



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND STRESS MANAGEMENT AMONG BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDIES TEACHERS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

By

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ABSTRACT

This study examined emotional intelligence and stress management among Business Studies teachers in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study was guided by five specific objectives, five research questions and five research hypotheses. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population for the study comprised 720 Business Studies teachers in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. A sample size of 257 Business Studies teachers obtained using Taro Yamane's formula and selected using a multistage sampling technique was used for the study. The researcher developed instrument used in collecting data for the study was titled "Emotional Intelligence and Stress Management of Business Studies Teachers Questionnaires (EISMBSTQ)". The instrument was structured using a four-point rating scale and duly validated by three experts in the Faculty of Education and Faculty of Vocational Education, Library and Information Science, all in University of Uyo, Uyo. Cronbach Alpha statistics was used to obtain a reliability coefficient of 0.861 for the EISMBSTQ. Regression analysis statistic was used in answering the research questions and in testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social awareness and empathy significantly influence stress management among Business Studies teachers in Akwa Ibom State. Recommendations made among others included: teacher-training institutions should incorporate self-awareness development programmes into their instructional curriculum to help Business Studies teachers identify and understand their emotional triggers. This will enable teachers to recognize stress early and apply appropriate coping strategies. Also, education authorities should strengthen programmes that enhance social awareness through cooperative learning, peer interaction and communication training. Improved social awareness will help teachers build supportive relationships that reduce overall stress levels.

Introduction

Teachers are responsible for educating, guiding and shaping the behaviour of students, often under significant time and resource constraints. These responsibilities place them under considerable pressure, making teaching one of the most stressful profession globally. Factors such as heavy workloads, large class sizes, administrative demands, low motivation, and students' behavioural issues among others are often associated with the work of teaching. These factors contribute to the prolonged exposure to stress and can lead to burnout, fatigue, anxiety and decreased job satisfaction. It also affects classroom performance, student outcomes and the overall school environment. As teachers struggle to cope with these challenges, their welfare and professional effectiveness are put at risk. Without appropriate strategies to manage



stress, many teachers face emotional exhaustion and early career exit (Richard and Levesque, 2016).

Business Studies is an educational subject that focuses on teaching students the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to understand and participate effectively in the world of business. It covers areas such as commerce, accounting, marketing, entrepreneurship, office practice, and management. The subject aims to prepare learners for both paid employment and self-employment in a competitive economic environment (Philip, 2024). Business Studies also helps students develop critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving skills related to business activities. It promotes financial literacy and responsible economic behavior among students. Through Business Studies, learners gain practical skills that are useful in everyday life and the workplace. According to Charles and Asuquo (2017) Business Studies teacher is one who possesses either Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), B.Sc. (Ed), M.Sc. (Ed), Ph.D. in Business Education and is familiar with the current technological changes in the offices and the world of work as well as plans the learning activities with the view of current and global changes and practices in the business world. They play a key role in translating theoretical business knowledge into practical classroom experiences. These teachers guide students in understanding how businesses operate within local and global economies.

Stress is a physical and emotional response that occurs when an individual perceives a threat or challenge beyond their coping abilities (Harry, 2024). It can be triggered by various external or internal factors and often affects both mental and physical well-being. Stress management refers to the techniques and practices used to control an individual's level of stress. It is imperative for teachers to actively engage in stress-reducing strategies in order to maintain emotional balance and remain motivated in their roles (Caleb and Leo, 2019). Such strategies may include time management, exercise, mindfulness and professional support. Obi (2024) posited that many ways including time management, physical activity, relaxation techniques, healthy lifestyle choices, social support, professional counseling, hobbies and leisure activities, setting boundaries and problem solving can be used in managing stress, but stress can be best managed through effective individual's application of emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to recognize, understand, manage and influence emotions in oneself and others (Okpeyemi, 2020). It is a form of social and emotional awareness that enables individuals to navigate complex interpersonal situations effectively. The five outstanding segments of emotional intelligence are self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills (Silas, 2023). Emotional intelligence is particularly valuable in emotionally demanding professions such as teaching, healthcare, and leadership roles. In social interactions, individuals with strong emotional intelligence can read non-verbal cues, respond appropriately to others' emotions, and foster a positive environment (Wilson, 2022). Emotional intelligence also promotes resilience by helping individuals cope with failure, criticism, or pressure in constructive ways. In organizational settings, emotional intelligence contributes to teamwork, employee satisfaction, and leadership effectiveness. Individuals with high emotional intelligence tend to experience lower levels of anxiety, depression, interpersonal conflict and stress. Robert (2023) opined that many variables of emotional intelligence such as optimism, adaptability, stress tolerance, impulse control, conflict resolution, mindfulness, assertiveness, interpersonal relationship management and emotional expression can be used in the reduction of stress. However, this study will be focusing on two outstanding ones which include self-awareness



and empathy. Self-awareness is the ability to recognize and understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and behaviours in various situations. Udo and Ukpong (2016) defined self-awareness as the ability to understand one's feelings, attitudes and behaviour. For teachers, self-awareness means being conscious of how their feelings influence their teaching practices and interactions with students and colleagues. It helps them identify stress triggers and understand how they typically respond under pressure. With this insight, teachers can pause and reflect before reacting, allowing for more thoughtful and constructive responses (Benson, 2022). This ability to regulate emotional reactions contributes significantly to reducing stress and preventing burnout. Self-awareness also encourages teachers to evaluate their strengths and areas for growth, promoting continuous personal and professional development. It helps them maintain realistic expectations and avoid unnecessary self-criticism.

Empathy involves the capacity to emotionally relate to others by perceiving and resonating with their feelings and experiences. It goes beyond recognizing social cues to forming an emotional connection that allows one to appreciate another person's internal state. In the context of teaching, empathy allows educators to respond with compassion to students' academic difficulties as well as their emotional and social challenges. This understanding helps create a supportive classroom environment where students feel valued and heard. When teachers practice empathy, they can respond to students' needs with patience and compassion, which often reduces classroom conflicts and stress (Owen, 2018). Empathy also allows teachers to build strong relationships with colleagues, fostering collaboration and mutual support. By being empathetic, teachers can better manage their own emotional reactions, as they gain perspective on others' behaviours and motivations. This perspective helps lessen frustration and burnout by promoting a more compassionate mindset. Additionally, empathy encourages teachers to seek solutions that address the root causes of issues rather than reacting to surface behaviours.

Despite growing global recognition of the importance of emotional intelligence, limited research has been conducted to the best of the researcher's knowledge on how it predicts stress management among Business Studies teachers, particularly within the context of public secondary schools. Therefore, this study sought to explore the extent to which emotional intelligence predicts stress management among Business Studies teachers in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State to offer insights that can inform teacher training, emotional wellness programme, and educational policy, ultimately contributing to improved teacher effectiveness and student outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

Effective stress management is essential for teachers because it helps them maintain their mental and physical well-being, reduces burnout, and improves job satisfaction. It also enhances teachers' concentration, classroom performance, and their ability to create a positive learning environment for students. However, in the teaching profession today, many educators experience high levels of stress arising from heavy workloads, challenging student behaviours and increasing societal expectations, which may negatively affect their overall well-being and professional effectiveness. For teachers, stress is not only harmful to their mental and physical health but may also influence the quality of teaching and students' academic outcomes. In particular, the inability to effectively manage stress may result in uncomfortable and challenging situations in the school environment. Stress among teachers may manifest in different ways such as increased absenteeism, reduced motivation, and various physical and psychological challenges. It may also lead to reduced teaching



effectiveness and increase the likelihood of teachers leaving the profession. Furthermore, stress can affect teachers' emotional regulation, strain teacher–student relationships, and make it difficult to maintain a healthy work–life balance. Other possible consequences include lowered classroom morale, reduced cognitive functioning, shortened career longevity, and limited opportunities for professional growth and development.

In an attempt to address this issue, several researchers have investigated different teacher-related and student-related factors as possible causes of stress with the aim of providing solutions to the problem. However, the continuous existence of stress among teachers suggests that previous efforts have not provided a sufficiently reliable solution to the problem. This persistent situation prompted the researcher to question whether the problem could be linked to teachers' inability to effectively apply emotional intelligence in managing stressful situations. Considering the importance of emotional intelligence in handling emotions and workplace pressures, and based on the issues highlighted in the background of the study, the researcher was motivated to conduct this study to determine the extent to which emotional intelligence influences stress management among Business Studies teachers in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to determine the extent to which emotional intelligence influence stress management among Business Studies teachers in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

- i) The extent to which self-awareness influence stress management among Business Studies teachers in Akwa Ibom State.
- ii) The extent to which empathy influence stress management among Business Studies teachers in Akwa Ibom State

Research Questions

- i. The following research questions were raised to guide the the study.
- ii. To what extent does self-awareness influence stress management among Business studies teachers in Akwa Ibom State
- iii. To what extent does empathy influence stress management among Business Studiteachers in Akwa Ibom State?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance to guide the researcher in the study.

- Ho1: Self-awareness does not significantly influence stress management among BusinessStudies teachers in Akwa Ibom State.
- Ho2: Empathy does not significantly influence stress management among Business Studiteachers in Akwa Ibom State.

Literature Review

Self-Awareness and Stress Management of Teachers

Self-awareness is the conscious knowledge of one's own character, emotions, motives, and desires (Raymond, 2021). Self - awareness is the key to sensitize a person strength and weakness(Udo and Ukpong, 2016). For teachers, self-awareness is a critical aspect of professional and personal development. Teaching is a highly demanding profession that requires emotional resilience and adaptive behavior. Teachers face numerous challenges daily, including classroom management, student behavior, curriculum



demands, and administrative pressure. These factors can lead to significant stress, impacting their performance and well-being. Developing self-awareness allows teachers to better understand their emotional responses. This understanding can help them navigate challenging situations calmly and thoughtfully. Tunde (2018) submitted that self-aware teachers are more likely to reflect on their actions and make intentional choices. This promotes a healthier classroom environment and a more balanced professional life. Therefore, self-awareness forms the foundation for effective stress management in teaching.

Teachers with strong emotional awareness can model calm and constructive behavior for their students. This contributes to a more positive and respectful classroom climate. Furthermore, emotional control helps teachers preserve their mental energy for decision-making and instruction. It also fosters a sense of internal stability, even amid external chaos (Daniel, 2019). Caleb and Leo (2019) posited that self-awareness improves teachers' interpersonal skills, which is vital in the school environment. Understanding one's own emotions helps in interpreting and responding to the emotions of others. This emotional intelligence fosters empathy, patience, and better communication with students, colleagues, and parents. Positive relationships reduce workplace tension and create a supportive environment. When teachers feel emotionally connected and supported, their stress levels naturally decrease. Self-aware teachers are more likely to handle conflicts professionally and constructively. Self-aware teachers are more likely to recognize when their work is negatively impacting their personal lives. They can identify signs of emotional exhaustion and take necessary actions to rest and recharge.

Patrick (2017) posited that self-aware teachers are more likely to practice empathy and compassion, both with others and themselves. By understanding their own struggles, they become more attuned to the difficulties faced by students and peers. This understanding fosters more compassionate interactions, which reduce tension and promote positive relationships. Classroom and staffroom conflicts are inevitable, but self-awareness helps prevent their escalation (Suleiman, 2017). Teachers who are aware of their emotional state can pause before reacting impulsively to a student or colleague. They can identify when they are acting from a place of stress or frustration rather than reason. Asogwa and Okwu (2021) stated that self-awareness enables teachers to express their thoughts and feelings clearly and respectfully.

Empathy and Stress Management of Teachers

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. In teaching, empathy means recognizing students' emotions and perspectives, and responding with care and understanding (Raymond, 2021). This ability goes beyond sympathy, as it involves actively placing oneself in another's shoes. For teachers, empathy is not just a moral value but a professional skill. It affects how they relate to students, colleagues, parents, and school leadership. When empathy is embedded in teaching practices, it enhances relationships and classroom dynamics. Importantly, empathy also plays a major role in managing teachers' own stress. By fostering understanding and emotional connection, it reduces conflict and enhances cooperation. A teacher who uses empathy can defuse tense situations and avoid emotional burnout. Thus, empathy serves as a cornerstone of effective stress management in the teaching profession (Caleb and Leo, 2019).

Empathy allows teachers to approach these challenges with emotional balance (Ifeanyi, 2018). It helps teachers remain patient and responsive rather than reactive. When educators understand the emotions behind behaviors, they respond more wisely. This ability reduces their own emotional overload. Empathy is thus a buffer against the



pressure inherent in teaching. In furtherance, student misbehavior is one of the primary causes of teacher stress. Empathetic teachers try to understand why a student is acting out rather than simply punishing the behavior. This often reveals underlying issues like anxiety, trauma, or unmet needs. By addressing the root cause, teachers can reduce recurring problems. Students who feel understood are more likely to trust and respect the teacher. This trust fosters cooperation and reduces classroom disruptions. Fewer behavioral issues mean less stress and more time for teaching (Chukwuemeka and Okoro, 2021). Empathy transforms discipline from a battle to a dialogue.

RESEARCH METHOD

A correlational research design was adopted in the study. This design was used because it describes the relationship that exists between two variables, the strength and direction of the relationship without manipulating them. Akwa Ibom State is the research area for this study. The state is one of the thirty-six states of the federation of Nigeria, created from the former Cross River state on the 23rd September 1987 the state capital is in Uyo with over 500,000 inhabitants. The population for the study consisted all the 720 Business Studies teachers in the 245 public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State (Akwa Ibom State Secondary Education Board, 2025). A sample size of 257 Business Studies teachers was used for the study. Taro Yamane's formula was used in obtaining the sample size for the study. The researcher developed instrument was used in collecting data for the study. The instrument was tagged "Emotional Intelligence and Stress Management of Business Studies Teachers Questionnaires (EISMBSTQ). The instrument was structured using a four-point scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), Very Low Extent (VLE). Face validation of the instrument was carried out by three experts. One expert from Educational Evaluation Unit of the Department of Psychological Foundations of education, Faculty of Education and Two experts in the Faculty of Vocational Education, Library and Information Science, all in University of Uyo, Uyo. To establish the reliability of the instrument, an internal consistency approach was adopted. The Emotional Intelligence and Stress Management of Business Studies Teachers Questionnaires was administered to 30 Business studies teachers in Akwa Ibom State which is the study Area, who were not part of the main study to ensure that the instrument measures what it is designed to measure consistently. After which a suitable reliability coefficient 0.86 was obtained for the instrument using a Cronbach Alpha Statistics. A simple regression analysis statistic was used in answering the research questions and in testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

The results of data analyses are presented and discussed in this section.

Research Question One

To what extent does self-awareness influence stress management among Business Studies teachers in Akwa Ibom State?



Table 1: Summary of Regression Analysis of the extent to which Self-Awareness influence Stress Management among Business Studies Teachers in Akwa Ibom State (N=247).

Variables	R	R ²	Adjusted
R ²			
Self-Awareness (X)	.880	.775	.774
Stress Management (Y)			

Source: Field Work (2025)

Table 4.1 reveals that the coefficient of determination (R^2) of .775 is obtained. This is interpreted that 77.5 % is the overall contribution of all items on self-awareness to stress management of Business Studies teachers with a percentage of 77.5, it therefore means that, there is a high extent to which self-awareness influences stress management among Business Studies teachers in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Question Two

To what extent does empathy influence stress management among Business Studies teachers in Akwa Ibom State?

Table 2: Summary of Regression Analysis of the extent to which Empathy influence Stress Management among Business Studies Teachers in Akwa Ibom State (N=247).

Variables	R	R ²	Adjusted
R ²			
Empathy (X)	.718	.516	.514
Stress Management (Y)			

Source: Field Work (2025)

Table 4.2 reveals that the coefficient of determination (R^2) of .516 is obtained. This is interpreted that 51.6 % is the overall contribution of all items on empathy to stress management of Business Studies teachers with a percentage of 51.6, it therefore means that, there is a high extent to which empathy influences stress management among Business Studies teachers in Akwa Ibom State. The results of Table 4.2 shows that the p-value of .000 is less than .05 at 1 and 245 degrees of freedom and at .05 level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis which stated that self-awareness does not significantly influence stress management among Business Studies teachers in Akwa Ibom State is rejected. Hence, self-awareness significantly influences stress management among Business Studies teachers in Akwa Ibom State.

Discussion of Findings

4.1.1 Self Awareness and Stress management among Teachers

The result of the first hypothesis revealed that self-awareness significantly influence stress management among Business Studies teachers in Akwa Ibom State. This is achievable because self-awareness enables teachers to recognize early signs of stress



before it escalates. It helps teachers understand their emotional triggers, allowing them to respond thoughtfully rather than react impulsively. With self-awareness, they can identify how workload, student behavior, or administrative demands specifically affect their well-being. This understanding allows them to adopt personalized coping strategies that effectively reduce tension. Self-aware teachers are better able to reflect on their teaching practices and adjust them to minimize unnecessary stress. They can also maintain healthier boundaries between professional responsibilities and personal life. By knowing their strengths and limitations, they can seek support or delegate tasks appropriately. Self-awareness enhances emotional regulation, which is crucial for maintaining composure during challenging classroom situations. It further promotes resilience by helping teachers learn from stressful experiences instead of being overwhelmed by them. The findings of the study is in line with the submission made by Tunde (2018) that self-aware teachers are more likely to reflect on their actions and make intentional choices. This promotes a healthier classroom environment and a more balanced professional life. Therefore, self-awareness forms the foundation for effective stress management in teaching.

4.1.2 Empathy and Stress management among Teachers

The result of the second hypothesis revealed that empathy does not significantly influence stress management among Business Studies teachers in Akwa Ibom State. This is possible because empathy enables teachers to understand and manage both their own emotions and those of otherseffectively. When teachers are empathetic, they are better able to interpret students' behaviors andchallenges without becoming emotionally overwhelmed. This understanding reduces frustration and emotional tension in the classroom. Empathy also promotes positive relationships with students, colleagues, and school administrators, which creates a supportive work environment. A supportive environment helps reduce work-related stress and feelings of isolation. Empathetic teachers are more likely to use constructive communication rather than conflict-driven responses when challenges arise. This approach minimizes workplace conflicts that often increase stress levels. Empathy encourages patience and emotional regulation, which are essential for coping with heavy workloads and time pressure. It also helps teachers feel a sense of purpose and fulfillment in their profession. Feeling fulfilled increases resilience against occupational stress. Therefore, empathy serves as an important emotional resource that enhances effective stress management among Business Studies teachers in Akwa Ibom State. The findings of the study is in agreement with the submission made by Caleb and Leo (2019) that a teacher who uses empathy can defuse tense situations and avoid emotional burnout. Thus, empathy serves as a cornerstone of effective stress management in the teaching profession

Conclusion

It is concluded that self-awareness significantly influence stress management among Business Studies teachers in Akwa Ibom State,as it help teachers understand their emotions, control stress responses, remain motivated, and interact positively within the school environment. The emotional intelligence component enable teachers to cope effectively with professional demands, reduce tension, and maintain psychological balance at work. However, empathy did not significantly influence stress management, indicating that the ability to understand others' emotions alone may not directly reduce personal stress levels among the teachers.



Recommendations

Based on the findings, it was recommended that:

- 1) Management of teacher-training institutions should incorporate self-awareness development programmes into their instructional curriculum to help Business Studies teachers identify and understand their emotional triggers. This will enable teachers to recognize stress early and apply appropriate coping strategies
- 2) Training programs and professional development workshops for Business Studies teachers should emphasize the development of empathetic skills. School administrators should also encourage supportive and empathetic school cultures that promote understanding, collaboration and emotional support to help teachers manage stress effectively.

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