



THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF STRESS AMONG COLLEGE TEACHERS WORKING IN ARTS AND SCIENCE COLLEGES - A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Stress in the teaching profession originates from a variety of sources, and it was established that there exists a bonding of stress to physical and mental health concerns. The present study aims to examine the level of occupational stress among college teachers in their workplace. It also attempts to analyze how gender, marital status, employment status of spouse, educational qualification, location of the college, and length of service of the teachers affect his/her wellbeing. Data were collected from 815 teachers of Government, Government-aided and Self-finance colleges working in Chennai, Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur districts of Tamil Nadu using well-structured questionnaires. Findings were made with the help of a standard statistical tool such as Percentage Analysis. Findings and Suggestions: The study reveals that there is a high level of stress among college teachers. It also shows that 29.9% of teachers strongly agree for the job demand, dealing with student's discipline, 27.1% strongly agree concerning student's poor attitudes towards study, 25.4% of teachers strongly agree with administrative work, 21.8% of teachers strongly agree with Assignment of duties without consultation, 17.1% strongly agree for work linked to deadlines and targets, 21.6% of teachers strongly agree that they feel irritated due to stress and 24.5% of teachers strongly agree that they experienced poor sleep patterns.

KEYWORDS: Occupational Stress, Stress Causing Factors, Feel and Outcome of Stress.

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) has marked stress as the "health epidemic of the 21st century" exerting significant burdens at all levels of society (Stewart, 2004). Swami Vivekanandasays, Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man. Also, Educate and raise the masses, and thus alone a nation is possible. Teachers play a significant role in helping students to reach their highest potential and in developing social responsibility. But, over the past years, teaching has become increasingly stressful. Teacher stress impacts teacher health and well-being, work attitudes and turnover. Teacher stress is associated with teaching performance and student academic outcomes. High-stress levels are causing teachers to leave their profession, which causes instability among staff, students, and the community. According to the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) report, teachers suffer greater occupational stress than other professionals. One in five (20%) felt stressed about their job compared with 13% of those in similar occupations. Although teachers' working hours across the year are similar to those in other professions, working intensively over fewer weeks of the year led to a poorer work-life balance and higher stress levels, the NFER observed (NFER Report, 2019).

The survey conducted by the American Federation of Teachers on nearly 5,000 teachers reported that nearly two-thirds said that their jobs were 'always' or 'often' stressful - roughly double the rates of

stress experienced by the general workforce. Work-related stress is a pattern of reactions that occurs when the workers work demands mismatched with their knowledge, skills or abilities and which challenge their ability to cope. Stress occurs in many different circumstances but is particularly strong when a person's ability to control demands at work is threatened. The experience of stress is intensified if no support or help is available from colleagues or supervisors. Therefore, social isolation and lack of cooperation increase the risk of prolonged stress at work, as well as the related negative health outcomes and increased accident risk. The impact of these types of stressors on mental and physical health has been examined by several investigators, with generally consistent findings.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sreepadma (2018) examined the faculty's perception of occupational stress among teachers teaching at the college level about certain socio-demographic factors. A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed among 120 teachers from five departments of different self-financing colleges in Hyderabad. Percentile method was employed to analyze the primary data. This study identified, job insecurity, lack of motivation, negative attitude of colleagues, and work-home conflicts were the major key factor of stress.

Satarupa Datta (2018) conducted a study based on the questionnaire to 140 respondents of different colleges in West Bengal. The psychological symptoms of stress were revealed through the loss of interest, guilty feeling and worthlessness, poor concentration, frustration, temper outburst, helplessness, etc. It was identified that private college teachers work under more time pressure than public college teachers. The study suggested that the college teachers need to be granted the required number of days of leave, to help them balance their dual role, and give their utmost in terms of quality to their Institution.

Qian Meng and Guan Wang (2018) investigated the level of stress of university teachers and the suggestions for both teachers and administrators. Responses from 240 Chinese university teachers chosen from the random sampling method were collected with a questionnaire and analyzed. Scientific research was found as a major stressor for assistant and associate professors. While the main stressors for professors were scientific research and professional development.

Manpreet Kaur and Rajesh Kumar (2017) conducted a study to identify demographic profiles of occupational stress and to examine the role of correlation between socio-economic status and occupational stress on stress levels. Respondents of 398 teachers which include 31.9% males and 68.1% females, from the urban center, New Delhi, India have participated. A well-structured questionnaire designed for the purpose was used. The demographic variables, socioeconomic status, promotional and length of service were contributing significantly contribute to the stress of the teachers. However, age group, work experience and promotion opportunities were reported as prime explanatory variables for the model.

Sukumar and Kanagarathinam (2016) conducted a study to know the causes of work stress that affects faculties in the workplace atmosphere. One hundred and twenty faculties of different self-financing colleges in the Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu have participated and the percentile method was used to analyze the data. It was observed that teachers of age group 31-40 were 45.8%, married teachers were 59.2%, teachers having their educational qualification PG were 40% and 57.5% of teachers were from the family contains up to 4 members. The key factors of stress like excessive additional duty, the behavior and negative attitude of students, Work-home conflicts have been observed.

Partap Singh and Sangeeta Rani (2015) conducted a study to investigate the perception towards occupational stress using questionnaires and the faculties from different departments of a private college have participated. The primary data, as well as secondary data, were used. A total of 120 teachers from different self-financing colleges in Panipat district of Haryana have participated. Percentile method was used to analyze & interpret the data. The key factors of stress, job insecurity, the behavior and negative attitude of students, negative attitude of colleagues, excessive additional duty were observed.

Sindhu (2014) carried out this study to find out the factors influencing stressors among college teachers. Response to the questionnaire of a random sample of 200 (100 each of male and female) degree college teachers of Kerala State were used. Frequency, percentages and chi-square were used as tools for

the data analysis. The study indicated that about 59.5 % of respondents were under the pressure of personal development stress, 74 % were under the pressure of interpersonal relationship stress and 47.5% of respondents were under the pressure of organizational climate stress.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the factors influencing stress and the stressors among the degree college teachers.
- To determine the level of stress among the degree college teachers.

Research Methodology

The arts and science colleges in 3 districts of Tamil Nadu, namely, Chennai, Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur were randomly selected according to their location, whether urban, suburban or rural, their type, whether government, government-aided or self-finance and their size, using a five-point scale. Seven colleges from each district were randomly selected. Primary data has been collected through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire developed by university and college union was used. Several alterations were made following a pilot project, to adapt it for Tamil Nadu conditions. The questionnaire contained five sections, namely, demographic profile, factors causing stress, feel & outcome of stress, stress management strategies and finally any other information or comment. The demographic and background items inquiring as to age, sex, marital status, level of education, number of years teaching and grade level Assistant Professor or Associate Professor. Questionnaires were distributed to teachers personally for completion from February 2019 to April 2019. Out of 1400 questionnaires 950 were received with a response rate of 67.9%. The questionnaires were scrutinized and 815 responses were found suitable for analysis. A five-point Likert scale was used and scores assigned for the responses "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Neutral", "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" were respectively, 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1. The scores were collected, summated, averaged and compared across different groups, to draw meaningful conclusions.

Results

Table 1: Profile of the Respondents

Background Variables	Type of College			Total
	Government	Government-Aided	Self-Finance	
Gender				
Male	102 (47.0%)	126 (51.9%)	141 (39.7%)	369 (45.3%)
Female	115 (53.0%)	117 (48.1%)	214 (60.3%)	446 (54.7%)
Marital Status				
Unmarried	11 (5.1%)	19 (7.8%)	62 (17.5%)	92 (11.3%)
Married	204 (94.0%)	222 (91.4%)	291 (82.0%)	717 (88.0%)
Widow	2 (0.9%)	2 (0.8%)	2 (0.6%)	6 (0.7%)
Employment of Spouse				
Employed	168 (77.4%)	176 (72.4%)	269 (75.8%)	613 (75.2%)
Home-Maker	31 (14.3%)	47 (19.3%)	26 (7.3%)	104 (12.8%)
Not Applicable	18 (8.3%)	20 (8.2%)	60 (16.9%)	98 (12.0%)

Educational Qualification				
PG with NET	10 (4.6%)	11 (4.5%)	19 (5.4%)	40 (4.9%)
PG with M Phil	54 (24.9%)	43 (17.7%)	187 (52.7%)	284 (34.8%)
PG with Ph. D	153 (70.5%)	189 (77.8%)	116 (32.7%)	458 (56.2%)
PG	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	33 (9.3%)	33 (4.0%)
Location of the College				
Urban	148 (68.2%)	154 (63.4%)	115 (32.4%)	417 (51.2%)
Suburban	29 (13.4%)	59 (24.3%)	65 (18.3%)	153 (18.8%)
Rural	40 (18.4%)	30 (12.3%)	175 (49.3%)	245 (30.1%)
Teaching Experience				
5 and Below	46 (21.2%)	133 (54.7%)	279 (78.6%)	458 (56.2%)
6-10	77 (35.5%)	41 (16.9%)	32 (9.0%)	150 (18.4%)
11-20	80 (36.9%)	45 (18.5%)	41 (11.5%)	166 (20.4%)
21 and Above	14 (6.5%)	24 (9.9%)	3 (0.8%)	41 (5.0%)
Total	217 (100.0%)	243 (100.0%)	355 (100.0%)	815 (100.0%)

Table-1 depicts that 45.3% of the teachers are male and 54.7% are female teachers. Marital status shows that 88% are married, 11.3% are unmarried and 0.7% belong to the widow. Table 1 also indicates that 75.2% of the teacher's spouses are employed, whereas 12.8% of the spouses are home-makers. The not applicable category (unmarried or widowed teachers) concerning spouse employment is 12%. Educational Qualification of the teachers shows that 4.9% have a PG degree with NET qualification, 34.8% are having the qualification PG & M. Phil, 56.2% teachers are qualified with PG degree & Ph.D. and 4% teachers having PG degree only. Teachers working in urban, suburban and rural colleges are 51.2%, 18.8% and 30% respectively. The length of service of teachers shows that 56.2 % have 5 years & below, 18.4% have 6-10 years service, 20.4% have 11-20 years and 5% have 21 years & above service.

Table 2: Levels of the Agreement for the Job Demand among Teachers

Statement		Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Dealing with Students Discipline	Frequency	25	67	150	329	244
	%	3.1	8.2	18.4	40.4	29.9
Student's poor attitudes towards study	Frequency	20	60	169	345	221
	%	2.5	7.4	20.7	42.3	27.1
Administrative work (e.g. filling in	Frequency	35	88	212	273	207

forms/reply to circulars, etc.)	%	4.3	10.8	26	33.5	25.4
Frequent changes of time-table or Subject papers	Frequency	76	165	216	252	106
	%	9.3	20.2	26.5	30.9	13
Doing extra work due to the absence of a colleague in the department	Frequency	50	133	217	256	159
	%	6.1	16.3	26.6	31.4	19.5
Long and continuous teaching hours	Frequency	51	148	257	243	116
	%	6.3	18.2	31.5	29.8	14.2
Teachers have too many activities to undertake during the working day	Frequency	33	117	190	302	173
	%	4	14.4	23.3	37.1	21.2
Taking college work to home disturbs my family life	Frequency	92	151	212	215	145
	%	11.3	18.5	26	26.4	17.8
Need to work more days than prescribed	Frequency	88	184	222	210	111
	%	10.8	22.6	27.2	25.8	13.6
Denying permission for on-duty	Frequency	108	155	222	191	139
	%	13.3	19	27.2	23.4	17.1
Favouritism of college authorities among faculty members	Frequency	94	110	220	236	155
	%	11.5	13.5	27	29	19
Assignment of duties that take me away from my office	Frequency	93	186	280	177	79
	%	11.4	22.8	34.4	21.7	9.7

Table-2 reveals that 29.9% of teachers strongly agree for the job demand, dealing with students' discipline, 27.1% responded strongly agree for student's poor attitudes towards the study and 25.4% responded strongly agree for administrative work. Also, 13% of teachers responded strongly agree for frequent changes of time-table or subject papers and 19.5% for teachers responded strongly agree concerning doing extra work due to the absence of colleagues in the department. The Table 2 also indicates that 14.2% of teachers responded strongly agree for long and continuous teaching hours whereas 21.2% of teachers responded for the factor, teachers have too many activities to undertake during the working day and 17.8% responded strongly agree for taking college work to home disturbs my family life. The 13.6%, 17.1%, 19% and 9.7% of teachers responded strongly agree for the job demands, need to work more days than prescribed, denying permission for on-duty, favoritism of college authorities among faculty members and assignment of duties that take me away from my office respectively. It is also noted from the table that a significant number of teachers responded for neutral for the job demands.

Table 3: Levels of the Agreement for the Job Control among Teachers

Statement		Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Not able to exert control over demands made by college authorities	Frequency	58	146	287	206	118
	%	7.1	17.9	35.2	25.3	14.5
When my suggestions are ignored	Frequency	56	109	301	225	124
	%	6.9	13.4	36.9	27.6	15.2
Work linked to deadlines and targets	Frequency	34	123	230	289	139
	%	4.2	15.1	28.2	35.5	17.1
Assignment of duties without	Frequency	47	129	216	245	178

consultation	%	5.8	15.8	26.5	30.1	21.8
Job changes without consultation	Frequency	80	141	216	225	153
	%	9.8	17.3	26.5	27.6	18.8
Given responsibility without the authority to take decisions	Frequency	63	151	224	235	142
	%	7.7	18.5	27.5	28.8	17.4
Inadequate exposure to recent areas of research due to official constraints	Frequency	64	156	246	208	141
	%	7.9	19.1	30.2	25.5	17.3
In my job lack of opportunities to utilize my skills and abilities	Frequency	80	142	237	243	113
	%	9.8	17.4	29.1	29.8	13.9

Table-3 indicates that 14.5% of teachers strongly agree with the statement not able to exert control over demands made by college authorities, 15.2% responded strongly agree for the stressor when my suggestions are ignored and 17.1% responded strongly agree for work linked to deadlines and targets. Also, 21.8% of teachers responded strongly agree for the factor, assignment of duties without consultation and 18.8 % for teachers responded strongly agree for job changes without consultation. The Table 2 further indicates that 17.4% of teachers responded strongly agree for given responsibility without the authority to make decisions, 17.3% of teachers responded for the factor, inadequate exposure to recent areas of research due to official constraints and 13.9% responded strongly agree/agree for lack of opportunities to utilize my skills and abilities.

Table 4: Levels of the Agreement for the Feel of Stress among College Teachers

Statement		Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Irritated	Frequency	25	82	199	333	176
	%	3.1	10.1	24.4	40.9	21.6
loss of interest in teaching	Frequency	150	258	177	173	57
	%	18.4	31.7	21.7	21.2	7
Frustrated	Frequency	69	152	231	274	89
	%	8.5	18.7	28.3	33.6	10.9
Diarrhoea or constipation	Frequency	197	226	224	110	58
	%	24.2	27.7	27.5	13.5	7.1
Depressed	Frequency	84	153	253	244	81
	%	10.3	18.8	31	29.9	9.9
Unable to concentrate	Frequency	117	184	224	206	84
	%	14.4	22.6	27.5	25.3	10.3
Feeling Nervous	Frequency	200	223	210	125	57
	%	24.5	27.4	25.8	15.3	7

Table-4 shows that 21.6% of teachers strongly agree that they feel irritated due to stress, 7% of teachers strongly agree that have a loss of interest in teaching and 9.9% of teachers strongly agree that they have depressed. Further, 10.9% of teachers strongly that they get frustrated and 7.1% of teachers strongly agree that they suffered diarrhea or constipation due to stress. Also, 10.3% of teachers strongly agree that

they are unable to concentrate, whereas 7% of teachers strongly agree/agree that their behavior changes such as nail-biting, pacing.

Table 5: Level of the Agreement for the Outcome of Stress among College Teachers

Statement		Scale				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Poor sleep patterns	Frequency	30	70	162	353	200
	%	3.7	8.6	19.9	43.3	24.5
Stomach ulcers	Frequency	93	205	233	220	64
	%	11.4	25.2	28.6	27	7.9
Asthma	Frequency	184	257	218	118	38
	%	22.6	31.5	26.7	14.5	4.7
Heart disease	Frequency	178	246	210	144	37
	%	21.8	30.2	25.8	17.7	4.5
Tendency to consume tobacco/alcohol	Frequency	316	211	175	94	19
	%	38.8	25.9	21.5	11.5	2.3
Erratic moods	Frequency	188	178	228	171	50
	%	23.1	21.8	28	21	6.1

Table-5 reveals that 24.5% of teachers strongly agree that they experienced poor sleep patterns due to stress, 7.9% of teachers strongly agree that they suffered from stomach ulcers and 4.7% of teachers strongly agree that they suffered asthma. Further, 4.5% of teachers strongly agree that they have heart problems, 2.3% of teachers strongly agree that they tend to consume tobacco/alcohol and 6.1% of teachers strongly agree that their behavior changes as erratic moods.

FINDINGS

- ✓ 45.3% of the teachers are male.
- ✓ 88% of teachers are married.
- ✓ 75.2% of the teachers' spouses are employed
- ✓ 56.2% of teachers having PG with Ph.D. degree
- ✓ 51.2% of teachers are working in urban colleges and 30.1% are working in rural colleges.
- ✓ 56.2% of the teachers having the length of service 5 years and below, whereas 15% are 21 years and above.
- ✓ 29.9% of teachers strongly agree with the job demand, dealing with student's discipline.
- ✓ 27.1% responded strongly agree concerning student's poor attitudes towards
- ✓ 17.1% responded strongly agree for work linked to deadlines and targets
- ✓ 21.8% of teachers responded strongly agree for the factor, assignment of duties without consultation.
- ✓ 21.6% of teachers strongly agree that they feel irritated due to stress
- ✓ 24.5% of teachers strongly agree that they experienced poor sleep patterns

SUGGESTIONS

The research revealed that most of the teachers have agreed that they are highly stressed in the workplace due to six stress-causing factors. Also, the feel and outcome of stress are irritation and disturbed

sleep patterns. The stress among the teachers can be reduced if the college managements are ready to provide the necessary facilities to the teaching community. Hence, the suggestion to college management finds a significant role here.

1. Married college teachers, due to their work-home imbalance may be unable to concentrate and angry at their work spots as they need to work long hours in the college. Hence, the management must create a good work environment on the campus to utilize their expert knowledge in the factual, real world.
2. It is necessary to avoid continuous class hours for teachers. Sufficient time for preparation and rest enhances the chance to refresh them for the next classes.
3. In Government and Government-aided colleges, regular recruitments must take place to avoid the increased regular vacancies.
4. The college teachers' staff club activities may be strengthened to enhance the personnel relationship between college teachers.
5. Counselling must be given to teachers to overcome the stressor to create feel fresh environment.

CONCLUSIONS

Occupational stress is a major challenge for teachers and their institutions. The level of stress among teachers working in Arts and Science Colleges was analyzed in the present study. Among the six categories of stressors the job demand, control, role and support play a major role in inducing stress among teachers. Most of the teachers feel that the effects of occupational stress as irritation and poor sleep. As numbers of self-finance colleges are increasing in the education sector, the teachers have to deal with challenges like a long working hour, Job insecurity, Lack of opportunity for growth and advancement and job dissatisfaction. Further, identification of the causes of stress and to deal with them and healthy work with reduced destructive aspects of work was important for teachers. Educational institutions have to study the demands of balancing stress among teachers to make the environment more supportive, which will be helpful to retain skilled, capable and experienced working women.

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