

Daily Hassles among School Teachers

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Daily Hassles at Work Scale (DHAWS) developed by the investigators was administered on 148 female and 52 male teachers belonging to two secondary schools situated in a sub-urban area in Perak, Malaysia. The main objectives of the present study were: (a) to identify the daily hassles at work among secondary school teachers, and (b) to examine differences in the perception of daily hassles at work among male and female school teachers. Results revealed that female teachers as compared to male teachers scored significantly higher on too much responsibility, traveling to and from work, can't say no when I should work, not enough time for family, and being taken for granted as the daily hassles at work.

Keywords: Daily hassles, School teachers

In general, daily hassles at work affect the quality of work life. Daily hassles at work can be stressful in many ways. School teacher's role is extremely demanding. The working conditions account for stress and burnout feeling in life of teachers (Mishra & Panda, 1996). Stress among teachers has become a topic of professional interest, but studies relating to daily hassles at work are rather scanty. Results of many studies reported that daily hassles are one of the main contributors for stress. Research studies proved that the cumulative effects of daily hassles over time are probably the significant source of stress (Zohar, 1999).

In many countries teacher's job is often considered as one the most stressful profession (Ravichandran & Rajendran, 2007). Teaching is known as noble profession with lots of expectations from students, parents and the society. The high expectations from everyone make the profession very challenging and stressful.

Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978) defined teachers stress as response of negative effect (such as anger or depression) by a teacher usually accompanied by potentially pathogenic physiological and biochemical

changes (such as increased heart rate or release of adrenocorticotrophic hormones in the bloodstream) resulting from aspects of teacher's job and mediated by the perception that the demands made up upon the teachers constitute a threat to his self esteem or well being by coping mechanisms activated to reduce the perceived threat. Kyriacou (2001) stated that teachers perceived stress as an unpleasant, negative emotion such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration or depression resulting from some aspect of their work as a teacher. Various studies have been conducted on teachers' stress and burnout. Available data suggests that teachers' of primary school, secondary school or the university level experienced different level of stress in the daily life situation (Kumari, 2008).

Teaching and Work Stress

Hassles or stress at workplace are part of peoples work life. Teachers experience a great deal of work stress. Teaching has a number of specific stressors such as dealing with disruptive student behavior, the pressure of school inspection, providing cover for colleagues and large workload (Fitzgerald, 2008).

Teachers carry a great deal of responsibilities, having to educate and impart knowledge as well. The Malaysian National Education Philosophy which clearly defined the task and responsibility in the teaching profession is used as the guiding principles in all matters pertaining to education planning and implementation. Teachers play an important role to uphold this philosophy and to facilitate the achievement of the National Education Goals.

Studies have consistently concluded that teaching is a stressful occupation, and that a significant number of teachers, perhaps even majority are affected by work related stress (Rudow, 1999). Findings of a study by Johnson, Cooper, Cartwright, Donald, Taylor and Millet (2005) showed that teaching is one of the top stressful jobs.

Therefore, the present investigators believe that daily hassles at work perceived by the school teachers should be studied thoroughly as this has become the main factor that affects the teachers' quality of work life as well as their social and family life. It is necessary to examine gender differences on daily hassles at workplace. The investigators are also interested to find out as to whether is there any difference exist in the perception of daily hassles among female and male teachers.

Objectives

The specific objectives of this research are:

1. to identify the daily hassles at work among secondary school teachers.
2. to examine differences in the perception of daily hassles at work among male and female school teachers.

Significance of the Study

Everybody encounters daily hassles in their life. Daily hassles are the part and parcel of human life. Daily hassles can be related anything such as having to make decisions,

arguing with friends and family, trying to meet deadlines at school or work and stepping on a piece of bubble gum that someone carelessly spitted out.

Daily hassles at work adversely impact to the people who are working. Role overload is a good example of a daily hassles at work. When people are exposed to work on more tasks than they can handle or to work on tasks that are too difficult for them, they perceived work overload.

Teachers face a lot of daily hassles at work. Teaching is not only hard work, it is more distressful. Pressure due to school reform efforts, inadequate administrative support, poor working conditions, lack of participation in school decision making, the burden of paperwork, lack of resources have all been identified as hassles in teaching profession.

The daily hassle at work among teachers is an issue that should be given a great attention. The problem may look simple but the effects associated with may be personal, organizational, and family. The investigator have not come across a single study which has investigated what are the daily hassles at work perceived by school teachers in Malaysia.

Operational Definitions

The word hassle is known as annoyance. Hassle can also be defined as trouble or fuss. Lazarus, Kanner, Coyne and Schafer (1981) define daily hassles as irritating of annoying factors that happens on a daily basis, and place demands on an individual.

Miller, Tobacyk and Wilcox (1985) have defined hassles as "those irritating, frustrating, distressing demands and troubled relationships that grind on us day in and day out." DeLongis (1988) define hassles as: "Hassles are irritants – things that annoy or bother you." Blonna (1996) define hassles as "the irritating, frustrating, distressing demands that to some degree characterize everyday transactions with the environment."

According to Zohar (1999), hassles are annoying episodes in which daily tasks become more difficult or demanding than anticipated. Daily hassles are routine sources of annoyance and aggravation that have negative impact on our health.

Spruijt (1999) defines hassles as mundane irritants and sources of stress that people commonly encounter in everyday life. Beaudoin (2003) defined hassle as "a state of confusion, turmoil; an annoying or troublesome concern."

Hassles occur in our daily life. Hassles are nagging events in people's daily life. In the present study, the word hassle means the annoyance and stressful events that a teacher faces in their daily life at their workplace (i.e. school). School teachers in this context are referring to teachers who are working in public secondary schools.

Method

Sample:

200 teachers (148 male and 58 female) were drawn from two secondary schools situated in a sub-urban area in Perak, Malaysia. The ratio of female and male teachers was 3:1.

Development of the Instrument:

For the present study, the investigators have developed Daily Hassles at Work Scale (DHAWS). The DHAWS consisted of 34 items. For the development of this scale, the investigator has selected 21 items from the Cartwright and Cooper's (1997) Daily Hassles at Work Scale. The remaining 13 items were written by researcher after interviewing 10 teachers. The scale has 2-point response format i.e. Yes and No.

After data collection, item analysis was done by the investigators. Item analysis is a set of procedures which is used for the selection of the items. It is important to do the item analysis because it provides the index of the difficulty value of each item, and

the discrimination value of each item. On the basis of analysis of 34 items in the original scale, 33 items were retained. Item number 2 (having to work late) in the questionnaire is not found reliable. Item analysis also provides the reliability of the items. Cronbach's alpha for these items was found to be 0.795, which is highly reliable.

Procedure:

The data were collected individually from the teachers. Subjects took 15 to 20 minute's time to complete The Daily Hassles at Work Scale (DHAWS). Written instructions were printed on the questionnaire to ensure that the responses should be given accordingly. The subjects were asked to complete the scale by putting a tick mark either on the Yes or No column provided against each item.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage of Teachers (N=200) on Daily Hassles at Work Scale

Item	Frequency	Percentage
1. Trouble with students	126	64.5
2. Constant students interruptions	135	67.5
3. Conflict with the Principal	32	16.0
4. Deadlines and time pressures	155	77.5
5. Decision making	82	41.0
6. Dealing with bureaucracy at work	96	48.0
7. Technological breakdowns	107	53.0
8. Trouble with other colleagues	29	14.5
9. Teaching subjects that are not of specialized area	73	36.5
10. Too much responsibility	147	73.5
11. Too many jobs to do at once	157	78.5
12. Traveling to and from work	57	28.5
13. Traveling associate with job	72	36.0
14. Making mistakes	59	29.5
15. Conflict with school goals	55	27.5
16. Job interfering with home/family life	93	46.5
17. Can't cope with the pressure	59	29.5
18. Can't say no when I should work	123	61.5
19. Not enough stimulating things to do	96	48.0
20. Too many meetings	155	77.5
21. Uncertainty in job promotions	125	62.5
22. Lack of cooperation from colleagues	33	16.5
23. Family life adversely affecting work	71	35.5
24. Evaluation of students	98	49.0

25. Problems on job due to being a woman or man	29	14.5	30. Noise in the classroom	182	91.0
26. Unchallenging work	42	21.0	31. Prejudice and discrimination from others	57	28.5
27. Job dissatisfaction	57	28.5	32. Too many teaching periods	115	57.5
28. Not enough time for family	118	59.0	33. Being taken for granted	129	64.5
29. Dealing with behavioral problems of students	189	94.5			

Table 2: Gender Differences in the Perception of Daily Hassles at Work

Item	Female			Male			t	p
	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N		
1. Trouble with students	.69	.479	148	.56	.502	52	1.12	>.05
2. Constant students interruptions	.71	.456	148	.58	.499	52	1.14	>.05
3. Conflict with Principal	.11	.320	148	.29	.457	52	-1.53	>.05
4. Deadlines and time pressures	.79	.408	148	.73	.448	52	0.51	>.05
5. Decision making	.41	.493	148	.42	.499	52	0.85	>.05
6. Dealing with bureaucracy at work	.49	.502	148	.46	.503	52	0.25	>.05
7. Technological breakdowns	.56	.498	148	.46	.503	52	0.85	>.05
8. Trouble with other colleagues	.14	.350	148	.15	.364	52	-0.08	>.05
9. Teaching subjects that are not of specialized area	.36	.481	148	.38	.491	52	-0.17	>.05
10. Too much responsibility	.80	.398	148	.54	.503	52	2.23	<.05
11. Too many jobs to do at once	.80	.403	148	.75	.437	52	0.43	>.05
12. Traveling to and from work	.36	.481	148	.08	.269	52	2.39	<.05
13. Traveling associated with job	.41	.493	148	.23	.425	52	1.53	>.05
14. Making mistakes	.30	.462	148	.27	.448	52	0.25	>.05
15. Conflict with school goals	.22	.418	148	.42	.499	52	-1.70	>.05
16. Job interfering with home /family	.51	.502	148	.35	.480	52	1.37	>.05
17. Can't cope with the pressure	.34	.475	148	.17	.382	52	1.45	>.05
18. Can't say no when I should work	.68	.467	148	.42	.499	52	2.22	<.05
19. Not enough stimulating things to do	.47	.501	148	.52	.505	52	-0.43	>.05
20. Too many meetings	.80	.403	148	.71	.457	52	0.76	>.05
21. Uncertainty in job promotions	.61	.490	148	.67	.474	52	-0.51	>.05
22. Lack of cooperation from colleagues	.13	.336	148	.27	.448	52	-1.19	>.05
23. Family life adversely affecting work	.40	.491	148	.23	.425	52	1.45	>.05
24. Evaluation of students	.53	.501	148	.37	.486	52	1.37	>.05
25. Problems on job due to being a woman or man	.17	.377	148	.08	.269	52	0.76	>.05
26. Unchallenging work	.19	.393	148	.27	.448	52	-0.68	>.05
27. Job dissatisfaction	.34	.475	148	.13	.345	52	1.79	>.05
28. Not enough time for family	.71	.456	148	.25	.437	52	3.93	<.01
29. Dealing with behavioral problems of students	.98	.141	148	.85	.364	52	1.11	>.05
30. Noise in the classroom	.95	.227	148	.81	.398	52	1.19	>.05
31. Prejudice and discrimination from others	.28	.452	148	.29	.457	52	-0.85	>.05
32. Too many teaching periods	.56	.498	148	.62	.491	52	-0.51	>.05
33. Being taken for granted	.72	.449	148	.42	.499	52	2.56	<.05

Table 2 shows the result of t-test i.e. comparison between male and female teachers on each item of the DHAWS. Significant differences were not found between the mean scores of male and female teachers in the perception of daily hassles at work on 28 items: trouble with students, constant students interruptions, conflict with principal, decision making, dealing with bureaucracy at work, dealing with behavioral

problem students, noise in the classroom, prejudice and discrimination from others, too many jobs to do at once, too many meetings, lack of cooperation from colleagues, conflict with school goals, time pressures, making mistakes, can't cope with the pressure, not enough stimulating things to do, uncertainty in job promotion, unchallenging work, problems on job due to being a woman or man, too many teaching periods, technological breakdowns, trouble with other colleagues, teaching subjects that are not of specialized area, evaluation of students, job interfering with family life, traveling associated with job and family life adversely affecting work. All the daily hassles were present in teachers but in a different degree.

Female as compared to male teachers scored significantly higher on *too much responsibility, traveling to and from work, can't say no when I should work, not enough time for family, and being taken for granted* as the daily hassles at work. On all these five items it is found that female teachers were more likely to say yes to these hassles. This is because female teachers affected by a number of day to day concerns such as not enough time for family. Overall, the present results confirm that there is gender differences exist in perception of daily hassles at work among teachers and this finding can be supported by Almeida and Kessler (1998).

Female teachers have *too much responsibility* even though they are being taken for granted. Female teachers often don't have enough time to study at home and do checking students' work at home because of their heavy work load and responsibility at their family. Teachers also cannot say no to school administrators as well as the colleagues.

Traveling to and from work was also perceived as daily hassle among female teachers as compared to their male counterpart. At home female teachers have to do a lot of house chores such as cooking,

washing, cleaning and caring for the children. Teachers have also reported that they do not have enough time for the family.

Being taken for granted also obtained the same percentage. Teachers perceived that they are often taken for granted by the school administrators and also by their colleagues. This hassle make the teachers feel de-motivated and stressed. It can affect the teachers' efficiency to perform well as they have often been the 'victim' to do many works compared to their colleagues.

61.5% of the respondents reported that *'can't say no when I should work'* was also perceived as one of the hassles. This hassle means that the teachers are required to do the work assigned to them. They cannot deny the responsibility given to them. When a situation arises, it becomes a hassle for them.

Time to spend for family is very important in everyone's life. 59% of the teachers reported that they don't have enough time for family. This finding is in line with research done by Time Use Research Program (2000). In this study, the researcher reported that 75% of teachers worry about not spending enough time for family and friends. Teachers responded that they don't have time to spend with their family because bounded with too many responsibilities and work in the school.

Conclusion

The findings of the present study have led to certain conclusions:(i) Secondary school teachers perceived more daily hassles at work. The hassles are caused by students, colleagues, administrators, family and time factor, and (ii) Significant differences were found in the perception of daily hassles at work among female and male teachers on five hassles. It was found that female teachers perceived more daily hassles as compared to male teachers.

Recommendations

This study indicates the perception of daily hassles at work among teachers.

Results provide the evidence that male and female teachers have the same level of perception on most of the items of daily hassles at work scale. The following are some suggestions for future research. Future studies may be based on the sample of teachers from urban and rural schools which may have different perception on DHAWS. The teachers from urban and rural schools might perceive different type of work hassles than teachers from sub-urban schools. Future researches are also needed to identify the level of daily hassles at work perceived by teachers of different marital status, race and educational level. Future research may investigate daily hassles at work among teachers in a longitudinal study with daily diary method. The researchers may draw stronger inferences based on such studies. There is a need to examine the impact of daily hassles at work on health behavior among school teachers.

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