



Home Stress and Effective Utilization of ICT Components Among Female Caregivers in Orlu Nursery Schools of Imo State

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Abstract

This study examines home stress and the effective utilization of ICT components among female caregivers in Orlu Nursery Schools, Imo State. The dual role of female caregivers as educators and home managers underscores the importance of ICT in enhancing teaching and stress management. However, gaps exist in the availability, acquisition, and utilization of ICT resources, limiting their effectiveness. The study aims to identify causes of home stress, assesses ICT availability, evaluates ICT skills acquisition, and determines ICT utilization levels. Adopting a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 320 female caregivers using a structured questionnaire. Findings reveal that home stress stems from disrespect from household members and separation from spouses. While mobile phones and WhatsApp are available, other ICT resources like computers and e-mail are lacking. Poor ICT knowledge, irregular power supply, and inadequate funding hinder skills acquisition. ICT is used for tasks like searching teaching materials, but overall utilization remains low. The study recommends increased government funding, periodic ICT training for caregivers, and refurbishment of school facilities to enhance ICT integration and support female caregivers in managing stress and improving instructional delivery.

Keywords: Home Stress, Utilization, Nursery School, ICT

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Background to the Study

Family is the nerve center of all human institutions upon which the survival of the society depends. Ekennia (1998), in Ihem-Chijioke (2009) states that stress in the home has a far-reaching implication for all persons in the family and society at large. Thus, teaching as an occupation is not an exception. The word “stress” means any stimulus that has a prolonged impact, thereby raising an anxiety beyond his/her capacity of affecting an individual's psychological, physiological, emotional and social aspects of life in the home. Home stress denotes excessive force or expectation on which it could cause an individual harm, fatigue or distress (Nwokocha, 2013). Hence an individual in a stressful situation could show irritability, poor concentration low or poor productivity. The contemporary trend of the home stress is of much concern to educationists. The home as an entity has been identified to be a major breeding ground for stress on female caregivers which may have negative effective on their efficacy. Some sources of home stress include pressure, uncontrollability, frustration, aggression, bad spouse, inadequate finance, frequent quarrels and conflict, bad and unsuccessful children, infertility childlessness, death of spouse, dependents and house-helps, unrealistic goals, extra-marital affairs etc.

Education forms the basis for literacy, skill acquisition, technological advancement and ability to harness human and material resources towards the achievement of societal goals, and very important in any given society. It is a process by which abilities and capabilities of individuals are developed. These abilities might be physical abilities, emotional abilities, social abilities and intellectual abilities. A nursery school is an educational establishment or learning space offering early childhood education to children before they begin compulsory education at primary school. It may be publicly or privately operated and may be subsidized by public fund.

According to Ihem-Chijioke and Asonye (2018) pressure is the psychological experience produced by urgent demand or expectations for a person's behavior that comes from an outside source which uncontrollability is another factor that increases a person's experience of stress. The society expects the teachers to perform the function of classroom teaching, evaluating instructions relating with school authorities and subordinates as well as home duties. ICT as the new technology that is transforming ways of doing things, learning and solving human problems is a panacea to the issue of education for value re-orientation. ICT is seen as all technologies used in telecommunication, broadcast media, information processing, management and network transmission systems. It is a generic term for all technology devices, applications and management systems used for information management and communication (Bolaji, 2001).

ICT is one major technology that is shaping the character of female caregivers and indeed the society. Ajuzie (2009), posits that ICT is one thing that has invaded every aspect of human relationship and interactions. ICT devices have great potentials in teaching and learning, especially core values and morals. ICT services such as the social media have been found to who help and support each other to achieve common goals, impact positively on the teaching

and learning, and also helps learners to learn such core values as trust, team spirit, acceptance, tolerance, collaboration etc. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a global connection of many different types of computer networks linked together. This broad definition of ICT includes technologies such as radio, television, video, DVD, telephone (land lines and mobile phones), satellite systems, computers and network hardware and software as well as the equipment and services associated with these technologies such as video conferencing, e-mail and logs (UNESCO, 2015).

ICT has tremendously and positively affected development in all facets of human endeavors particularly in contemporary times ICT resources should be utilized in teaching and managing home stress in secondary education. This ICT components will facilitate knowledge acquisition and dissemination by teaching students within and between various disciplines. Thus, demand for ICT product is insatiable. The challenges for the educators in our secondary schools is no longer centered on covering the course content or adopting appropriate teaching and home stress management. The utilization of ICT resources and its effectiveness to reducing home stress is very low in secondary schools. ICT components utilization and in effective use in home stress management is questionable. It is on this background that the study tends to investigate home stress and effective utilization of ICT components among female caregivers.

Statement of the Problem

In recent times, women face significant stress as they juggle multiple roles, including preparing meals for their families, planning lessons, and managing academic responsibilities in higher institutions. Many households experience unique stressors such as conflicts with spouses, challenges with children, infertility, financial constraints, and unrealistic expectations (Nwokocha, 2013; Ekennia, 2003). Female caregivers, in particular, bear the burden of balancing their professional duties as educators with domestic responsibilities, which often leads to increased stress levels. Additionally, the lack of implementation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) components in schools further exacerbates these challenges, impacting their teaching skills, methods, and overall efficacy (Ajuzie, 2013; Egbule, 2008). The researchers worry is to investigate into home stress and effective utilization of ICT components in Orlu Education Zone. It is against this that the researchers were motivated to determine the home stress experienced by female teachers and the use of ICT components on the efficacy of nursery school female caregivers in Orlu Education Zone of Imo State. Female caregivers in nursery schools within the Orlu Education Zone of Imo State face a complex interplay of stressors. While they are crucial in providing early childhood education, they often navigate significant home stress, which can impact their professional efficacy. Furthermore, the effective integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) components into their teaching practices presents an additional layer of challenge. Recent studies have highlighted the increasing "technostress" experienced by female educators when faced with ICT integration (Salonen et al., 2016). This is compounded by the pre-existing stressors of balancing domestic responsibilities with professional demands, a burden disproportionately carried by women (Hochschild, 1989).

Therefore, there is a critical need to investigate the extent to which home stress, coupled with the challenges of ICT utilization, affects the efficacy of female caregivers in Orlu nursery schools. Specifically, there is a lack of localized data that shows the precise impact of these stressors within this specific educational zone. Understanding this impact is crucial for developing targeted interventions and support systems to enhance the well-being and professional performance of these essential educators.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate into home stress and effective utilization of ICT components among female caregivers in Orlu Nursery schools. The study addressed the following specific purposes;

1. To identify the causes of home stress among female caregivers.
2. To find out the availability of ICT components among female caregivers in Orlu nursery schools.
3. To ascertain the acquisition of ICT skills among female caregivers in Orlu nursery schools.
4. To find out if there is effective utilization of ICT components among female caregivers in Orlu nursery schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the causes of home stress among female caregivers in Orlu nursery schools?
2. Is there availability of ICT components among female caregivers in Orlu nursery schools?
3. What factors affect acquisition of ICT skills among female caregivers of Orlu nursery schools?
4. Is there effective utilization of ICT components among female caregivers in Orlu?

Method

This study adopts a descriptive survey design to investigate Home stress and the effective utilization of ICT components among female caregivers in Orlu Nursery Schools, Imo State. The population of the study comprises 1,600 female caregivers from 80 public nursery schools in Orlu Education Zone. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select the sample. First, 10% of the nursery schools (8 schools) were randomly selected. Subsequently, 20% of the female caregivers from these schools were chosen, resulting in a sample size of 320 participants. Data were collected using a 32-item structured questionnaire designed by the researcher. To ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was reviewed by experts in early child education and ICT, and a pilot study was conducted to test its reliability. The questionnaire was administered to the 320 female caregivers, and responses were analyzed using mean statistics. A mean score of 2.5 and above was considered acceptable, while scores below 2.5 were rejected.

Results

Table 1: Causes of home stress among female caregivers in Orlu nursery schools

S/N	Items on Causes of Home Stress	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remarks
1	Constant Quarrelling	160	120	20	50	3.3	Accepted
2	Use of Abusive Words	140	120	40	20	3.2	Accepted
3	Hostility from Spouse	55	135	20	10	3.4	Accepted
4	Harassment from Family Members	140	120	40	20	3.2	Accepted
5	Disrespect from Family Members	70	140	10	-	3.5	Accepted
6	Separation from Spouse	190	100	20	10	3.5	Accepted
7	Faces Humiliation at Home	180	100	30	10	3.4	Accepted
8	Busy at Home	45	50	60	165	2.0	Rejected
Grand Mean						3.2	Accepted

Table 1 revealed that disrespect from people in your household and separation from spouse were the most causes of home stress with (mean=3.5) respectively. This is followed by hostility from spouse, facing humiliation at home with mean scores of 3.4. In this sequence, others followed thus: constant quarrelling, use of abusive words on others, harassment from family members and always working at home with mean scores as 3.3, 3.2, 3.2 and 2.0 respectively.

Table 2: Availability of ICT components among female caregivers in Orlu nursery schools

S/N	Items	FA	SA	RA	NA	Mean	Remarks
1	E-mail	40	70	99	121	1.8	Rejected
2	Storage Devices	55	75	100	90	2.3	Rejected
3	Mobile Phones	170	80	45	25	3.2	Accepted
4	Whatsapp	120	100	80	20	3.0	Accepted
5	Web Browser	35	65	100	130	1.8	Rejected
6	Computer Set	48	85	100	97	2.3	Rejected
7	E-Book	70	60	85	95	2.3	Rejected
8	YouTube	58	82	108	72	2.4	Rejected
9	Computer Printer	56	64	110	100	2.3	Rejected
10	Computer Games	165	70	50	35	3.1	Accepted
Grand Mean						2.5	Accepted

Table 2 showed that the use of mobile phones, computer games and WhatsApp with mean scores of 3.2 and 3.1 frequently available to female teachers. YouTube, e-book, storage devices, printers, computer set, web browser, e-mail were found to be rarely and never available with mean rating of below 2.50. The table further reveals that the ICT component that their availability were below average on a 4 points Likert scale of measurement.

Table 3: Factors affecting the acquisition of ICT skills among female caregivers in Orlu nursery schools.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remarks
1	Irregular Supply of Power	150	120	30	20	3.3	Accepted
2	There is Alternative Source of Power	55	50	80	135	2.1	Rejected
3	Lack of Proper Seminar/ Workshop	100	120	60	40	2.9	Accepted
4	Poor Knowledge of ICT Operations	160	130	20	10	3.4	Accepted
5	Inadequate Fund	150	120	30	20	3.3	Accepted
6	Frequent Breakdown of Appliances	140	120	40	20	3.2	Accepted
7	Frequent Changes in the Models of ICT Components	110	100	90	20	2.9	Accepted
8	Inadequate ICT	150	120	30	20	3.3	Accepted
Grand Mean						3.15	Accepted

Table 3 shows that the most factors that affect acquisition of ICT skills by female caregivers that of poor knowledge of ICT operations, inadequate ICT components, irregular supply of power, inadequate fund, frequent changes in the models of ICT components, frequent breakdown of appliances and lack of proper seminar/ workshops with means of 3.4, 3.3, 3.3, 3.3, 3.2, 2.9 and 2.9 respectively. The table revealed all the identified problems that affect the acquisition of ICT skills as their mean value is above 2.50 with alternative source power as the least encountered factor with mean score of 2.1.

Table 4: Effective utilization of ICT components among female caregivers

S/N	Items	FU	SU	RU	NU	Mean	Remarks
1	Uses computer to assess student's continuous assessment	128	97	50	45	2.9	Accepted
2	Search engine is used to download relevant information	140	88	60	32	3.1	Accepted
3	Power point to plan lessons	30	80	100	110	2.1	Rejected
4	Use of internet to search for teaching materials	130	90	68	32	3.0	Accepted
5	ICT components for recording student's exam results	50	58	120	92	2.2	Rejected
6	Uses e-mail to give and get feedback from students	33	77	101	109	2.1	Rejected
Grand Mean						2.6	Accepted

Table 4 reveals the effective utilization of ICT component among female caregivers in Orlu nursery schools. The table shows that the female caregivers utilizes ICT components to search for teaching materials, makes use of search engines to download relevant current information and as well as uses computer to access student's continuous assessment results

with mean scores of 3.1, 3.0 and 2.9, respectively. The table further revealed that the female caregivers do not use ICT components effectively as power-point is not used to plan lessons, neither for recording students' examination scores, e-mail either is not used to get feedback from students with following mean scores 2.2, 2.1 and 2.1 respectively with mean ratings below 2.5.

Discussion of Findings

The result of research question one has it that home stress among female caregivers is caused by disrespect from people in one's household, separation from spouse. This is in consonant with Nwokeocha (2013), who opined that an individual in a stressful situation could show irritability, poor concentration, low or poor productivity. Ekennia (2003) opined that causes of stress in everyday life include pressure, uncontrollability and frustration. The less control a person has the greater the degree of stress. The society expects the female teachers to perform the function of classroom teaching and as well as home managers.

The results of research question 2 on availability of ICT components shows that only mobile phones and WhatsApp were available ICT component to female caregivers. The non-availability of ICT limits the rate they manages stress. This is in line with Ajuzie(2013) who observed that ICT is of great help in sustainable development in Nigeria as it assists in providing resources which will contribute meaningfully to the global challenges of information age. Egbule(2008) cited in Akude (2010) states that ICT tools may not be readily available for classroom instruction among the developing countries of the world. Showing factors that affects the acquisition of ICT skills in table 3, a number of factors such as poor knowledge of ICT operations and adequate ICT components, irregular supply of power among others have affected the acquisition of ICT skills among female caregivers.

This study revealed that ICT skills acquisition of female caregivers is too low to enable them cope with home stress. There is need for it to be improved upon and sustained among the female caregivers in order to enhance teaching and learning in our schools. This is in line with the views of Ayemi and Onosanya (2008) who stressed that in spite of the benefits of ICT in education, most teachers have not taken the advantages in their classroom teaching and professional development. Ayemi and Onosanya (2008) further stressed that the reasons adduced non-utilization of ICT in teaching and learning process included inadequacy of ICT facilities for the teaming population of teachers who needed them.

Finally, results in table four shows what the female caregivers effectively utilizes ICT components to search for teaching materials, makes use of search engines to download relevant current information and as well uses computer to access student's assessment results while the caregivers do not utilize the ICT components in other relevant areas of teaching and learning. Therefore, all hands must be on deck to provide the female teachers with the needed components and relevant information as well as the competences to handle them.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings of this study have found that female caregivers in Orlu nursery schools are behind in ICT components utilization for instructional delivery. The resources were found not to be adequately available and the female caregivers lack the acquisition of skills as it relates to managing home stress. The study also identified some causes of home stress. Hence in the availability, acquisition of ICT skills, effective utilization of ICT components there is a gap. It is therefore recommended that:

1. Government should increase the funding's of the education sector,
2. There should be periodic training and restraining of teachers on basic ICT components and skills.
3. The government and stakeholders should make haste and refurbish our schools.

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