages with the demand.

Later, Lazarus (2001) added another appraisal that he described as benefit, where individuals search for the benefit in a demanding encounter. Negatively and positively toned appraisals are associated with different types of emotions, and they provide the pathway through which as much emphasis can now be given to positive emotions as has been given to negative emotions (Dewe et al., 2010). It is these appraisals that operate as the “cognitive underpinnings” for coping as they are part of “an active search for information and meaning on which to predicate action” (Lazarus, 1999). It is secondary appraisal where the focus turns to “what can be done about it”. This is where the person evaluates the availability of coping resources (Lazarus, 2001).

## **Coping**

While much debate surrounds the definition of coping (Dewe et al., 2010), the definition put forward by Lazarus describes coping in terms of a process that embraces the “constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts a person makes to manage specific external or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (Lazarus, 1999, p.110). Lazarus and his colleague Folkman (1980) went on to identify two types of coping. These they described as problem-focused (where the focus is on managing the encounter), and emotion-focused (where the focus is on regulating the emotion) coping.

Classifying coping strategies as either problem- or emotion-focused offered what Folkman and Moskowitz (2004) described as a “broad brush approach.” Since then, researchers have taken the opportunity to consider a range of ways of classifying coping strategies, expanding the original work to include, for example, strategies that include meaning-centered coping and relationship-social coping (Folkman, 1980). While no consensus has yet been reached as to the number of coping categories, researchers do agree that no category should be regarded as inherently better than another, because each needs to be considered within the context of a stressful encounter and how that encounter is appraised.

Classifying coping strategies is one thing but, when considered in terms of the way they are being used in a particular encounter, illustrates the richness and complexity of the coping process and suggests that researchers may wish to explore the way in which different strategies are used before labeling them as simply falling into one category or another. Also, there is the vexed question of coping effectiveness.

Two theoretical approaches offer an understanding as to how to best judge coping effectiveness. The first focuses on whether “personally significant” and appropriate outcomes have been successfully achieved (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004:754), whereas the second considers effectiveness in terms of the “fit” between the type of coping and the nature of the encounter. Folkman and Moskowitz suggest a number of refinements to these two approaches. The first is in terms of developing a better understanding of what we need to investigate when it comes to the nature of outcomes, such as their qualities and characteristics and, similarly, when it comes to “fit” developing a more refined analysis of those environmental characteristics that may influence the nature of coping.

The term “secondary” appraisal is not meant to suggest that it is of any less importance than “primary” appraisal. The difference between the two appraisals is, as Lazarus (1999:78) points out, “not about timing but the contents of the appraisal.” Lazarus goes on to add that it is the “distinctly different content of each type of appraisal” (p. 78) that requires each to be investigated separately. But, as he cautions, each is part of a “common process,” where together they each help to shape a stressful encounter as the manner in which individuals give meaning to an encounter is further refined through the process of secondary appraisal. While coping research has captured the imagination of many researchers, there is still considerable debate as to just where current methodologies are taking us in terms of how coping is measured, and what it is that alternative measures may provide (Coyne, 1997; Dewe et al 2001; Folkman, 1980; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004; Lazarus, 2001; Somerfield & McCrae, 2000)

Work stress research might profit from “reflecting more carefully on how such (appraisals) processes follow (Schaubroeck, 1999: 759), and that when investigating work stress it is, as Perrewe and Zellars (1999:749) suggest, not just important to explore individual appraisals but “it is essential in order to understand the stress process”

### **Relevance of the transactional model of stress to the study**

The transactional model of stress is relevant to this work because it has to do with environmental demands which tax individuals resources which in this study, human resources (Principal). This helps principals to know resources to use for various demanding environmental factors before hand. He will use the exposure gotten from the knowledge of transactional model to overcome administrative stress that will occur as a result of environmental factors.

---

## Literature Review

### The concept of stress

Stress is a psycho-physiological state or process that occurs when an individual faces events he/she perceives as threatening to his/her physical well-being. It grows out of the interaction that individual has with the environment, occurring when there is a mismatch, between situational demands (stressors) and the resources. Stress is a natural way of coping with changes in our environment. Stress can also be referred to as any adjective demand that creates a state of tension or threat and that requires change or adaptation. Hines and Paulson (2006), observed stress as a condition where in job-related factor interact with the workers to change his psychological condition from normal functioning. Darmordy and Smyth (2010) conceptualized that stress is positive if it enables a person to perform or excel in given situation or event and it is negative if there is excessive amount of stress that causes the individual to reduce performance. There is relationship between perceived work stress and academic performance. This could be due to self-efficacy beliefs, workload, frustrations, pressure and fear of failure. There is rarely a person that does not experience stress based primarily upon the perceptions of the situation, values and goals; student being in contact with different environment are exposed to various forces and events. These forces and events put demands and pressures on time and attention, which result to frustrations, tension and anxieties because of difficulty to attend and respond to these forces and events. The lack understanding of the effects of these psychological processes in human life and possible adaptation lead to stress. Therefore, stress may be referred to as complex physiological process which is initiated by situations or circumstances.

Okeke (2013) explained stress as a negative and unpleasant condition which may be experienced when a person is unable to meet the demands and pressures that are placed upon him. He further added that certain amount of stress is good because it enables the body to release adrenaline in response to stress which will give the needed stimulation to deal with difficult situations when problems arise. Stopper (2006) also explained stress as any physical, chemical or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension. Stopper observed that a mild degree of stress and tension can sometime be beneficial, feeling mildly stressed when carrying out academic project or assignment often compels individuals to perform academically well. However, stress becomes a problem when pressures placed on an individual are perceived to be excessive or intolerable, over whelming or poorly managed. This level of stress always leads to academic failure.

Doring (2003) describes stress as pressure or worry resulting from mental or physical distress and difficult circumstances. It is a general intellectual fatigue which renders the individual defenseless and inactive; it could therefore be seen as a body's disequilibrium where the body is twisted out of shape due to inability to cope with academic demands. Stress is a state of anxiety, conflict, heightened emotion and frustration. He claimed that stress is diagnosed from psychological and physiological symptoms academic performance. Doring (2003) viewed stress as the wear and tear on our body which is produced by the very process of living. He also regards stress factors as a mobilization of body defense in response to physical, psychological and social threats.

Stress can develop when teachers' expectations and realities are too far apart. According to (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca and Malone, 2006), stressor often arises with respect to career aspiration and goal expectations. When there is a gap hindering accomplishment of goals, stress is encountered, and experienced. Its effect includes distrust, rejection, anger, poor teacher performance and depression which in turn lead to distress and related health problems. Also

stress can be seen as a state manifested by a specific syndrome of biological events. These events could be as a result of work. Work is a necessity that involves both physical and mental exertion which sometimes attracts rewards. Despite this, it could result into stress and eventually strain which may be unfavourable to the individual in the work environment, hence performance stress is more or less a poor fit in the performance/work environment. This can lead to certain kinds of deviations, dissatisfaction, anxiety, conflict and restlessness. Performance stressor is a demand from any aspect of the work that has extreme or noxious characteristics. Reddy et al (2010) however stated that stress can arise from some dramatic incidents, or from accumulation of less dramatic related incidents. In other words, performance related stress results from interactive imbalance between individual and the environment.

### **Causes/sources of Stress**

Sources of occupational stress include poor working condition, work overload and under-load, role conflict and ambiguity, unsatisfactory career development and erratic working hours (Quicks and Quick, 2000). This occupational stress affects mental health and thus influences teaching efficiency. Work stress is a major cause for poor mental health (Clusky, 2004 & Hedin, 2004). Anxiety due to reforms efforts, minimal administrative support, poor working condition, lack of involvement in decision making, the burden of paper work, and lack of resources have all been identified as factors that can cause stress among educators. The daily interaction with pupils and co-workers and the increased and fragmented demands of teaching in general, often lead to overwhelming pressures and challenges, which further lead to stress and strain. Okeke, Adu and Drake (2013) found the causes of principal stress to include the school climate, learners' discipline, school management practices, high workload, resource constrain, redeployment of principals, low remuneration, low status of the teaching profession, and interpersonal conflict. Trendall (2006) found many teachers were under physical and mental strain and reported that the most frequent sources of stress were lack of time, large classes, teaching work load and pupils' misbehavior. There are different factors for the stress of teachers in general and women teachers in particular. Woman teachers have more stressful situations when compared to male counterparts. It is an established fact that the performance of a teacher mainly depends upon his psychological state of mind.

Newell (2007) contended that problems such as student's indiscipline, lack of student progress, inadequate budget, lack of administrative support etc. contributed to teachers' stress. Pratte J. (2008) studied primary school teachers to see the relationship between stress and the background of children's socio-economic level and found financial deprivation in the home background of children to be positively and significantly related to perceived stress among teachers. Tellanback, Brenner & Lofgren (2003) conducted two studies on Swedish school teachers. In the first study on 1,838 teachers, 40.15% said teaching was 'always' or 'often' a mental strain. In the second study on 445 teachers 31% found their work to be 'very much' a mental strain. Trendall (2009) found many teachers were under mental or physical stain and reported that the most frequent source of stress were lack of time, large classes, teaching work load and pupils' misbehavior. Women teachers have more stressful situation than male counterparts. Payne & Furnham (2007) reported data from 444 sec. teachers in Barbados and found that difficulties associated with instructional and managerial demands were perceived as the most stressful aspects of their work. Payne & Furnham (2007) administered the TOSFQ to a sample of 186 elementary and secondary school teachers in Chile. Four main factors were identified i.e. administrative support, professional distress, financial security and students' discipline among which lack of administrative support was perceived as the most stressful factor.

### **Principal stress**

There are multifarious demands placed on principals such as curriculum and instruction functions; staff personnel function; school-community relations; school-business functions, etc. Fullan & Stiegelbauer (2001) felt that a principal's role is multifaceted and continually changing to include new challenges and demands that require time and precision. There is often lack of time to accomplish and balance all these functions in school. Ricciardi (2000) in a study on the dimension of principal stress in 140 West Indian secondary schools found that overwhelming job demands and time constraints made job adjustment difficult for new school administrators. Therefore, "Time management for school administrators", men and women in principalship position work long hours, harassed by pressure from within and without, as they attempt to manage an impossible workload.

Furthermore, principal stress include pupils' misbehavior, student absenteeism, poor working conditions, time pressure, lack of encouragement, feeling of failure, non-cooperative staff members, job insecurity, lack of public esteem, criticism by colleagues, criticism from parents. Apart from these sources, lack of control over job, delayed salaries, multiple duties, political inference, meeting state and federal mandates, large amounts of paperwork, funding difficulties, frustrated teachers, long working hours, growing lists of responsibilities, and rising accountability standards are responsible for the increased level of stress for school principals (Cushing, 2003; Queen & Queen, 2005 and Combs, 2009).

### **Age and Stress Management Behaviour**

Stress is a complex phenomenon; it depends largely on background experiences, temperament and environmental conditions. Chris (2004) said that at any age, stress is a part of life. Young and old alike have to face difficult situations and overcome obstacles with appropriate stress management behaviours. While young adults struggle to establish a career, achieve financial security, or juggle work and family demands, older people may face failing health or dwindling finances or simply the challenges of retaining their independence, by adopting methods that can relieve them of such stress. Unfortunately, the body's natural defenses against stress gradually break down with age. Expert asserts that you don't have to give in to stress just because you're no longer young. Many seniors still manage to sail through their later years. "Successful agers" tend to have a few things in common to help manage stress: They stay connected to friends and family, they exercise and keep active, and, above all, they find ways to both reduce and manage the stress in their lives by taking lots of nap and taking stress relieving supplements. A certain level of stress is unavoidable. Because of its complex nature, stress has been studied for many years by researchers in psychology, sociology and medicine.

A comparative study was conducted by Kyriacou (2001) on teacher stress management behavior with respect to their age. The study adopted a sample size of 220 teachers made up of 120 younger 100 older teachers drawn using a stratified randomly sampling technique out of 23 public schools in Tanzania have found that 62% of the younger teachers were identified with good stress management behavior while 76% of the older teachers were more identified with good stress management behaviour. Teacher stress is defined as the experience by a teacher of negative, unpleasant emotions (such as tension, anger, or depression) as a result of some aspect of their work (Kyriacou, 2001). It's not uncommon, and it appears to be universal across cultures. Experts posited that principals should be particularly concerned about the effect of teacher stress on the academic outcomes of their students. As most principals would expect, the effects of stress on individual teachers affect the classroom environment and learning (Antoniou and Vlachakis, 2006). Stress among teachers is related to absenteeism, turnover, and early retirement, which negatively affect the climate of the school and lead to poor student outcomes,

both academically and behaviorally. Most teachers tend to use alcoholic beverages to calm down their stress or take some of their workload home to manage their stress. Stress management intervention programs have a variety of outcomes, such as improved peer support, reduced levels of somatic complaints, decreased work pressure and role ambiguity, enhanced feelings of personal accomplishment, and improved job satisfaction. Ferrandino (2001) asserts that a principal who addresses the needs of the teachers promotes an environment in which teachers can more readily address the needs of the students. When people are faced with demands from others or demands from the physical or psycho-social environment to which they feel unable to adequately respond, a reaction of the organism is activated to cope with the situation. The nature of this response depends upon a combination of different elements, including the extent of the demand, the personal characteristics and coping resources of the person, the constraints on the person in trying to cope and the support received from others. As part of stress management technique, most teachers tend to use music to calm down their stress while some act calmly in pressured situations especially the older ones.

In 1996, Carolyn, Karen, Gina, and Avron conducted a longitudinal study on Age Differences in Stress, Coping, and Appraisal in California using 2,280 men for over 30 years, both semi-structured interview questions and a coping checklist in middle-aged, young-old, and old-old men. Despite extensive probing, nearly a quarter of the old-old reported having had no problems and they expended less coping effort even when they did have problems. The types of problems reported varied systematically with age. Middle-aged men were more likely to appraise their problems both as challenges and as annoyances than the older men. Different age patterns emerged from the coping interviews vs the checklists, but controlling for type of problem significantly attenuated age differences. However, there were no age differences in perceived stressfulness of the problem, appraisals of harm/loss, or helpless appraisals, number of emotions reported, or coping efficacy. One interpretation of these results is that the nature of stress changes with age, from episodic to chronic, which in turn affects appraisal and coping processes.

According to McGrath (2006) stress is involved in an environmental situation that is perceived as presenting demand which threatens to exceed the person's capabilities and resources for meeting it, under conditions where he or she expects a substantial differential in the rewards and costs from meeting the demand versus not meeting it. Older teachers often feel fatigued when teaching for long periods and often have feelings of not being able to cope with the stress. The adverse effects of stress on physical health and emotional well-being are increasingly recognised; there is little agreement among experts on the definition of stress. Stress is caused by physiological, psychological and environmental demands. When confronted with stressors, the body creates extra energy and stress occurs because our bodies do not use up all of the extra energy that has been created. According to Lazarus (2001), stress occurs when there are demands on the person, which taxes or exceeds his adjustive resources.

According to Manthei (2006), stress can be regarded as "any factor, acting internally or externally, that makes it difficult to adapt and that induces increased effort on the part of the person to maintain a state of equilibrium both internally and with the external environment." It is caused by a multitude of demands (Stressors) such an inadequate fit between what we need and what we capable of, and what our environment offers and what it demands of us. "Stress designates the aggression itself leading to discomfort, or the consequences of it. It is our organism's response to a challenge, be it right or wrong." Thus the principal's role now requires instructional leadership, community leadership, and systems management to ensure the success of all students and to ensure that stress level in the school is appropriately managed.



A study was conducted by Somerfield and McCrae on occupational stress of catholic school principal. The participants were 356 staff from catholic schools in six catholic diocesan school systems in New South Wales, Australia. Participants were drawn from 52 schools, selected on a stratified random basis. The result indicated that statistical significant difference based on age existed for the sample in several domains of occupational stress.

## **Research Method**

### **Research Design**

This study adopted an Ex-post Facto research design because the phenomena for the studies have already occurred.

### **Area of the Study**

The study area is Akwa Ibom State which is one of the thirty-six (36) states of Federal Republic of Nigeria.

### **Population of the Study**

The population of this study comprised of all public secondary school principals in Akwa Ibom State. There are 234 Principals in Akwa Ibom state.

### **Sampling Technique**

A simple random sampling technique was used in selecting 200 out of 234 principals for the studies.

### **Research Instrument**

The researcher developed one instrument tagged "PRINCIPAL'S VARIABLES AND STRESS MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOURS QUESTIONNAIRE (PV SMBQ).

### **Validity of the Instrument**

The assessment of PRINCIPAL'S VARIABLES AND STRESS MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOURS QUESTIONNAIRE (PV SMBQ) was validated by two experts in educational administration and planning, University of Uyo.

### **Reliability of Instrument**

The test-retest reliability study was conducted with the use of forty (34) respondents who did not form part of the main study.

### **Procedure for Data Collection**

The researcher obtained a letter of identification from the head of department and personally administered the instrument with the help of the letter of identification to the sampled principals who then gave the researcher attention for the exercise.

### **Procedure for Data Analysis**

Each hypothesis was re-stated and the variables inherent in each were identified and the appropriate statistical analysis/technique used for testing can be seen subsequently as all the hypothesis were stated in their null forms and tested at 0.5 level of significance.

**Results and Discussion of Findings**

## Research Question One

The research question sought to find out the difference that exists in stress management behaviours of younger and older principals. To answer the research question, descriptive analysis was performed on the data (see table 1)

**TABLE 1: Descriptive analysis of the difference that exists in stress management behaviours of younger and older principals.**

Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	Mean Difference	Remarks
Older	76	73.51**	17.73	<b>*Remarkable Difference</b>
Younger	124	55.78*		

\*\* The highest mean score

\* The least mean score

**Source: Field Survey**

The result of the above table 1 presents the descriptive analysis of the difference that exists in stress management behaviours of younger and older principals. From the result of the analysis it was observed that the level of older principals (73.51) was remarkably higher than that of the younger principals (55.78) with remarkable mean difference of (17.73\*). The result therefore means that there is remarkable difference existing in stress management behaviours of younger and older principals.

**Hypothesis One**

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference in stress management behaviours of younger and older principals. In order to test the hypothesis, two variables were identified as follows:

1. Younger and older principals as the independent variables
2. Stress management behaviours as the dependant variables

Independent t-test analysis was used in comparing the two independent variables (See table 2).

**Table 2: Independent t-test Analysis of the difference in stress management behaviours of younger and older principals.**

Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	t
Younger principals	76	73.51	6.08	15.56*
Older principals	124	55.78	8.71	

**\*Significant at 0.05 level; df =198; N =200; Critical t value = 1.960**

The above table 2 presents the obtained t –value as (15.56\*). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical t-value (1.960) at 0.05 levels with 198 degree of freedom. The obtained t-value (15.56\*) was greater than the critical t-value (1.960). Hence, the result was significant. The result therefore means that there is significant difference in stress management behaviours of younger and older principals.

---

### **Discussion of the Finding**

The result of the data analysis in table 2 was significant due to the fact that the obtained t-value (15.56) was greater than the critical t-value (1.960) at 0.05 level with 198 degree of freedom. The result implies that there is significant difference in stress management behaviours of younger and older principals. The result was in agreement with the research finding of Selye (1976), who opined that stress is caused by physiological, psychological and environmental demands. He also said that when confronted with stressors, the body creates extra energy and stress occurs because our bodies do not use up all of the extra energy that has been created. The significance of the result caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative one was accepted.

### **Conclusions**

Based on the findings of the research work, it was concluded that there are cases of stress challenges among principals in Akwa Ibom State. Also there is significant difference in stress management behaviours of younger and older principals.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the research work, it was recommended that:

All principals should adopt the good strategy of stress management behaviour for effective stress management. This should cut across for both the younger and older principals. School authority should organize workshop and seminar to principals effective management of stress.

---

REFERENCES

- A. S. Antoniou & A. N. Vlachakis (2006). Gender and age differences in occupational stress and professional burnout between primary and high-school teachers in Greece. *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 21(7), pp. 682-690.
- Caprara, G. V., Barbaranelli, C., Steca P. and Malone, P. S. (2006). Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs as determinants of job satisfaction and students' academic achievement: A study at the school level. *Journal of School Psychology* 44(6):473-490
- Chris S. (2004). Effects of Occupational Stress Management Intervention Programs: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* 13(1):69-93
- Clusky R, Hedin H (2004). *How can justice be used to manage stress in organisations?* In J. Greenberg and J.A. Colquitt (Ed.), *Handbook of organisational justice*, 383-410. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Aldwin, Carolyn M., Karen J. Sutton, Gina Chiara, and Avron III Spiro. (1996). "Age Differences in Stress, Coping, and Appraisal: Findings from the Normative Aging Study" *Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Science* 51B: P179-88.
- Coyne, I. T. (1997). Sampling in Qualitative Research. Purposeful and Theoretical Sampling; Merging or Clear Boundaries? *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 26, 623-630. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.1997.t01-25-00999.x>
- Cushing K. S. (2003) Disappearing principals. *Leadership* 32(5): 28
- Queen & Queen, (2005). *The Frazzled Principal's Wellness Plan: Reclaiming Managing Stress and Creating a Healthy Lifestyle*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Combs, J., Edmonson, S. L., & Jackson, S. H. (2009). Burnout among elementary school principals. *Journal of Scholarship and Practice*, 5(4), 10-15.
- Darmordy, M. and Smyth, E. (2010). *Job Satisfaction and Occupational Stress among Primary School Teachers and School Principals in Ireland*. ESRI
- Dewe, P. & Trenberth, L. (2010) An exploration of the role of leisure in coping with work related stress using sequential tree analysis. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling* 33(4) 101-116.
- Doring, A. (1993). *Stressed? Who me?* ERIC Document Number ED362497
- Folkman, S. (1980) *Improving coping assessment: Reply to Stone and Kennedy - Moore*. In H. S. Friedman (ed.), *Hostility Coping and Health*. Washington: American Psychological Association, pp. 215 – 23.
- Folkman, S. & Moskowitz, J. T. (2004) *Coping: Pitfalls and promise*. *Annual Review of Psychology* 55: 745 – 74.
- Fullan, M. & Stiegelbauer, S. (2001). *The new meaning of educational change (2nd ed.)*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Kyriacou, (2001). Teacher stress: prevalence, sources and symptoms. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 48,
- Lazarus, R. S. & Cohen-Charash, Y. (2001) *Discrete emotions in organizational life*. In R. L. Payne & C. L. Cooper (eds), *Emotions at Work: Theory, research and applications for management*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, pp. 45 – 81

- Lazarus, R. S. (2001) *Relational meaning and discrete emotions*. In K. R. Scherer, A. Schorr & T. Johnstone (eds), *Appraisal Processes in Emotion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 37-67.
- Lazarus, R. S. (1999) *Stress and Emotion: A new synthesis*. London: Free Association Books.
- McGrath, J.E. (2006). *Stress and behavior in organizations*. In M.D. Dunnette (Ed.), *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Manthei, R.J. (2006). *Counselling in New Zealand: Past, present and future counselling in Pacific Rim countries*. San Mateo, California: Lake Press.
- Newell, R.C. (2007). *Teacher Stress Warning, touch may be hazardous to your health- American Teacher*, 75,
- C. I. O. Okeke, E. O. Adu, M. L. Drake (2013). *Correlating Demographic Variables with Occupational Stress and Coping Strategies of Pre-School Educators: A Literature Review*. *J Psychology*, 5(2): 143-154
- Payne, M.A. and Furnham, A. (2007). Dimensions of occupational stress in west Indian secondary school teachers. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 57, 141-150.
- Perrewé, P. L., & Zellars, K. L. (1999). An examination of attributions and emotions in the transactional approach to the organizational stress process. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 20(5), 739–752. Available at: [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1099-1379\(199909\)20:5<739:AID-JOB1949>3.0.CO;2-C](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-1379(199909)20:5<739:AID-JOB1949>3.0.CO;2-C)
- Pratte, J. (1978). *Perceived Stress among Teachers The effect of age and background of children taught*. *Educational Review*, 30 (1), PREL Research and Department (R&D).
- Quick, J. D., & Quick, J. C. (2000) *The theory of preventive stress management in organizations*. In C. L. Cooper (ed.), *Theories of Organizational Stress*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 246 – 68.
- Reddy, G. L. (2010). *Occupational stress, professional burnout and job satisfaction of university teachers in south India, UGC major research project*. Kuppam: Dept. of Education, Dravidian University
- Rees, C. J. (2007). *Recognizing the perceived causes of stress. A training and development perspective*. *Ind. and Commer. Train*, 32(4), 120-127.
- Ricciadi, D. (2000). *Experiences of Kentucky principal intern program: Job assistance provided in the entry year*. ERIC Document Number ED451597.
- Schaubroeck, J. (1999) Should the subjective be the objective? On studying mental processes, coping behavior, and actual exposures in organizational stress research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 20: 753 – 60
- Somerfield, M. R. & McCrae, R. R. (2000) *Stress and coping research: Methodological challenges, theoretical advances*. *American Psychologist* 55: 620 – 625.
- Stopper EF (2006). *Stress in the library workplace*, *New Library World*, (11 / 12): 561-564.
- Tellanback, S. Brenner, S.V & Lofgren, H. (2003). *Teacher Stress: Explanatory model building*. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 5(6), pp 65-78
- Trendall, C. (2009). *Stress in teaching or teachers effectiveness. A Study of Teachers across Mainstream and Special Education*, 12.