

Occupational Stress -A Study on Teachers Working In Self Financing Colleges in Chennai

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I. Introduction

Today the environment is characterized by three Cs namely – change, challenge and competition. In this tough and challenging competitive environment, it is very essential not only to survive but also to emerge as winners – the only key to stay in competition in the long run. Educational institutions are no exceptions to this phenomenon. Every institution puts its best efforts to be a best institution in imparting knowledge. To serve this purpose the strongest assets available to organizations are its human resources, that is the teachers who are the sources of ample amount of information and knowledge.

Teaching profession is generally considered as a noble profession with lots of expectations from various sections of the society. Many assume that teaching profession is the least stressful careers. Although not highly paid in comparison to professionals in the commercial sector, academics have been envied for their tenure, light workloads, flexibility and the freedom to pursue their own research interests. However during the past two decades many of these advantages have been eroded. Like many other organizations with changes in trend and expectations the teaching career also carries a huge amount of stress. Greater part of stress is associated with the rapid pace of changes in education in the last decade. (Gillespie.N.A et al 2001)

Finding a teacher who doesn't feel stressed is possibly like trying to find a needle in a haystack. Increasing numbers of academic positions are now untenured, workloads have increased and academics are under increasing pressure to attract external funds Stress is a consequence of a misbalance between a person and his or her environment, and the perceived inability to manage the hurdles and resultant demands. It arises from an opportunity, demand, constraint, threat or challenge when the outcome of the event is important and uncertain. It may also be construed as a pressure, strain or tension. Teacher stress can be explained as the experience by a teacher of unpleasant, negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, or depression, resulting from some aspect of their work as a teacher. (Kyriacou 2001)

II. Review Of Literature

Aziz.M (2004) examined the role stress among women in the Indian Information technology sector. 264 women professionals in IT industry were examined and the results showed that resource inadequacy emerged as the most potent role stressor followed by role overload, personal inadequacy, role stagnation, role erosion, inter role distance, role expectation conflict, self role distance, role ambiguity and role isolation.

Kyriacou.C and Chien. P (2004) examined teachers stress in Taiwanese Primary Schools. 203 teachers were examined and the results showed that changeable education policy of the government were the most potent stressor. It was followed by public attitude and misunderstanding about primary teacher's workload, additional administrative work, being observed by colleagues, student teachers ratio, college tutors or parents, special needs of pupils in the class and pupils misbehavior.

Leemamol Mathew (2005) conducted an exploratory study on occupational stress and coping strategies of special educators in South India. 35 special educators who had experience of more than two years were studied. The study revealed that school structure and climate, home/work interface, relationship with other people, low salary, job insecurity, work overload and high teacher student ratio were the sources of stress. Major coping strategies used by the special educators were social support, task strategies and balance of home and work relationship. Mokdad. M (2005) studied the occupational stress among Algerian teachers. 126 teachers of primary schools were studied. The teacher's major sources of stress identified were society, parents, the teaching environment, pupils, supervision, the curriculum, colleagues and administration. Nwadiani Mon (2006) investigated the level of stress among lecturers in Nigerian Universities. Samples of 218 lecturers were studied. Poor salaries, lack of instructional resources, poor interpersonal relationship among staff and students, unmanageable student population, preparation of examination results, invigilation of examination, government intervention, lack of annual leave/holiday and under funding of education, were the basis for stress. The finding also indicated that Nigerian lecturers are highly stressed, irrespective of their sex and marital status and experience.

Need For The Study

Providing education to all is one the policies of the Government. Need for education at the primary level and at higher level is important to mould the youth of the country. Teachers play a vital role in the creation and development of knowledge and innovation, in addition to education and training. A teacher is expected to be seen as a counselor to both students and parents, sometimes as a nurse, a social worker even to some extent a parent in certain occasions.

An academicians can work to the fullest extent only if he/she is stress free. Teaching like other professions involves stress as an inevitable tool of challenges, flavor, and change which adds zest for living. Attracting developing and retaining future teachers as nation builders are major concerns to the various stakeholders in education. (Alaba .O. Agbatogun 2010)

It is important to study and manage the source of stress in teachers rationalistically as they have the important duty of educating individuals. The study was carried out in order to enable a better understanding of occupational stress among the teachers in self financing colleges.

III. Objectives Of The Study

1. To identify the predominant factors of stress in the work environment.
2. To identify the consequences of stress.
3. To study the relationship between sources and consequences of stress.

IV. Research Methodology

Sample:600 teachers working in self financing Arts and Science Colleges were selected through simple random sampling method and questionnaires were distributed. 550 questionnaires were returned out of which 40 were unusable. Therefore the sample size was 510.

Tool: The information was mainly collected from primary sources, through questionnaire instrument.

V. Results And Discussion

The analysis of the data collected is represented in tabular form along with the interpretations.

Demogrphic Details Of Respondents

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	NO OF RESPONDENTS
GENDER	
MALE	270
FEMALE	240
AGE	
UNDER 26	58
26-35YRS	315
36-45 YRS	106
46-55YRS	31
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION	
M.PHIL	370
PhD	52
NET/SLET	88
DESIGNATION	
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR	378
HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT	100
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR	32
WORK EXPERIENCE	
LESS THAN 5YRS	196
5-10YRS	194
10-15YRS	78
15- 20 YRS	42

MONTHLY INCOME	
LESS THAN 10000	142
10000-15000	178
15000-20000	106
20000-25000	43
25000-30000	18
GREATER THAN 30000	23
MARTIAL STATUS	
SINGLE	158
MARRIED	352

Factors Influencing Stress

The factors influencing stress factor were identified by Principal component method.

Table showing Rotated Component Matrix of Job Related Statements

	Component		
	1	2	3
VAR00007	.772		
VAR00008	.767		
VAR00006	.657		
VAR00009	.553		
VAR00003	.534		
VAR00002	.434		
VAR00011		.747	
VAR00012		.737	
VAR00013		.698	
VAR00010		.509	
VAR00005			.789
VAR00004			.717
VAR00001			.694

From the above table it is found that three factors are derived out of thirteen variables of job related statements. The following variable loadings are useful to name the factors. The factor comprises three variables.

- Marking exam scrip (.747), Dealing with students' discipline(.694), Lack of co operation from students(.657), Larger classes/more students(.434)

From the above values this factor is known as "**Student Related Stressors**".

Similarly the second factor is the composition of variables namely

- Dealing with new methods of teaching (.789), Frequent changes in subject allocation (.772), Teaching new/additional courses (.717) and Frequent changes in syllabus (.534)

Hence this factor is labeled as "**Innovative Approaches**".

The third factor is made up of five variables.

- Inconvenient and frequent changes in time table (.767), Need to hit target/deadlines (.737), Staying back after the regular timings to finish the lab classes (.698), Unable to plan working day (.553) and Dealing with administration work (.509)

Therefore this factor is known as "**Job Accomplishment Stressors**".

The factor analysis by principal component method identified for predominant factors directly creating stress among college teachers based on their job related assignments. It can be concluded that the college teachers in arts and science colleges in Chennai city are highly inclined for the afflictions of job related stressors. It is found that **student related stressors and innovative approaches** in the respective designation create more stress among the college teachers. Marking exam scrip and dealing with new methods of teaching

were the highest source of stress among student related stressors and innovative approaches. The pressure to **accomplish** in their respective jobs was also a precipitating factor. Stress is related to an individual’s tendency to strive for achievement. The individual makes a continuous struggle to accomplish or achieve more and more things. Emphasis on deadlines and staying back after the regular timing puts an immense pressure on teachers of self financing colleges.

Consequences Of Stress

The consequences of stress were identified through the health related variables by principal component method and the following results were obtained.

Table showing Rotated Component Matrix health Related Variables

	Component	
	1	2
VAR00010	.717	
VAR00008	.716	
VAR00009	.716	
VAR00011	.716	
VAR00006	.656	
VAR00012	.613	
VAR00007	.592	
VAR00005	.575	
VAR00013	.555	
VAR00002		.822
VAR00003		.784
VAR00001		.754
VAR00004		.617

Two factors are resulting out of thirteen variables of health problem statements. To name the factors the following variable loadings were used.

The first aspect encompass of the following:

- Feel irritated and frustrated (.822), Often getting angry (.784), Have frequent arguments (.754), Work has led to depression (.716) and Have feeling of helplessness (.617)
 Hence this factor is coined as “**Psychological Health Problems**”

Likewise the second factor embraces of the following:

- Breathing and other related problems have been developed (.717), Have difficulty in sleeping (.716), Have developed stomach related problems (.716), Prone to headache/migraine (.656), End of the day feel fatigued (.613), Blood pressure has increased (.592), Have neck/shoulder pain due to anxiety (.575) and There is an increased consumption of tobacco/alcohol (.555)

Therefore this factor is known as “**Physiological health problems**”.

The study revealed the stress impacted on them psychologically. **Psychological consequences** are the feeling of ill being associated with various types and phases of mental illness They described feelings of anxiety, depression, burnout, anger, irritability, helplessness and being overwhelmed, in addition to forgetfulness, an inability to switch off and frustration towards oneself, other staff and or management. It is quite obvious that if an individual is suffering from work place stress it would more likely affect his /her personal life

A number of consequences can result from stress. The consequences and level of job stress is a subject matter of consideration. If the stress is positive it may result in more energy, enthusiasm and motivation otherwise the experience of work can lead to a variety of symptoms of stress that harm employee’s health. Due to increasing competitions at the workplace, teachers are working hard to meet deadlines. This tremendous pressure of work also affects them **Physiologically**. The study highlighted that stress had resulted in a variety of physical illness which included, cold, backache, headache, digestive problems, diabetes and blood pressure etc.

Relationship Between Sources And Consequences Of Stress

Karl Pearson coefficient of correlation is used to obtain the parametric relationship between sources and effects of stress.

Table showing Relationship between Sources and Consequences of stress

		Psycho-logical effects	Physio-logical effects
Student Related Stressors	Pearson Correlation	.170(**)	.148(**)
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.001	.004
	N	383	383
Innovative Approaches	Pearson Correlation	.150(**)	.212(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.000
	N	383	383
Job Accompli-ishment Stressors	Pearson Correlation	.073	-.009
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.155	.855
	N	383	383

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

From the above table it is found that student related stressors are positively correlated to psychological effects (r=0.170) and physiological effects (r=0.148) which is statistically significant at 5% level. It is also inferred that innovative approaches stressors are positively correlated to psychological effects (r=0.150) and physiological effects (r=0.212).Henceforth it can be concluded that the self financing teachers develop psychological and physiological effects due to student related stressors and innovative approaches.

Findings: The research was primarily an empirical examination of the causes and consequences of stress of teachers in self financing colleges. Some of the crucial findings are:

- Among the student related stressors marking exam scrip followed by dealing with student discipline were the major factors responsible for stress.
- In relation to the innovative approaches dealing with new methods of teaching followed by frequent changes in subject allocation were the stressors.
- Inconvenient and frequent changes in time table followed by need to hit target/deadlines were the major factors responsible for stress among the job accomplishment stressors.
- The major psychological health problems faced by the teachers are feeling irritated & frustrated and often getting angry.
- Breathing problems, having difficulty in sleeping and developing stomach related problems are the predominant physiological health problems.
- Student related stressors and innovative approaches stressors have lead to psychological and physiological consequences. But the job accomplishment stressors did not lead to any consequence of stress.

VI. Conclusion

The problem of stress is inevitable and unavoidable in the educational institutions. This sector which was once considered as the stress free sector is now prone sector. Both the individual and organization can take appropriate coping strategies. Managing stress should be a responsibility of the individuals also. The most important thing for individuals to remember is that stress is created by people’s reactions to situations, rather than the situation. It involves recognising the stressors or the factors that causes stress and affects health. Individuals have to identify certain stress symptoms and relate it with the stress situation that one is going through. Then adopt lifestyle techniques of stress management and seek medical help when it becomes necessary. Management must take several initiatives in helping their employees overcome its disastrous effect, as otherwise this would ultimately affect their performance and presence in a competitive market. Efforts should be made to provide a common platform to the teachers where they get an opportunity to develop them and project their potential talent.

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