



Effect of gender, age and academic qualifications on source of job stress of secondary school teachers

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Abstract : *There are various sources responsible for teacher stress. The important one among them is workload. It is found to be one of the most prominent causal factors of teacher stress. A major factor related to workload is role overload, which takes place when teachers have to cope with a number of competing roles within their job. Another important source of stress among teachers includes constant changes within the profession and a lack of information as to how changes are to be implemented. Apart from these, the sources of teacher stress include the pupil's misbehavior, student absenteeism, the student's negative attitude towards learning, poor working conditions, time pressure, large classes, too much correction work, lack of encouragement, feeling of failure, non-cooperative parents, job insecurity, lack of public esteem, poor colleague relations, criticism by colleagues, lack of control over the job etc.*
Key Words: *Job stress, Teacher stress, Source of stress, and Stress.*

Introduction

Whatever by profession, occupation or vocation we may be, there is hardly anyone who is totally free from tensions and stress. Every day, we are confronted with several situations that produce stress. For instance, to a teacher, who is working in a school, as Dunham, J. (1984) notes, problems may be caused by organizational and curriculum change, problems of role conflict and ambiguity, pressures caused by too much work to be done in too little time, repercussion of the head's management style, team work difficulties and even communication difficulties. All such situations, in one way or the other can be the sources of stress.

Our ways of thinking, feeling and acting, almost anything may lead to stress. According to Dunham, there are four main stressors and they are as under:

1. Anticipatory stressors (thinking dreadful things, fear some expectations).
2. Time stressors (too much to do in too little time).
3. Situational stressors (i.e., moving house, getting divorced, death of dear ones, loss of job, etc.).
4. Encounter stressor (stress that emanates from interpersonal conflicts, quarrels, etc.).

The above list indicates that almost everything from our way of thinking to picking up a quarrel with a colleague or a partner, etc; is the source of stress. Such sources can easily lead us to the stressful state of mind.

Job Stress

Job stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker (Meena Buddhisagar Rathod and



Madhulika Varma (2005). (Manual for Indore Teacher's Job Stressors Scale. p. 5).

Job stress can lead to poor health and even injury. The concept of job stress is often confused with challenge, but these concepts are not the same. Challenge energizes us psychologically and physically, and it motivates us to learn new skills and master our jobs. When a challenge is met with, we feel relaxed and satisfied. Thus, a challenge is an important ingredient for healthy and productive work. The importance of challenge in our work is so inevitable that people are referring to it when they say "a little bit of stress is good for you".

The nature of work is changing at a whirlwind speed. Perhaps now more than ever before, job stress poses a threat to the health of workers and, in turn, to the health of organizations. Job-related stress is particularly likely to be chronic because it is such a large part of life. Stress reduces a worker's effectiveness by impairing concentration; causing sleeplessness and increasing the risk of illness, back problems, accidents and loss of time. At its worst extremes, stress that places a burden on our hearts and circulation can often be fatal.

Job stress results from the interaction of the worker and the conditions of work. Views differ, however, on the importance of worker characteristics versus working conditions as the primary cause of job stress. These differing viewpoints are important because they suggest different ways to prevent stress at work.

Teacher Stress

The importance of the teacher in the educational process is unquestionable. This is because, of all the human factors in the educational system, the teachers occupy a key position and it

is only through them that the ultimate process of education takes place. The teacher today is confronted with new challenges in education. In addition, there are heavy demands made by the society on teachers to perform various roles, many of which are undefined, inconsistent and unachievable to the present socio-cultural, economic and bureaucratic contexts of our society, exerting heavy stress on teachers.

Kyriacou, C. and Sutcliffe, J. (1978) defined teacher stress as a response to negative effect by a teacher, usually accompanied by potentially pathogenic, physiological and biochemical changes resulting from aspects of a teacher's job. (Vijayalakshmi, N. S., 2008, p.5).

What can individuals do to reduce job stress?

There is likely to be resistance to organization intervention and while priority should be given to such an intervention there are plenty of things that an individual can do to reduce their work stress. While a certain amount of stress can be motivating, too much stress can lead to difficulty in concentrating, frustration, and poor decision making and a number of stress-related illnesses. If one is experiencing job burnout, it is important to say "no" to additional responsibilities and examine one's time management. These strategies can help one cope with job burnout. Strategies that individuals can employ to reduce their work stress revolve around avoiding the cause of stress or changing the way that one reacts to stress.

1. Reduce Stress through Prioritizing and Planning: One source of stress at work is the feeling as though one hasn't got enough time to do the tasks that one needs to do. If one has a to - do - list as long as one's arm and feels



that one is constantly putting out fires, then prioritizing and effective time management at work may be an important avenue to reduce workplace stress.

2. Reduce Stress by Breaking Bad Thinking Habits: It can sometimes be easy to get into a negative frame of mind. In fact, when confronted with unrelenting stress, a negative outlook may spring up the norm. One important way that one can reduce the impact of stress on oneself is to flip one's negative thinking and develop positive thinking habits. Recognizing that stress is about how one views the situation, one can increase one's abilities to cope with stress by changing the way that one views certain situations.

3. Recognize What Causes Stress: Download a stress diary and keep a stress log today. By understanding what pushes one's buttons and how one reacts to work stress one can develop strategies to prepare for events that cause one stress at work.

4. Practice Relaxation Strategies: Develop a repertoire of relaxation techniques that one can use at work. It is to be said that diaphragmatic breathing exercises have been taught to clients who have then used them in periods of high workplace stress. They have reported that these breathing techniques can help to short circuit of the stress response.

5. Find Support: Discuss work concerns with a counselor or a trusted friend/a member of the family who can listen and give good advice.

Review of Related Literature

Ravichandran, R. and Rajendran, R. (2007) conducted a study on perceived sources of stress among the teachers. The findings of the study found that there is a gender difference on perceived personal

stress. Female teachers are reported to have more stress when compared to their male counterpart. Likewise on the factor of teaching assignment both male and female teachers differ significantly in their perception of this source of stress. Sources of stress are partially confirmed by these findings. As regards the age variable, teachers differ in personal stress, teaching evaluation, and facilities available at school and organizational policy. While on remaining factors no significant difference was found in relation to different age groups and stress factors.

Sabu, S. and Jangaiah, C. (2005) conducted a study on adjustment and teachers' stress. The findings of the study found that there is a significant difference between male and female teachers with regard to their stress. Further, when the means were compared, it was found that the female teachers' stress was higher than that of male teachers. Hence, the female teachers have higher stress. There is a significant difference among the teachers of different age groups with regard to their stress. Further, when the means were compared, it was found that the stress experienced by the teachers above 45 years was greater than that of others.

Trendall, C. (1989) conducted on a stress in teaching or teacher effectiveness a study of teachers across main stream and special education. The finding of the study found that many teachers were under physical and mental strain and reported that the most frequent sources of stress were lack of time, large classes, teaching workload and pupils' misbehavior. There are different factors for the stress of the teachers in general and women in particular. Female teachers have more stressful situations



when compared to their male counterparts.

Pratte, J. (1978) studied on the relation of perceived stress among teachers- the effect of age and background of children thought (socio-economic and age). His study with primary school teachers in Northern England found financial deprivation in the home background of children to be positively and significantly related to perceived stress among teachers. Stress also increased with the age of children for there was a tendency towards increasing non-cooperation and aggression as the children grew older, especially so, in the socially deprived group.

Statement of the Problem

Title of the present the investigation is "Effect of Gender, Age and Academic Qualifications on Source of Job Stress of Secondary School Teachers".

Operational Definitions

Stress

"Stress is a generalized response of body to demands placed on it, whether they are pleasant or unpleasant".

- Selye, H. (1976)

Sources of Teacher Job Stress

There are various sources responsible for teacher stress. The important one among them is workload. It is found to be one of the most prominent causal factors of teacher stress. A major factor related to workload is role overload, which takes place when teachers have to cope with a number of competing roles within their job. Another important source of stress among teachers includes constant changes within the profession and a lack of information as to how changes are to be implemented. Apart from these the sources of teacher stress include pupil's

misbehavior, student absenteeism, negative student attitude towards learning, poor working conditions, time pressure, large classes, too much correction work, lack of encouragement, feeling of failure, non-cooperative parents, job insecurity, lack of public esteem, poor colleague relations, criticism by colleagues, lack of control over the job etc.

Teacher Stress

Kyriacou, C. and Sutcliffe, J. (1978) described "Teacher stress as a 'response to negative effect by a teacher usually accompanied by potentially pathogenic, physiological and biochemical changes resulting from aspects of teacher's job" (Alice Mathews, Sr., 2005, p. 122).

Job Stress

Beechr, T.A. and Newman, J. E. (1986) described "A condition arising from the interaction of people with their jobs and characterized by changes within people that face them to deviate from their normal functioning" (Shashire Khat and Siva Kumar, Ch., 2008, p.115).

Secondary School Teacher

This term is used to indicate teachers handling classes VI to X in secondary schools. They are Secondary Grade Teachers and B.Ed. Assistants.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the influence of the following variables on sources of job stress of secondary school teachers.
1) Gender 2) Age 3) Academic qualifications

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is a significant difference in the sources of job stress of secondary school teachers in relation to the following variables.
1) Gender 2) Age 3) Academic qualifications

Methodology



The descriptive or survey method of research is the most suitable type for this study.

Sampling of the Study: There are 716 secondary schools in East Godavari district, retrieved from the <http://www.mabadi.com>. These 716 schools are distributed in seven revenue divisions. 80 high schools have been selected from the seven divisions randomly by adopting lottery technique giving due importance to geographical location, availability of resources, basic amenities available and urban/rural classification. The tools have been administered to the teachers available at the school at the time of visit. The tool had been administered to a total of 560 teachers working in the 80 schools selected. Thus the average representation of each school comes to 7 at this juncture. It was found that 58 forms were defective for some reason or other. Thus the final left over sample comes to 502. The data has been analyzed considering the 502 forms.

Tool Used: The Sources of Job Stress inventory was constructed by Martha Davis, Psychologist in the Department of Psychiatry at Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in Santa Clara, California, Elizabeth Robbins Eshelman, MSW, Clinical Social Worker, Group of the Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, San Francisco Bay Area, and Matthew McKay, Professor, Wright Institute in Berkeley, California (The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook, Fifth Edition, 2000, pp.223-226). In this workbook no mention was made about the validity and reliability of the tool.

Method of Scoring: In this inventory, a five point scale was used. The responses were in the form of Never carries a score

of 0, Occasionally a score of 1, Somewhat often a score of 2, Frequently a score of 3, and Almost Always a score of 4. The range of scores of the present inventory is from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 176 as there are 44 items.

Reliability of the Tool

Sources of Job Stress Inventory: From the self correlation of the half tests the reliability co-efficient of the whole test was established using the Spearman Brown Prophecy Formula, the correlation value obtained for the whole test was $r = 0.54$.

Statistical Techniques Used

The following statistical techniques have been used depending on the need. Mean Standard Deviation, Critical Ratio, ANOVA / F-Test.

Analysis of Data And Interpretation

H: There is a significant difference in the sources of job stress of secondary school teachers in relation to the following variables.

1) Gender 2) Age 3) Academic qualifications

H1: Gender of secondary school teachers makes a significant difference in their sources of job stress.

H0: Gender of secondary school teachers does not make a significant difference in their sources of job stress.

To test this hypothesis, the following procedure is adopted. Means and S.Ds for the two sub groups of gender of the whole group were computed separately. From this, standard error of the difference between the means was computed. Finally, critical ratio was calculated and the data is presented in table

No.1.



Table 1: Sources of Job Stress-Gender-Mean-S.D-C.R.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	D	$\frac{\sigma}{D}$	C.R.
Male	301	53.82	29.65	7.26	2.69	2.67**
Female	201	46.56	29.48			

** Significant at 0.01 level

From table 1, the obtained C.R. value (2.67) is greater than the table value of 2.58. It is significant at 0.01 level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference between male and female teachers of secondary schools in their sources of job stress. The mean difference (7.26) is in favor of male teachers of secondary schools. Hence, it is inferred that the male teachers of secondary schools have a high level of sources of job stress, when compared to their female counterparts.

H2: Age of secondary school teachers makes a significant difference in their sources of job stress.

H0: Age of secondary school teachers does not make a significant difference in their sources of job stress.

To test this hypothesis, the following procedure is adopted. Means and S.Ds for the four sub-groups of age of the whole group were computed separately. F-value was calculated (Sharma, R. A., 2006, Advanced Statistics in Education and Psychology, p.233) and the data is presented in table No.2.

Table 2: sources of job stress-age-means-s.ds

Age	N	Mean	S.D.
Upto 25 years	106	46.33	26.70
26 to 35 years	194	49.34	30.76
36 to 45 years	132	55.58	29.46
Above 46 years	070	53.40	31.10

From table 2, it can be observed that the lowest mean score among the four groups is 46.33 of the age group of upto 25 years. The highest mean score is 55.58 of the age group of 36 to 45 years.

Table 3: Sources of Job Stress-Age-Anova

Source of variation	df	Sum of squares	Mean squares	F-value
Between groups	3	6014.47	2004.82	2.28
Within the groups	498	437897.01	879.31	
Total	501	443911.48		

Not significant at 0.05 levels

From table 3, the obtained F-value for sources of job stress of secondary school teachers with regard to their age is 2.28 for df=3 and 498 less than the table value of 2.62, which is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the null

hypothesis is accepted. It can be inferred that the age of secondary school teachers does not make a significant difference in their sources of job stress.

As F-value is not significant at 0.05 level, no further probing of obtaining



differences in sub-groups of age is attempted (Sharma, R. A., 2006, Advanced Statistics in Education and Psychology, p.188 & 231).

H3: Academic qualifications of secondary school teachers make a significant difference in their sources of job stress.

H0: Academic qualifications of secondary school teachers do not make a significant difference in their sources of job stress.

To test this hypothesis, the following procedure is adopted. Means and S.Ds were computed separately for the two sub-groups of academic qualifications of the whole group. From them, the standard error of the difference between the means was computed. Finally critical ratio was calculated. The data is presented in table No.4.

Table 4: sources of job stress-academic qualifications-mean-S.D-C.R.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	D	$\frac{\sigma}{D}$	C.R.
Graduate	335	50.98	30.10	0.20	2.26	0.08
Postgraduate	167	50.78	20.17			

Not significant at 0.05 level

From table 4, the obtained C.R. value (0.08) is less than the table value of 1.96. It is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained. Therefore, the academic qualifications of the secondary school teachers do not make a significant difference in their sources of job stress.

Major findings

1. There is significant difference between male and female teachers of secondary schools in their sources of job stress. The mean difference is in favor of male teachers of secondary schools. The male teachers of secondary schools have a high level of sources of job stress, when compared to their female counterparts.
2. Age of secondary school teachers does not make significant difference in their sources of job stress.
3. Academic qualifications of secondary school teachers do not make significant difference in their sources of job stress.

Educational implications

The investigator is not attempting to make sweeping generalization on the base of single study. However, on the basis of the findings of the study a few educational implications of the study may be indicated as follows.

1. As teachers differ in job stress training modules are to be incorporated in the teacher training programmes to prepare trainee teachers to cope with job stress.
2. As teachers differ in sources of job stress it is necessary to apply Human Resource practices and Organizational analysis procedures in educational administrations also to identify such sources and introduce necessary interventions in the form of guidance and counseling to teachers.

Suggestions for further research

Keeping in view the procedure adopted for this study and its limitations, the following suggestions are made for further research in this area.

1. A similar study may be conducted



with large sample in the entire coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh.

2. A study may be undertaken in the three regions of Andhra Pradesh namely, Coastal, Ryalseema and Telangana.
3. A comparative study may be undertaken with the samples in Southern States of India, namely Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala.

Conclusion

Modern studies on teaching gave much importance to several psychological and managerial aspects of teaching and learning. Researches in other fields like nursing, hotel and police have highlighted many unexplored avenues in the field of education. There have been many significant studies to understand the influence of stress, teacher burnout, teacher effectiveness, the personality variables associated with job satisfaction etc. This study helped the investigator to identify certain variables like gender, age, locality of living, teaching experience etc., which have a say on the stress sources and stress levels of the secondary school teachers.

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