

Perceived Sources of Stress among the Teachers

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The study attempts to investigate the various sources of stress experienced by higher secondary teachers. A sample of 200 higher secondary teachers was randomly selected. They were administered Teacher's Stress Inventory developed by Rajendran, which measures eight independent factors of sources of stress. The result of one way ANOVA indicated that the personal variables: sex, age, educational levels, years of teaching experience and types of school, play a significant role in the perception of various sources of stress related to the teaching profession.

Human beings have many biological, psychological and social needs. When these needs are not satisfied they experience stress. Besides these needs there are many challenges in human life and they all are likely to produce stress. Hans Selye (1978) defines Stress as 'any external events or internal drive which threatens to upset the organismic equilibrium'. The studies by Raschke (1985); Balse (1986); Hock and Roger (1996), indicated that the degree of stress which teachers experience is positively related to the degree which he/she perceives as a lack of control over a potentially threatening situation. Such as inability to meet the demands of students and a lack of adequate coping mechanisms. Schools are considered as a formal organization (Hoy & Miskel, 1987), and teachers are susceptible to organizational stress of role conflict and role ambiguity. Many researchers have identified sources of stress among post-secondary faculty members. Their findings have indicate that time pressures (Astin, 1993; Barnes, Agago & Coombs, 1998; Smith et al., 1995; Thompson & Dey, 1998)

and high self expectations (Gmelch et al., 1986; Smith et al., 1995) are the main sources of stress for teachers.

In many countries teacher's job is often considered as one of the most stressful profession. In the last two decades, intensive researches have been carried out in USA and Europe concerning the sources and symptoms of teachers' professional stress (Kyriacou, 1996). Studies in the field of teacher's stress show that the greater part stress is associated with the rapid pace of changes in education, particularly in 1980s and 1990s. Teaching profession is generally considered as a noble profession with lots of expectations from the parents towards their children's education and the development of their personalities. These expectations may also contribute as a source of stress. Present study attempts to identify the sources of stress and also study its relation with certain demographic variables.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were set up for the study:

1. There is a significant difference on the demographic variables and sources of stress among higher secondary teachers.
2. The handling of classes at various levels is different significantly on the identified factors of stress.
3. Teachers working in different schools differ significantly on factors of stress.

Method

Sample

The sample of the study comprised of 200 higher secondary teachers (Males=82 and Females=118) randomly drawn from Government, aided and private schools in the city of Chennai. Their age ranged from 20-55 years and their experience ranged from 1-25 years.

Tool

The Teacher's Stress Inventory developed by the Rajendran (1998), was used in the present study. The final form of the Inventory consists of 65-items, describing various sources of stress perceived by higher secondary teachers; it is a 5-point scale varying from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree". A factor analysis of the items in the

scale revealed 8- independent factors such as: (i) Personal stress ii) Teaching assignments iii) Personal expectation iv) Teaching evaluation, v) Lack of support from parents and others vi) Facilities available at school vii) Organizational Policy viii) Parental expectation.

Results and Discussion

The results of the study are presented in Table – 1. These indicate that there is a gender difference on perceived Personal Stress, ($F = 17.37$, $p < 0.01$). Female teachers reported more stress as compared to their male counterpart. Like wise on the factor of Teaching Assignment ($F = 11.53$; $p < 0.01$) both male and female teachers differ significantly in their perception of this source of stress. These findings are supported by Manthei (1988) who has reported that female teachers experience more stress than male teachers due to job over load. Payne (1987) has found that women teachers reported significantly more stress concerning time management. However, there are no gender differences on the remaining six factors: personal expectations, teaching evaluation, lack of support from parents and other, facilities available at school, organizational policy and parental expectation. The hypothesis No. 1 (a)

Table 1: ANOVA for demographic variables and sources of stress [F – values]

S.No	Factors	Gender diff.	Age	Qualification	Experience	Handling Classes	Marital Status	Type of School
1.	Personal Stress	7.37**	2.75*	3.36*	4.33**	3.17*	1.72	1.19
2.	Teaching Assign	11.53**	1.93	2.84*	1.43	1.38	0.85	1.64
3.	Personal Exptat	0.29	2.02	2.05	2.48	1.93	3.54*	0.45
4.	Teaching Evalua	2.35	2.70*	1.17	2.45	1.10	3.70*	1.93
5.	Lack of Support	0.41	1.92	0.86	4.65**	0.67	0.16	5.47**
6.	Facilities	0.24	2.45	0.35	1.03	0.69	4.65*	14.71**
7.	Org. Policy	0.44	4.96**	0.57	8.35**	1.51	1.65	8.15**
8.	Parental Exptat.	0.01	1.44	0.99	2.87*	0.18	0.39	3.96**

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

is partially confirmed by these findings.

As regards the age variable, teachers differ in Personal Stress ($F = 2.75$; $p < 0.05$), Teaching Evaluation ($F = 2.70$; $p < 0.05$), Facilities available at school ($F = 2.45$; $p < 0.05$), and Organizational Policy ($F = 4.96$; $p < 0.01$). While on remaining factors no significant difference was found in relation to different age groups and Stress factors. Therefore, the hypothesis No. 1 (b) is partially accepted.

The Teachers' qualification as a source of stress was found significant only on Personal Stress ($F = 3.36$; $p < 0.05$) and on Teaching Assignment ($F = 2.84$; $p < 0.05$) whereas it was not significant in rest of the variables. The hypothesis No. 1 (c) is partially accepted.

Experience is directly contributing to sources of stress among teachers' Personal Stress ($F = 4.33$; $p < 0.01$), Lack of Support from parents ($F = 4.65$; $p < 0.01$), Organizational Policy ($F = 8.35$; $p < 0.01$) and Parental Expectations ($F = 2.87$; $p < 0.05$). In remaining factors Experience is not found as a significant source of stress. Here also the hypothesis No. 1 (d) is partially accepted.

Marital Status as a source of stress is contributing to Personal Expectations ($F = 3.54$; $p < 0.05$), Teaching Evaluation ($F = 3.70$; $p < 0.05$) and Facilities available at School ($F = 4.65$; $p < 0.05$) were found significant showing that teachers do differ on these variables. These findings are supported by McGrath (1989). The hypothesis No. 1 (e) is therefore, partially accepted.

As regards the Handling of different Classes as a source of stress is concerned, it was found significant only on Personal Stress factor ($F = 3.17$; $p < 0.05$). Therefore hypothesis 2 is partially accepted.

As far type of Schools as a source of stress, the significant factors are: Lack of Support from Parents ($F = 5.47$; $p < 0.01$), Facilities Available at School ($F = 14.71$; $p < 0.01$), Organizational

Policy ($F = 8.15$; $p < 0.01$), and Parental Expectations ($F = 3.96$; $p < 0.01$).

The overall results of the present study suggest the need for periodical stress management programmes for reducing the levels of stress among the teachers which in turn will improve their functional skills and lead to effective teaching/learning in the class room.

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