



A STUDY ON OCCUPATIONAL STRESS OF COLLEGE TEACHERS IN TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ARTS AND SCIENCE COLLEGES)

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Abstract

Stress is the non specific response of the physical and mental health of the human being to any demands placed upon beyond the limit. Occupational stress is the response people may have when the work pressures are not matched with the knowledge, skills or expectations and abilities. Education sector is one of the fastest growing sectors where new teaching methodologies, techniques, are evolving rapidly and hence it is difficult for the faculty members to cope with the challenges in carrying out the roles and responsibilities in an effective way. It affects the quality of work life which ultimately shows adverse effect in job satisfaction. The objective of the paper is to explore the faculty perception towards occupational stress working in arts and science colleges. The primary data questionnaire is used for the research study collected from the faculty members and professors from various departments in arts and science colleges in and around Tiruchirappalli district. The result of the research study is based on the response from the faculty's opinion and suggestions extended to find new techniques to manage stress in workplace.

Key words: *Occupational Stress, Work stress, Teachers, Faculty, Burnout*

1. Introduction

Stress is considered to be any pressure which exceeds the individual's capacity to maintain physiological, psychological and emotional stability as if everything depends on the mental and physical ability. ¹Occupational stress can be defined as the physical and emotional response that occurs where worker perceives an imbalance between their work demands and their capability or resources to meet these demands. In simple words it is the harmful physical and emotional response that can happen when there is conflict between job demands on the employee and the amount of control and employees roles and responsibilities has over meeting these demands.

² Occupational stress has become increasingly common in teaching profession largely because of increased occupational complexities and increased economic pressure on individuals to cope with the financial constraints. The main causes of stress among the college teachers were reported as their multiple academic and administrative roles assigned to them irrespective of teaching subjects. It leads to decrease in quality of teaching and lack of efficiency which in turn affect the relationship between the student and lecturers. Student related issues also give mental pressure for the teachers as they are being answerable for the unfavourable incidents happening in colleges.

³ Classroom remain overcrowded and teacher face intensive verbal communications, prolonged standing, high volume of work load and continuous class hours. With the changing socio-economic scenario and increasing unemployment, the values of teacher and their professional concerns associated with the job have undergone a change, increasing stresses and hassles of teachers in terms of qualification, experience and work participation. Occupational stress in teachers can lead to a variety of negative outcomes including emotional exhaustion, feelings of depersonalization, feeling on not spending time with family, physical problems and a sense of failure with one's personal accomplishment,

2. Review of Literature

⁴Goodman, (1980); ⁵Schnacke, (1982); ⁶Schwanke, (1981); ⁷Bertoch et al: A survey of recent studies of teacher stress shows that many identified stressors appear consistently and may be subsumed under the general domains of environmental and personality based stressors. Environmental stressors include student discipline and attitude problems, teacher competence, and teacher administrator relations. Additional stressors include accountability laws, large classes, low salaries, intense pupil dependence, and declining community support. Sources of personality-induced stressors relate to one's self-perception. Negative self-perception, negative life experiences, low morale, and a struggle to maintain personal values and standards in the classroom all take their toll.

²Apex (1985): The major causes of Occupational Stress enumerated are: (1) Environmental factors, (2) Job design faults, (3) Employer Employee relationships, (4) Social isolation, (5) Failure to solve grievances, (6) Fear of adverse health effects and (7) Threat of job losses.

⁸Borg and Riding (1991) conducted an investigation of Occupational Stress on 545 teachers in Malta. It was revealed that one-third of the respondents rated teaching as stressful or very stressful. The study was also identified pupil misbehaviour, poor working conditions, poor staff relations and time pressures as leading contributors to stress.

⁹Dunham (1992), who defined stress as a process of behavioural, emotional, mental, and physical reactions caused by prolonged, increasing or new pressures that are significantly greater than the availability of "coping" strategies. He advocated that three main approaches could be used to understand the nature of stress in teaching. The first one is analogous to the "engineering" model of stress. There are external pressures exerted on teachers in colleges, and teachers have limits to stress. In this approach, stress is a set of causes. The second approach is based on the "physiological" model, which focuses on the forms of reactions taken by teachers in response to these pressures. They may be emotional and bodily manifestations. The third one is the interactional approach that emphasizes the need to identify the sources of stress and the behaviour that they adopt to cope with these demands.

³Blix et al. (1994) in their research on "occupational stress among university teachers" found out that two third of the university faculty reported that they perceived job stress at least half of the scheduled time. Faculty also expressed burnout, health problems caused by job stress, decreased work output, low capacity to manage the work stress and basis of job change.

¹⁰Mishra (1996) conducted a study to compare the levels of occupational stress and job satisfaction among male and female teachers of higher educational institutions. The study was conducted on a sample of 80 degree college teachers comprising 40 males and 40 females. Results indicated that significant differences observed between male and female teachers on overall stress and overall job satisfaction scores. Stress was found to be correlated negatively and significantly with job satisfaction in both the groups.

¹¹Pestonjee and Azeem (2001) conducted a study on "A Study of Organisational Role Stress in relation to Job Burnout among University Teachers". Their study consisted of (N=300) university teachers, which has been classified into three groups of 100 each. The results of the study indicate that organizational role stress is highly correlated with job burnout among all the three groups of teachers (Lecturers, Readers and Professors).

¹²Winefield et al, (2003) In Australian universities, a national survey on occupational stress revealed that "academic staffs were generally worse off than general staff, and staffs in newer universities were worse off than those in older universities".

¹³Kumar & Deo (2011) measured different aspects of work life among 100 college teachers of Bihar and Jharkhand to find out the differences in perception of male and female, senior and junior teachers and revealed that junior college teachers experienced significant more stress as compared to senior teachers and female teachers experienced more role overload and inter role distance stress as compared to their male counterparts.

¹⁴Reddy and Poornima (2012), South India study have shown that majority (74%) of the university teachers are experiencing moderate and high level of stress and 86% of teachers have professional burnout. They also found that there is a positive relationship between the occupational stress and professional burnout among the university teachers.

¹⁵Sing and Rani (2015) show in a study in Haryana that stress reduces teachers' efficiency and effectiveness due to mood disturbance, psychological distress, anxiety, lowered morale, cardiovascular disease and fatigue

3. Research Methodology

Research Problem

²Teaching profession was once viewed as a 'low stress occupation' and they have been envied for tenure, light workload, flexibility, less emotional and physical pressure. However, some recent studies suggest that the teaching faculty is among the most stressed occupational group.' They need to update themselves in terms of qualification and face eligibility tests to join in higher educational institutions. Rapid growth of internet and technology emerges in education sector too and hence it is the responsibility of the teaching professionals to develop outstanding skills for value based teaching. This interest has reflected itself in an ever increasing research orientation to study the various dimensions of occupational stress of teachers in higher educational institutions.

Objectives of the study

To study the occupational stress of college teachers in arts and science colleges.

To examine the various causes of work stress that affects faculties in the college environment.

To evaluate the stress level of faculty members working in colleges by examining various dimensions related to occupational stress.

To suggest new techniques for the faculty members to manage stress in workplace.

Scope of the study

Globalization has shifted the perspectives of Indian higher education sector to a greater extent. According to the author's suggestion ¹⁴'the increasing role played by latest knowledge, skills, innovation and research in economic growth and development, the emergence of the information society and the need for quality education results in increased pressure on the higher education system and teachers, in particular'. This phenomenal change in the Indian educational sector in context of the privatization has created a scope for studying occupational stress among teachers in colleges.

Research design

Applied research is designed to solve practical problems of the modern world, rather than to

acquire knowledge for knowledge's sake. This research was conducted based on the interview session and the questionnaire distribution with the targeted respondents. Probability sampling is used in this research study. The questionnaire response received from the sampling size of 100 respondents selected on the basis of stratified random sampling method, includes Head of the Department, Assistant Professors and Associate Professors from various departments in arts and science colleges in Tiruchirappalli district.

The sample consists of men and women of different ages and special preference given to new entry faculties. The selection of this sample is based on the assumption that the faculty members with minimum years of experience can give a better response to the questionnaire. The secondary data is collected through various journals and research papers. The primary data is collected through questionnaires collected from the respondents for this research study. The statistical tools are used in SPSS software for data analysis and interpretation.

Limitations of the study

1. The survey is conducted based on a limited number of respondents, confined to Tiruchirappalli district only.
2. Specifically education sector is focused in this research study and hence the suggestions for development are not common for all organizations in other sectors.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Percentage Analysis for Demographic Variables

Demographic Variables	Variables	Frequency	Valid Percent
AGE	Below 30 years	14	14.0
	30-40 years	36	36.0
	41-50 years	39	39.0
	Above 50 years	11	11.0
Total		100	100.0
GENDER	Male	33	53.0
	Female	67	47.0
Total		100	100.0
Demographic Variables	Variables	Frequency	Valid Percent
HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL	PG Degree	34	24.0
	M.Phil	52	52.0
	Ph.D	14	24.0

Total		100	100.0
TEACHING EXPERIENCE	Below 5 years	49	24.0
	5-10 years	24	49.0
	11-20 years	16	16.0
	Above 20 years	11	11.0
Total		100	100.0
MONTHLY INCOME	Below 10000	20	20.0
	10000-20000	38	38.0
	21000-30000	27	27.0
	Above 30000	15	15.0
Total		100	100.0

Table 1

Findings

It is inferred that majority 75% of the respondents are in the middle age group between 30 - 50 as teaching profession in college need higher educational qualification.. Almost equal importance's given to both male and female faculties as they both contribute equally themselves towards the college development in the area of teaching. More than 60% of the teaching staffs are qualified with higher degree level depicts the quality of college teachers. It is inferred that nearly 70% of the respondents are having below ten years of teaching experience and this indicate the entry level employees and the mediocre experience faculties are facing the occupational stress to a greater extent.

Factor Analysis for Causes of Stress in Workplace

KMO and Bartlett's test for Causes of Stress in Workplace

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.553
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1297.999
	Df	105
	Sig.	.000

Table 2

Rotated Component Matrix^a

Causes of Stress in Workplace	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Excessive Working hours	.893	-.008	.012	-.013	.116	.284
Increase in Class size	-.068	.716	-.013	-.008	.251	.354
Excessive Workload	.060	.108	-.110	.107	.861	.142
Unclear Job description	.734	-.017	-.035	-.002	.068	.133
Poor Compensation aspects	.053	.029	.105	.803	.132	.211
Students Misbehaviour	.212	.001	.121	.157	.010	.547
Poor Working Environment	-.248	-.189	.136	.198	-.052	.797
Lack of support from management/department	.691	.191	.496	.114	.610	-.206
Non teaching activities	.147	.836	.445	-.035	.101	-.209
Lack of career development	.173	.125	.701	.038	.542	.195
Workplace bullying	.080	.126	.283	.026	.816	-.112
Health problems	.499	.130	-.053	.356	-.009	-.093
Poor interaction with the colleagues	.114	.078	-.140	.882	.006	-.036
Achieving result target pressure	.026	.656	.740	.135	.027	-.075
Admission target for entry level teachers	.016	.076	.573	-.189	-.032	.134
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.						
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.						

Table 2.1

Findings

High value of KMO (0.553>0 .05) indicates that a factor analysis is useful for the present data. The significant value for Bartlett’s test of Sphericity is 0.000 and is less than .05 which indicates that there exist significant relationships among the variables. From the rotated component matrix, it is inferred that out of fifteen causes of stress factors, six causes are considered to be the most important stress factors of college teachers in workplace. They are

- Excessive Working hours
- Excessive Workload
- Poor Compensation aspects
- Poor Working Environment
- Non teaching activities
- Achieving result target pressure

Factor Analysis for Stress Management Techniques to Overcome Work Stress

KMO and Bartlett’s test for Stress management techniques to overcome work stress

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.509
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1357.999
	Df	105
	Sig.	.000

Table 3

Rotated Component Matrixa

Stress Management Techniques	Component		
	1	2	3
Developing positive attitude	.809	-.052	-.052
Regular exercise or Yoga	.869	-.089	-.108
Spending time with family and children	.654	.110	.033
Work time Management	-.017	.759	.044
Sound sleep and physical rest	-.425	.676	-.193
Interaction with positive people	-.541	-.214	-.419
Showing interest in hobbies	-.291	-.685	-.225
Maintaining healthy habits	-.150	-.503	.478
Confident work actions	.041	-.020	.790
Periodic Health check ups	-.026	.054	.726
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.			
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.			
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.			

Table 3.1

Findings

High value of KMO (0.509>0 .05) indicates that a factor analysis is useful for the present data. The significant value for Bartlett’s test of Sphericity is 0.000 and is less than .05 which indicates that there exist significant relationships among the variables. From the rotated component matrix, it is inferred that out of ten stress management techniques, three techniques are considered to be the most important influencing factors to release stress of college teachers in workplace. They are ,

- Regular exercise or Yoga

- Work time Management
- Confident work actions

ANOVA test for gender and Stress management techniques to overcome stress:

Hypothesis

Null hypothesis H0- There is no significant relationship between the gender and stress management techniques to overcome stress.

Alternative hypothesis H1-There is significant relationship between the gender and stress management techniques to overcome stress.

Stress Management Techniques	F	Sig.
Developing positive attitude	.387	.775
Regular exercise or Yoga	.465	.365
Spending time with family and children	.597	.618
Work time Management	.000	.395
Sound sleep and physical rest	.887	.134
Interaction with positive people	.251	.294
Showing interest in hobbies	.139	.098
Maintaining healthy habits	.762	.469
Confident work actions	.946	.392
Periodic Health check ups	.287	.751

Table 4

Findings

Based on the result generated by SPSS, it is clearly inferred that all the attitude variables significant values are greater than 0.05 and hence the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence there is no significant relationship between the gender and stress management techniques to overcome stress.

Suggestions

- Since excessive workload and work time is found to be the major cause factors of stress in teachers workplace, the management can render its support by recruiting more teaching staffs to reduce the workload.
- Compensation benefit is also found to be the most influencing stress factor for teaching faculties. They need to be recognised with good salary based on their qualification and teaching experience. Institutions can adapt various incentive schemes to motivate teachers.
- Deserved faculties are encouraged by means of awarding Best Faculty awards, salary increments, based on their performance.

- Separate health care centres can be established in colleges for periodic health checkups of the teachers to diagnose stress related problems.
- The management can take initiatives in conducting counselling and stress management programmes to overcome teachers stress in weekends or during vacations.
- Teachers should maintain a cordial and friendly relationship with all their colleagues irrespective of their designation and years of experience so that a favourable working environment can be adapted.
- Management can encourage the faculty members to organise and arrange for tours at least once in a year as it reduces the grievances between the staffs and make themselves personally feels enthusiastic and get relaxed from other problems.
- Female teachers on the other hand responded high, experiences over occupational stress in comparison with the male as household activities is traditionally the part of female members and hence availing flexible working hours can help them to overcome their stress to a greater extent.
- Institutions can organise management games for faculty members, make them to actively participate in various game activities to overcome their work stress excluding regular college works.

Conclusion

Teachers have always been the centre of attention in the classroom to make their students to listen, yet ironically their concerns and needs have not always been addressed in the same way This article focuses on occupational work stress of college teachers and it is found that stress has been increasing due to the evolving needs, improper guidance, tough competition, work pressure and short deadlines. Hence this research study focuses on finding causes, recommends some valuable suggestions and adopts stress management techniques for overcoming the work stress.

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