



Stress, Stressors of Teachers' – A Probe Into Literature

KEYWORDS

Mrs. R. PORTIA

Research Scholar, M.S. University, Tirunelveli.

Dr.(Miss). A. JOYCILIN SHERMILA

Research Supervisor, Associate Professor, Annammal College of Education for Women, Thoothukudi.

Introduction

Teacher is a person of many sided interest with an innate tendency to mould the young ones. The range of professional duties performed by teacher is wide and ever extending. While discharging such crucial responsibilities, she is caught in a whirlpool of problems causing stress and strains to the otherwise job oriented and duty bound teacher. Therefore to appreciate the works and achievement of teachers, a good understanding of the stressors confronting them and the strategies they adopt to overcome the hurdles is of paramount importance.

Teachers' Stress

Stress refers to any environmental, organizational and individual or internal demands which require the individual to re-adjust to their usual behaviour pattern. Stress is common in the day to day activities as it is an era of strain, frustration, conflict, tension and anxiety.

The concept "stress" was first introduced in the life sciences by ¹Hans Selye in 1936. Now it has become a necessity for psychologists, physicians and others working in this area to define stress in a clear and measurable way that is acceptable to everyone.

Stress has been variously defined but it generally is recognized as an ²unpleasant emotional state (Kyriocou, 1989), which is ⁵said to occur when there have been prolonged, increasing or new pressure that are significantly greater than their coping resources (Dunham, 1992). ³The consequences of stress include health problems and reduction in work performance effectiveness (Quick, 1984). ⁴Stress is also a factor in staff attrition, absenteeism and low morale (Billingsley, 1992).

⁵Teachers' stress has been viewed as an interactive process which occurs between teachers and their teaching environment that leads to excessive demands being placed on them and resulting in physiological and psychological distress (Forlin, 1996).

In recent years, innovation in education has risen to prominence which changed the traditional roles of teachers from using a "talk and chalk" method to being more pupil – centered. ⁶As a result the teaching profession has been categorized as an occupation at high risk for stress (Chand, 2006). ⁷According to Vanxyl and Petersen (1991), education in different countries is undergoing fundamental changes and teachers have to adapt to the new reality.

Similarly in Tamilnadu after the introduction of SSA in schools and the innovative methods of teaching ABL and

ALM the teachers have been entrusted with new responsibilities for enhancing the status of teaching and learning achievement. So they are ⁸likely to experience additional stress due to the changes in the basic occupational structure of teaching (Hayward, 1994).

Teachers in schools are subjected to varied activities where in they have to strain their body, mind and soul for emerging successful in the assigned tasks. The situations are ever changing as the days turn out from Monday to Saturday. While discharging such baffling responsibilities pertaining to different roles, the teacher has to cope with circumstances that may cause stress capable of disturbing his or her normal teacher behavior (⁹Griffith Jayne et.al., 2010).

According to Kruger (1992) maintains that "¹⁰stress is a phenomenon that manifests in the individual person as a result of various stressors arising from the self and the environment and affect the individual person in accordance with the way in which he or she attributes meaning to the events, stimuli or demands affecting him or her, and in accordance with the way in which he or she experiences and enters into or handles such events, stimuli or demands".

Therefore any source capable of causing stress whether it is I. Personal – intellectual or emotional or physical oriented: or II Environmental – familial or social in nature may be termed as a stressor. Research of ¹¹Marais (1992) shows that teachers are exposed to a wide variety of multi – dimensional stressors, within the work situation inadequate working conditions, role conflict, ambiguity, pupil problem, time pressures, the threat and redundancy, work pressure, little participation in decision making, distribution of tasks, stereotypes, discrimination and the crown of all is inadequate salaries. ¹²Teachers experience stress due to lack of occupational confidence as a result of it they find it difficult to keep themselves up to date in their areas of expertise (Terry, 1997).

REVIEW SUMMARY

Stress and Stressors:

The changing environment in the field of teaching has come to be regarded as a major factor for initiating variety of stressors to the working teachers (¹³Steyn et al, 2006). Irrespective of the country or continents, teachers' job demands were stated to be consistent predictors of stress outcomes (¹⁴Konstadina et al, 2003; ¹⁵Renato Pisan-ti et al, 2003). Moreover the behaviour of the pupils, the classroom and the support system were also found to be stress causing factors in addition to teachers' lack of knowledge or skills to address the diversity among the students (¹⁶Pauls Janine, 2005). In certain cases more complex

organizational set up and performance also led to higher level job stress. Similarly higher level home related problems triggered off higher level stress. The teacher being an academician the conflict arising due to satisfying academic need and family expectations blows up the stress levels (¹⁷Ahsan Nilufar et al, 2009). When such is the case with the teachers in normal schools, there is evidence in research the teachers in nursing institutes experience more stress than those in other activities (¹⁸Shegeki Muto, 2007).

Similar is the condition of teachers in the field of special education and other areas. The special education teachers with a balanced social role orientation (¹⁹Joanne Eichinger, 2000); not much affected by increased workload at the time of school inspection (²⁰Dawn, 1999); and not having significant negative feeling about the principal and the organizations (²¹Maria Plastido et al, 2008) were stated to be successful in fighting with stress and as such have satisfaction in job. The people associated with school teachers such as a president of an institution (²²Patrecia; Robert, 2008); radiological science educators (²³Killion Jeffeay B, 2006) were not found to exhibit emotional exhaustion at the significant level due to job stress. In a study conducted on staff of higher education the results showed that the most significant source of stress for staff of higher education was job security. In comparison to the normative data, in the qualitative study also staff reported significantly higher levels of stress relating to work relationship, control, resources and communication. Significantly lower levels of commitment both from the organization and the faculties were also observed to be a major factor causing stress (²⁴Tytherleigh, M.Y. et al, 2005).

Another bunch of findings was reported in literature regarding the factors causing stress to teachers. The major factors were found to be - increased teacher workload; imposed and centralized system of accountability; lack of professional autonomy; relentlessly imposed changes; constant media criticism; reduced resources and moderate pay. There was also gender based difference in teachers stress experience. The effects of teachers stress were declining job satisfaction, reduced ability to meet students' needs, psychological disorders leading to increased absenteeism and high levels of claims for stress related disabilities. It was also noted that stress appears to be a factor responsible for teachers leaving the profession in many countries (²⁵Charlie, 2001).

REVIEWS IN NUTSHELL

Part - I

Studies pertaining to Teachers

S. N	YEAR	AUTHOR	FINDINGS
1	2010	²⁶ Sonnenntag et al	Mentally 'switching off' during non work time for moderating stress.
2	2009	²⁷ Betoret	Lack of school resources as cause for stress.
3	2008	²⁸ Steinmetz et al	Working hours, work environment, and employee attitude increase with work home interferences (WHI).
4	2010	²⁹ Adera et al	Teacher turn - over as a problem in special education due to 1. Increasing responsibilities, 2. long working hours, 3. emotional disturbances and 4. physical fatigue.
5	2007	³⁰ Kokkionos et al	Job stressors - interference; lack of expression of individuality; beyond teaching role and workload.

6	2008	³¹ Kinman et al	Health predictor of emotional disturbance. Work stressors correlate with living status, sense of cohesion serves as buffer to stress.
7	2005	³² Mesmer - Magnus et al	WFC (Work to Family Conflict) correlates with workload. Family to Work Conflict correlates with living status.
8	2006	³³ Kinman et al	Wellbeing associated with job security; work safety and working hours.
9	2004	³⁴ Fortunato et al	Negative affectivity correlates with job stressors, strains and attitudes.
10	1994	³⁵ Dua et al	Emotional and physical well being correlated with job related stress factors - workload, work condition, interpersonal dealings, and work devoid of creativity.
11	1989	³⁶ Hanchey et al	Burnout an outcome of ineffective appraisal of environment and encountering excessive stressors.
12	1987	³⁷ Tishler et al	Vulnerability for stress, job stressors and current status of teachers are the causes for stress.
13	1986	³⁸ Evans et al	Effect of stress on physical illness, psychological strain reported.
14	1985	³⁹ Wright et al	Rural - urban differences in parent / school conflict; student discipline; completing student report as stressors confirmed.
15	1985	⁴⁰ Richards et al	Significant stressors and methods to tackle them identified by nominal group techniques.
16	1979	⁴¹ Hopes et al	Importance of including content for developing coping with stress in vocational courses established.
17	2011	⁴² Cladellas	Professors' possibility to arrange work time, helps them balance work and personal activities, thereby decreasing the impact of stress.
18	2011	⁴³ Davis	The constructs of compassion fatigue are job training, stress, job requirements and professional support.
19	2012	⁴⁴ Hung et al	Interference, expression of individuality and beyond teaching cause higher stress in teachers of central Taiwan. Unmarried and living single and few years of experience are higher in stress level.

Part - II

Studies pertaining to Other Employees

20	2010	⁴⁵ Scholfeld et al	Qualitative study gives valid data because of workers' unconstrained descriptions - first hand observations- participant observations.
21	2009	⁴⁶ Rospenda et al	Mental health correlates - gender / racial discriminations; abuse; bias; drinking and sexual harassment.
22	2004	⁴⁷ Grebner et al	Data collection by event sampling - lack of clear directions; lack of coordination; lack of time; poor work environment.
23	1995	⁴⁸ Repetti et al	Nature of work stress associated with duration and intensity of child fondling and child care.
24	1991	⁴⁹ Rook et al	Spouse employment influences job stress.
25	1992	⁵⁰ Mansfield et al	Social support lessens stress, enhances job satisfaction. Interferences increases stress level.
26	1990	⁵¹ Beehr et al	Stress caused by uncertainty to perform and to be independent.
27	1991	⁵² Beehr et al	Spouse employment status influences stress level - stress to ward off aversive strain.
28	1991	⁵³ Dunseath et al	Social support buffering depends on general education and nature of job.

29	1987	⁵⁴ Zautra et al	Illness prevention and job enrichment approaches to enhance quality of work.
30	1985	⁵⁵ Rawlins et al	Attrition occurs because of lack of proper working condition.

CRITICAL REVIEW

After reviewing a long list of available studies related to teachers' job stressors, the researcher identified the emerging of two large domains pertaining to stressors – Teacher based stressors and Environment based stressors.

CONCLUSION

From these the researcher has come to the conclusion that the teacher population chosen for the present investigation was unique and different from teachers of other categories or other employees. Therefore the teachers' population was studied only regarding the level of negation to positive acceptance with provisions for adopting successive intellectual strategies. Further it was inferred that there was dearth of study testing the relationship between the different psychological variables and the teachers' job stress.

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