

## OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AS CORRELATE OF PARENTING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN ANAMBRA CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT

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### **Abstract**

*This study was on occupational stress as correlate to parenting and child development in Anambra Central senatorial district. Correlation survey design was used for the study. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study was all the families under 20 years of marriage totaling 900 and census sampling technique was used. The instrument for study was a questionnaire made up of two clusters and containing twenty items to measure how occupational stress correlates to parenting and child development. Three briefed assistants helped to distribute the questionnaires which were all collected. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using split half method and Cronbach's alpha was used to do the calculation and the result yielded a reliability coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.69. The data collected was analyzed using Pearson Product moment of correlation to answer the research questions and -t- test for correlation to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that a high positive correlation of 0.79 and 0.78 respectively exist between occupational stress, parenting and child development in Anambra central senatorial zone. The hypothesis revealed that rural parents had less occupational stress than urban parents. Based on the above findings the following recommendations among others were proffered namely: Conferences Seminars and workshops on the impact of occupational stress are to be organized by stakeholders, secondly, the government and entrepreneurs should endeavour to create a good working ambience.*

**KEYWORDS: Occupational Stress, Correlation, Parenting Activity, Child Development, Anambra Central Senatorial District.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Man is born “tabular rasa” and as man interacts with the environment, he grows and acquires developmental features depicting significant changes from previous phase. Such phenomenon is mostly noticed among growing children and it is referred to as child development.

Child development involves biological, psychological and emotional changes that occur in human beings between birth and the conclusion of adolescence. This phase of life is called childhood and it is divided into three stages of life which includes:

- Early childhood
- Middle childhood
- Late childhood

This is the phase when socialization is of vital importance and parents and other care givers are seen to be very essential resources for children in managing features of development (emotional arousal, coping and managing behavior). The parents serve in this role by providing positive affirmation, conveying love and respect and engendering a sense of security. Consequently, child development is said to be influenced by parenting. Okudo and Obumse (2022), Ifejiolor (2019) all noted that parents are the father and mother of their offspring’s who perform the roles of parenting.

Parenting as a concept was derived from the Latin root “parere” meaning to bring forth, develop or educate. On this note, Molly Kretchnar-Hendricks (2023) presents parenting as the process of raising and providing them with protection and care in order to ensure healthy, development into adulthood. Parenting is a process of raising, promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social and cognitive development of a child to adulthood and across the life span. It entails all those things parents do to support the healthy and positive adjustment of their wards. Very often, it is achieved through socialization, acculturation and child rearing practices. Child rearing practices is often times defined interchangeably with parenting. It includes what parents do to enable the social, economic, cognitive, emotional and psychological development of the children.

According to Saovakon Virasiri et al (2011), parenting refers to the rearing of a child or children in particular, the care, love and guidance given by parents. It consists of the methods, techniques and other activities that are used or required in the rearing of children. Kadzin (2000) views it as a process of raising and educating a child from birth until adulthood which is carried out in a child’s family by the mother and father or biological parents.

Generally, parenting all over the globe shares three major concerns namely: Ensuring children’s health and safety, preparing children for life as productive adults and transmitting cultural values (Alam Kazdim, 2000). These goals that parenting share are nonetheless not without numerous challenges such as the demand of extended family/collective parenthood, which imposes the obligation to train your siblings children. Another strong factor that poses

challenge is modernization, urbanization and industrialization. These often make it difficult for parents to meet up with the societal demands of child rearing. Added also to the above mentioned is being inadequately prepared to face parenting roles. Linked to the above statements is the risk of global challenges such as family instability, moral decadence and health problem. There are also the challenges of stress, among which is occupational stress.

According to Carson (2015), stress is a situation of tension or threat which requires an adjustment if the individual is to meet his/her needs. Stress is a nervous feeling that stops a person from relaxation. As pointed out earlier, the parenting is faced by many types of stresses, among which is occupational stress.

According to Tsutsumi (2019), occupational stress is also known as work or job stress. It occurs when a discrepancy exists between individuals and job or work. Occupational stress is an undesirable feelings or unfriendly emotional state resulting from work. It can also be viewed as subjective negative feeling which threatens workers wellbeing or self esteem. Occupational stress can also be viewed from a condition arising from the interaction of people and their occupation and characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from normal functioning.

The World Health Organization defined occupational stress as the response people may have when presented with work demand and pressures that are not matched to the knowledge, abilities in such as way that they lack means to cope. Nadem (2016) defined occupational stress as a condition arising from the interaction of people and their jobs and characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from Normal functioning. Matthew (2016) defined occupational stress as a mechanism whereby the human body attempts to adapt to the environment. Ramon (2014), refers to occupational stress as emotional reactions that takes place as a result of certain stimuli in a work environment and which predisposes the individual workers to physical and psychological problems. Robbins (2019) defined occupational stress as a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, a demand or resources related to desire of individuals by which they perceive the outcome to be both uncertain and important. In view of the above, the World Health Organization opined that occupational stress can affect both physical and emotional wellbeing of the person if not managed properly. On this view, Ahmad & Ahmad (2018) stated that occupational stress can lead to poor health, injury etc. literature abounds on the consequences of occupational stress among which include physical, psychological and social disorders among people. Occupational stress has been noted to have strong adverse effect on parenting and child rearing practices. Occupational stress can hinder parents from not performing their parental roles hence leaving the children at the mercy of other care givers and socialization agents. This has been known to have strong adverse and negative effects on the children since children whose parents monitor their day to day activities tends to adjust properly while those whose parents do not monitor their day to day activities, tends to mal-adjustment (Okudo and Obumse, 2022).

Apart from the above, location has been noted to be a very strong factor in child's development and parenting. Literature is replete indicating that rural parents are hindered by amenities, not facing the challenges of urbanization as well as modernization.

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The socio-political and economic climate in the country has forced so many parents into the streets in search of means to make ends meet this because of the high cost of commodities, basic amenities and scarcity of financial resources. These have left most parents with zero option rather than to run around seeking for means to meet up with the high demand imposed on them by family expenses. In view of the above their occupation occupies their time and because of the volume/enormous time spent in pursuit of means of livelihood, most parents come home worn out and tired, stressed by their occupation, consequently have little or no time to attend to their primary role of parenting and following their young infants through the stages of development. Based on the above, it becomes pertinent to investigate how occupational stress correlates to parenting and child development.

The main purpose of this study is to investigate how parenting and child development correlates to occupational stress. Specifically, the study sought to examine the following

- (1) To find out what relationship exists between occupational stress and parenting
- (2) To find out what relationship exists between occupational stress and child development.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- (1) What is the relationship existing between occupational stress and parenting?
- (2) What is the relationship existing between occupational stress and child development?

## **HYPOTHESES**

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

- (1) There is no significance relationship existing between the urban and rural parents occupational stress based on child development.
- (2) There is no significant relationship existing between urban and rural parents occupational stress based on parenting.

## **METHOD**

The design used for the study was correlation survey and the area of study was Anambra Central Senatorial district. The population of study was family under 20years of marriage totaling 900 (Awka Local Govt. Area). Census sampling technique was used because the study was carried out on the entire population. The reliability of the instrument was established using split half method and the result obtained was analyzed using Cronbachs' alpha ( $\alpha$ ) which yielded a reliability of 0.69. Three briefed research assistants helped in the distribution of the questionnaire which were all properly filled and returned. The question contained two clusters meant to elicit response from the parents on how occupational stress correlates to parenting and chill development. The study was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses. The data collected was analysed and the research questions answered using Pearson's Product Moment of Correlation while the hypothesis was tested using -t- test for correlations.

## **RESULTS**

The data obtained from the study were presented in table form as follows beginning from the research questions and then the hypotheses.

**Research question one:** what is the relationship existing between occupational stress and parenting among families from Anambra Central senatorial district.

**Table one:** Pearson on relationship between occupational stress and parenting

Source of variation	N	Occupational Stress	Parenting	Remark
Occupation stress	900	1.00	0.79	High positive relationship
Parenting		0.79	1.00	

Table one above revealed that a high positive relationship of 0.79 exists between the ratings of families from Anambra Central Senatorial district on the level of occupational stress and parenting.

**Research question two:** what is the relationship existing between occupational stress and child development among families from Anambra Central senatorial district.

**Table two:** Pearson on relationship between occupational stress and child development

Source of variation	N	Occupational Stress	Child Development	Remark
Occupation stress	900	1.00	0.78	High positive relationship
Child development		0.78	1.00	

The table two above showed that a high positive relationship of 0.78 exists between occupational stress and child development among families from Anambra central senatorial district.

**Hypothesis one:** there is no significant relationship existing between urban and rural parents occupational stress based on their parenting

**Table three:** -t- test of correlation between urban and rural family rating of occupational stress based on parenting.

N	r	df	cal -t-	crit -t-	$P \geq 0.05$
900	0.79	898	6.24	16.89	5

Table three above indicated at 0.05 level of significance and differential freedom of 898 df, the calculated -t- (6.24) is less than the critical -t- (16.89), hence indicating that there is no significant relationship between the urban and rural parents occupational stress based on parenting.

**Hypothesis two:** there is no significant relationship between the urban and rural family occupational stress based on child development.

N	r	df	cal -t-	crit -t-	$\geq 0.05$
900	0.78	898	2.79	11.28	5

Table four above indicated that at 0.05 level of significance and differential freedom (df) of 898, the calculated -t- is less than the critical -t-, hence affirming the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship existing between the urban and rural parents occupational stress based on child development.

## **DISCUSSION**

The finding of the study was discussed in line with the major purpose of study which sought to determine how family occupational stress correlates with parenting and child development. The discussion was presented under the following two themes:

- (a) What relationship exists between occupational stress and parenting
- (b) What relationship exists between occupational stress and child development.

Concerning occupational stress and parenting, the following items were items contained in the questionnaire and they include: returns late from work tired (3.02), always stressed out coming back from work (3.06), always absent and makes excuse for participating in P.T.A meetings on account of Job (3.01), feels tired to help you discover new intellectual skills (3.43), feels tired to supervise your out of school programme (2.98), dashes out regularly to work (3.05), never available at home on account of Job conferences (2.89), does not monitor the family support provision because of tiredness (2.96), not available to discuss or dialogue with you because of work load (2.96), always goes straight to bed on returning from work (2.98), shows little or no interest on your and siblings well being (2.96).

Interestingly all the items above were rated high above the average mean mark of 2.50. This gave credence to the result in table one which indicated that a very high positive relationship of 0.79 exists between parenting and occupational stress. This is inline with the views of Carson (2015) who sees occupational stress as tension or threat to parenting. In a similar manner Ahmad & Ahmad (2018) who maintained that occupational stress had adverse effect on parenting because parents abound their parenting role because they were worn-out by Job. This was confirmed by Tsutsumi (2019) who sees occupational stress as discrepancy existing between Job and individual role functioning that that forces them to deviate from normal functioning.

Concerning the hypothesis which tested for significance of relationship between the rural and urban parenting responsibilities based occupational stress, the table three affirmed the null hypothesis, that there was no significant relationship existing between the urban and rural family occupational stress based on parenting. This was because at the differential freedom (df) of 898, the calculated -t- (6.24) was seen to be less than the critical -t- (16.89) hence, the affirmation of the null hypothesis. The table goes further by implication to show that occupational stress affect parenting in urban areas more than in rural areas. According to Alam Kadzan (2000) parenting all over the globe shares some major concern among which includes the consequences of modernization, urbanization and industrialization. These are strong factors in urban areas which can hinder parenting because of time utilization and commitment. Parents in rural community seem to have more ample time to share with the family.

Concerning the relationship existing between family occupational stress and child development, the items stated below were used to elicit responses from the respondents and were found to reveal the following namely; not available to help the child achieve skills and competence on motor skills on account of Job stress (3.06), not available to assist the child on bowl and bladder control on account of work stress (3.05), not available to assist the child learn social behavior because of tiredness (2.98), not available to assist the child learning control of common emotions (shyness, fear, anger etc) (3.01), not available to assist the young child resolve conflicts because of tiredness (2.98), not available to for dialogues with the little child because he/she is worn out (2.90), pay little attention in helping the young child appreciate physical changes (3.01) has not time to assist the young think and act independently (3.06), pay no attention to peer interaction (2.92) etc. interestingly, the results above revealed that all the items were rated above the acceptable mean mark, hence they constitute factors of occupational stress. Based on the table two which sought to determine what relationship exists between family occupational stress and child development, it was discovered that a very high positive relationship (0.78) exist between family occupational stress and child development. Implying that occupational stress hinders parents contributions towards child development. This is in line with what Ahmad & Ahmad (2018), Tsutsumi (2019) noted. According to these scholars, occupational stress imposes discrepancies on individuals functioning (child development).

In a similar manner, the hypothesis which tested for significance of relationship between urban and rural parents occupational stress based on child development affirmed the null hypotheses which stated that there is no significant relationship existing between urban and rural parents occupational stress based on child development.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study was on occupational stress as a correlate to parenting and child development. The study revealed that items variables used for the study were all rated above the average mean mark of (2.50) indicating acceptance that occupational stress affects parenting and child development. This was further emphasized by the result in table 1 and 2 which revealed that a high positive correlation of 0.79 and 0.78 exists between occupational stress, parenting and child development respectively. The hypotheses which tested for significance of relationship between the urban and rural family occupational stress as it correlates to parenting and child development revealed that there was no significant relationship existing between both and with respect to parenting and child development implying that occupational stress impacts differently on both urban and rural parenting and child development. Urbanization, industrialization and globalization had great impact on urban areas hence making things a bit stressful because of the complexities inherent therein.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Conferences/Seminars/Workshops on the impact of occupational stress are to be organized.
2. A better working ambience is encouraged to be created by government and other stakeholders.
3. Child development and parenting should be giving the priority it deserves.

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