



A THEORETICAL STUDY ON OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND STRESS MANAGEMENT AMONG TEACHERS AND ITS COPING STRATEGIES

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Abstract

Academic obligations, administrative pressure, and performance expectations are ever-increasing, making occupational stress a major issue in the teaching profession. This is especially true in urban higher education institutions. Through a review of relevant literature, ideas, and models, this theoretical article seeks to investigate the nature of stress in higher education faculty. Academics report high rates of stress due to factors such as heavy workloads, competing priorities, and lack of free time, unfair institutional practices, and an unhealthy work-life balance, among others. To provide a thorough conceptual understanding of stress management among college professors, the study aims to synthesize existing theories of psychology and organizational behavior. This research highlights the importance of mental health awareness, legislative measures, and institutional support networks in promoting educators' well-being. Both the health of educators and the quality of their lessons are affected by how well they handle stress.

Keywords: Stress, Stress Management, Teacher, Coping, Occupational

1. INTRODUCTION

It is well-known that teaching, particularly at the university level, is a mentally and emotionally exhausting occupation. It is very uncommon for college instructors to be constantly evaluated for their performance while juggling many responsibilities such as student mentorship, research, assessment, administration, and teaching all under tight time constraints. Such demands are heightened in urban academic settings like major cities as a result of institutional rivalry, diverse student bodies, and swiftly evolving educational policy. Teachers' physical and emotional health, as well as their work satisfaction and general efficacy as educators, may be adversely affected by long-term stress. Identifying the nature, causes, and results of academic stress requires a theoretical understanding of the phenomenon. A number of psychological and organizational theories shed light on the causes and effects of stress, including the Job Demand-Control Model, Coping Theory, and the Transactional Model of Stress. In order to provide a coherent theoretical framework for stress management among college instructors in urban universities, this article seeks to examine and integrate different theoretical viewpoints.

There is no profession or person in today's rapidly evolving world who does not experience some level of stress. There is a lot of tension in modern life. When people realize they can't influence every aspect of their lives, they often experience stress. We must discover methods to channel stress constructively, lessen its negative effects, and master its management. The widening gap between the demands of everyday life and the resources available to deal with them gives rise to physiological and psychological stress. Nowadays, a lot of people deal with stress. Experiencing high levels of stress is a normal and expected part of many jobs. Complexity, ambiguity, conflict, and conflicting expectations are all aspects of working life that people in various roles must learn to deal with. Educators have a responsibility to pass on to the next generation the values, beliefs, practices, and practices that make up a society's cultural legacy. They should also make an effort to help their pupils adapt to a world that is always changing. For the educational system to be successful, many factors must be considered. One of these is the teacher's competence, which encompasses his subject matter knowledge, teaching methodology, and personal attributes like attitude toward teaching, organizational climate, coping mechanisms, mental health, skillfulness, relation with others, analytical and conceptual thinking, and so on.

Stress

"Stress" is an etymological descendant of the Latin word "stringer," meaning to pull tightly. Dealing with stress is something you can't escape. As a result of its complexity and fluidity, it is becoming an increasingly pressing issue for psychologists, teachers, and institutions. This is seen as a typical aspect of being human. It has no respect for gender, race, age, religion, or socioeconomic status; it affects everyone. Contrary to popular belief, stress cannot be defined in a single, agreed-upon way. Many experts and panellists, especially those working in the areas of psychology and mental health, have proposed various definitions of stress. Anxiety, conflict, pressure, and other comparable stimuli that threaten an individual's capacity to cope may cause a variety of emotional, physiological, and behavioral responses that are collectively known as stress. According to Tenibiaje (2015), it's a combination of mental and physical responses to external stimuli. Physiological, biochemical, or psychological stress all arise when an organism reacts to anything that causes it distress, either a change in its surroundings or its internal state of affairs. There are a number of mechanisms that activate when an organism is threatened by environmental stimuli. By way of the parasympathetic nervous system, the body is brought back to equilibrium, whereas the sympathetic nervous system is responsible for activating the fight-or-flight response via the sympathoadrenal medullary axis (SAM).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Mustafa, Mohd. (2024) The current research set out to investigate how college students in Ladakh deal with stress and what factors contribute to it. Moreover, we want to identify any gender gaps in our sample of college students' responses to the research questions. For this reason, a random sampling approach was used to pick 160 college students, 80 of whom were male and 80 were female, ranging in age from 18 to 22 years. The subscales measuring active coping, self-distraction, and humor, however, show gender variations. Results showed that compared to females, men used active coping strategies, humor, and self-distraction more often. Educators, parents, counselors, and policymakers may devise effective intervention strategies to alleviate the stress that college students encounter by pinpointing its primary causes and emphasizing its negative effects on students' health and academic performance.

Ellovido, Bonn & Quirap, Erlinda. (2024) Being a teacher isn't without its share of stress, but luckily, there are ways for teachers to cope. Finding out how public school elementary school teachers manage stress on the job was the driving force for this study. Based on working, living, and subject-related elements, it intended to assess problem- and emotion-focused coping techniques for teachers, as well as occupational stress. The study's secondary objective was to determine whether or not these coping mechanisms were significantly associated with stress in the workplace. One hundred forty-five elementary school teachers from the public school system in Opol-West District, Misamis Oriental, were included in this descriptive correlational research by the use of universal sampling.

Girija, C., Dr. D. Ramani (2024) to describe the mental and physical reactions that people have when they feel threatened, overwhelmed, or challenged by anything. A natural defense mechanism, it gets the mind and body ready to deal with any kind of threat, whether it's physical, mental, or emotional. The impact of stress on human health may be both beneficial and detrimental, depending on the individual. Because every teaching position has its own set of specific expectations and difficulties, stress in the classroom is a widespread problem. The study finds a research vacuum on stress levels among college professors and focuses on ways employed by teachers to deal with stress.

Dr. M. Hemalatha (2024) College instructors in two separate cities, Madurai and Auckland, are the subjects of Dr. M. Hemalatha's research, which compares their levels of occupational stress and work satisfaction. A pre-tested questionnaire including sections on stress, work satisfaction, and intention to leave was used as the research instrument to accomplish the study's purpose. A total of 635 professors were surveyed for the research, which used primary and secondary data. The results show that the two study areas were quite different in terms of demographics and stress perceptions. Findings from this research highlight the need for all-encompassing approaches to

reduce occupational stress among university faculty. Recognizing that stresses might vary depending on circumstances and developing individualized treatments to support faculty well-being are key points.

3. OCCUPATIONAL STRESS COPING STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS

"The reduction of stress connected with teacher's job, such as role overload, has to be very much an ongoing management challenge for both the educational system and the institution, not simply during teacher training for new, weak or inefficient teachers," state Pither"s and Forgarly (1995)." The majority of the educators had been in the field for more than five years, and several of them had extensive experience. A large number were also engaged in administrative roles. Teachers found the following six tactics to be the most helpful in managing the stress they experience on the job:

- If a session is not going well, you should Abandon it;
- Discuss your problems with instructors;
- Set properties;
- Make sure you understand the material you are about to teach;
- Prepare your lessons well;
- Look for humour in the scenario.
- Taking a day off to relax, talking to other experts like physicians or counselors, reading up on stress, and going to a stress seminar are the four things that teachers are least likely to undertake to alleviate their stress.

People use both kinds of coping mechanisms to deal with the majority of stressful situations, according to research. Taking care of yourself physically has a multiplicative effect on your ability to deal with stress, worry, and lengthy workdays.

- Caffeine may be a great energy boost for teachers, but it's important to limit yourself to no more than two cups of coffee each day. It would be even better if you could replace green tea with coffee or soda for at least one cup. Compared to coffee, this tea has less caffeine and may help your immune system.

- A healthy breakfast will increase your metabolism and provide you the energy to go through the day.
- This recipe for aromatherapy bath salts may be used in the comfort of own home or classroom. If you're feeling anxious or out of control, take a deep breath.
- You may munch and crunch on nutritious snacks guilt-free if you make sure to pack a survival kit full of them every day before you go off for school. You may improve your concentration by eating several of these items, such as almonds, baby carrots, and tuna.
- When your kids are really getting under your skin, take a few moments to sit quietly and meditate at your desk or even the dry erase board.
- Plan your schedule wisely so you may take pleasure in your life outside of school while you're not working. One or two days a week, instead of bringing your work home with you, staying up late, and working all weekend, try to make the most of your school day by arriving a little earlier and remaining a bit later. Make a schedule for yourself and stick to it.
- Your satisfaction and relationships with coworkers will take a major hit if you squander or abuse the time allotted for meetings and planning. In the same vein as improving your time management outside of work, make the most of your planning and meeting sessions by creating an agenda and prioritizing tasks.
- Teaching isn't exactly a high-paying profession, but there are ways to invest in yourself that will pay off in the long run, such as getting a master's degree or more certifications. Above all else, you may get more information and resources than ever before to assist you in taking charge of your financial situation by creating a budget and investing wisely.
- We are aware that some of our pupils may be dealing with personal struggles at home. Even if you spend most of your day shielding and encouraging them, you should recognize and learn to avoid internalizing the stresses experienced by others. Make the most of your time with pupils by making learning engaging and relevant; after all, you have complete control over your classroom.
- A lot of people find change to be difficult. Feelings of unease and nervousness are typical reactions to change. No matter the challenge, whether it's a new leadership team or a completely different curriculum, it's important to learn to control your emotions and expectations and to accept and implement criticism regularly.

- You, as a teacher, are constantly on the lookout for new and exciting gimmicks, learning tools, and approaches to meet the needs of your pupils. Your dedication to your kids is commendable, and I hope you'll keep up the good work. However, we also need to remember that each day has a limited amount of time. When you fail to come up with novel solutions, forgive yourself and realize that you have a gift for teaching.

4. STRESS MANAGEMENT AMONG TEACHERS

When it comes to dealing with stress, many companies now provide stress management programs to help their staff. Some businesses go out of their way to help their workers deal with stress on the job by providing tools like coloring diaries and stress relievers. Achieving greatness and progress is no easy feat. Especially for women, the professional world may be stressful at times due to deadlines, meetings, and last-minute changes. Although women do their best to excel in every aspect of life, they aren't equipped to handle stress well at work, which is the one skill that holds them back from reaching their full potential. Workplace stress is a serious problem that contributes significantly to women's lack of motivation on a global scale.

There is a subset of occupational stress that affects educators. The educational industry as a whole has acknowledged the pervasiveness of the perception that teaching is a demanding profession. It has been defined as the unpleasant emotional feelings (like rage and despair) and physiological changes (such as an elevated heart rate) that a teacher may undergo as a consequence of some elements of his employment that pose a risk to his self-esteem or health. Stress in the classroom was described by Nwimo and Onwuka (2015) as "the unpleasant emotional experiences that teachers report having as a result of being a teacher," including feelings of anger, worry, sadness, and anxiousness. Some have even hypothesized that certain educators deal with stress in different ways.

Beginning instructors may feel overwhelmed by classroom tasks and challenging pupils, while older teachers may feel pressured by changes in their job, the inclusion of new responsibilities, and the changed educational priorities. This explains why, despite coping with high levels of stress on the job, some educators are able to do things like raise student success and set lofty personal objectives, while others fall short. Both personal and contextual factors contribute to teachers' levels of stress. Working circumstances, resources, workloads, deadlines, job security, pay rates, and student conduct are all important environmental issues. Whereas gender, age, personality, and resilience are examples of individual traits teachers, like workers in any other field, are certain to face stress on the job. As a result, educators now recognize that their jobs are taxing and draining on their bodies and minds.

Although teaching is a fulfilling career path, it is not without its difficulties and stresses. Parents, students, and the general public put a lot of pressure on teachers to raise student achievement. It's hardly surprising that teachers often experience burnout. Teachers often find themselves balancing a number of tasks, including managing classrooms, designing lessons, ensuring that students fulfill academic requirements, and accommodating a wide range of student needs. The rising problem of teacher burnout is having an effect on classroom instruction and teacher morale. Listed below are a few easy ways that educators may alleviate stress in their everyday lives:

- **Embrace Mindfulness**

Meditation and deep breathing exercises are examples of mindfulness activities that may help educators be more in the here and now, which in turn can alleviate anxiety and enhance concentration. Improving one's health may be as simple as setting up a few minutes daily to focus on one's core.

- **Set Clear Limits**

The importance of separating one's job and personal life cannot be overstated. Do not give in to the temptation to check your email or answer your phone after school. Whether it's spending time with loved ones, engaging in hobbies, or even just getting enough sleep, make the most of this time by doing things that make you happy and relaxed. A teacher's effectiveness is enhanced when they get enough sleep.

- **The Ability to Say "No"**

In addition to teaching in the classroom, teachers often have to deal with administrative duties, organize lessons, and communicate with parents. It is critical that they learn to refuse extra tasks that are too much for them to handle. Pay attention to what's really important: making the classroom a welcoming place for kids to study. School administrators may help by supporting reasonable workloads and showing appreciation for teachers' efforts.

- **Effective Collaboration**

No educator works in isolation. Establishing meaningful connections with coworkers creates a welcoming environment and offers priceless assistance. A strong network of understanding and support may be formed via sharing lesson ideas, working together on projects, or even just expressing grievances with colleagues.

- **Relocation is Therapeutic**

Anxieties are alleviated by engaging in physical exercise. Short walks or stretching breaks may be a regular part of a teacher's day. To maximize the stress-relieving effects of exercise, consider enrolling in a group fitness class or finding a workout buddy.

5. CONCLUSION

We can conclude that in Personal, professional, and organizational variables all play a role in the complex phenomena of occupational stress among college professors. Although stress cannot be entirely eradicated, it can be successfully managed via the use of suitable coping mechanisms and institutional support systems, according to the literature and stress theories that were reviewed. Individual self-evaluation, coping mechanisms, and environmental demands are the three main factors that theoretical models highlight as influencing the results of stress. Organizational measures, such as supportive leadership and acceptable job allocation, and personal coping mechanisms, such as emotional control and time management, must be balanced for stress management to be effective. The ultimate goal is to improve the health and productivity of college instructors.

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