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JOB -STRESS OF FACULTY MEMBERS IN PRIVATE PROFESSIONAL COLLEGES LOCATED IN NCR, DELHI

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ABSTRACT

Stress has become a major buzzword and legitimate concern of the time. The stress epidemic not only has a deteriorating impact on those affected and their families but is also very costly to organizations. The objectives of this study were to assess the present level of job-stress of Faculty members and the different mechanisms/strategies preferred by them to cope up with it in a survey of 300 Faculty- members working in 30 Private Professional Colleges located in National Capital Region, Delhi. The determinants of job stress that have been studied under this research included 22 different dimensions of job- stress under three Sub-groups of Stressors. The results show that the majority of the Faculty members experienced moderate degree of job- stress.

KEYWORDS

Coping Mechanisms, Faculty members, Job-stress, Private Professional Colleges.

INTRODUCTION

By all definitions, the profession of teaching has a very prestigious place in all professions. A teacher is a kingpin in the entire system of education. Almost all cultures of the civilized world would have considered their teachers in a very high esteem. They are often been given different names like "Master", "Mentor" and "Guru". To achieve this status teachers throughout the history of civilization have always tried to come up to the expectations of the world around them.

Though times have changed and the societies and cultures have drastically diversified, but the task of a teacher remains the same, which is primarily the transfer of knowledge to the next generation. With change in cultural norms and traditions in the societies there has been a drastic change in the expectations from a teacher. Teachings now become a very demanding profession with a lot of stresses. For a teacher who has a lot of deadlines to meet and a lot of responsibilities to shoulder besides teaching what are in the Text Book, the role and responsibility has become multitasked in the present day education system.

With the change in the type of teaching culture and added managerial responsibilities for teachers which include planning and executing instructional lessons, assessing students based on specific objectives derived from a set of curriculum and communicating with parents, teaching has been identified as one of the most stressful profession today.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

If asked to name jobs that are stressful, it is doubtful that the average person would ever think of teaching in Colleges as a stress filled job. Increasingly, however, many Faculty- members are experiencing more job- stress and less job satisfaction. They are exposed to constant stress because they work with specific target audience - students who are pretty difficult to deal with. To cap it all, they have to cope with pressures of parents, students and their Managements. Fighting fires may sound taxing, chasing criminals demanding, but new studies say that working as Teachers also belongs to the category of most stressful jobs. In relation to the profession of teaching, where a teacher is viewed as dispensers of knowledge, teachers are increasingly perceived as facilitators or managers of knowledge.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Stress is currently a phenomenon that must be recognized and addressed in various professions, because of the complexity of present-day society and the teaching profession is no exception. Dr. Hans Selye, who is considered the pioneer of psychological stress (Everley & Rosenfeld, 1991:14) cautions that "complete freedom from stress is death". However, various researchers indicate that a definite relation exists between work stress and a person's productivity (Warren & Toll, 1993:11). Too much or too little stress can reduce a person's productivity. Research done worldwide indicates that teachers' stress is becoming endemic (Van Wyk, 1998:3), which could have serious implications for the physical and mental health of teachers. Work demands, pupil misbehavior and negative feedback are the main contributors to teacher stress in Sweden (Jacobsson, Pousette & Thylefors, 2001:8). The same applies for Scottish and Australian teachers, according to Pithers (1998:277). He recommended that more stress similarities than differences are found in comparisons of teachers' stress internationally. Statistics (Van Wyk, 1998:5) indicate that teachers hand in more medical insurance claims than persons in other professions, have a four year shorter life expectancy than the national average and often blame stress as reason for sick leave from the Institute. Furthermore, certain kinds of occupations are associated with higher stress levels. Biggs (1988:44) explains that persons in the helping professions are particularly prone to stress, because of their idealistic goals. Feldman (1998:165) lists teaching as one of the more stressful occupations.

Stress as viewed by Ofley (1999) is the psychological, physiological and behavioral response of an individual seeking to adopt and adjust to both the internal and external pressures. Furthermore, Dalloway (2007) describes stress as an automatic physical reaction to danger, demands or threat. Love and Irani (2007) view stress as the individual's inability to cope with excessive workplace demand or job pressure, while Harting et al (2007) presented stress as a process of responding to an imbalance between demand and resources.

Selye, a pioneer in the study of stress, described stress as "the rate at which we live at any moment..... anything pleasant or unpleasant that speeds up the intensity of life causes a temporary increase in stress (Selye,1974,p.2). "Occupational stress arises from a discrepancy between the teacher's work needs, values and expectations and the failure of the work environment to provide occupational rewards, job demands and the capacity of the worker to meet these requirements"(Cooper,1981,p.175). Hunter wrote "air traffic control, surgery and teaching are probably three of the most potentially stressful occupations in the world..... In them people are responsible for functioning in learned patterns yet must also possess on-their-feet, high-speed thinking and decision-making skills to handle the unexpected situations triggered by variance of humans and the caprice of nature"(Hunter,1977,p.122).

The implication of the above definitions is that too much pressures can be placed upon teachers arising from unnecessary deadlines, attempts to impress boss /Employer, administrative tasks, conflicts ,implementation of new policy ,lack of breathing space between classes, non-availability of time to relax and recapture, aspirations for greater achievement, overwork, emotional exhaustion, lack of participation in decision making process ,poor communication, job insecurity, dealing with different needs of the students etc.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the general level of Stress among the Faculty members of Private Professional Colleges.
2. To assess the degree of job-stress against different dimensions of job-related stressors.
3. To identify the degree of importance of different mechanisms/strategies preferred by the Faculty members to reduce/cope up with the job-stress.

RESEARCH METHODS

A survey instrument in the form of close-ended questionnaire was developed for the purpose of collecting the data for the study. Multiple modes of communication such as e-mail, post and in-person were used in order to get optimal response from the study participants. Of 300 distributed questionnaires, overall usable response rate was 63.33(190) %.

The participants were 36 % Female and 64 % Male, 39 % of them were married and 61% single.

TABLE A: JOB STRESS

Sl.No.	Questions	N	YES(1)		NO(2)		
			No.	%	No.	%	
1	Do you perform well under Stress?	190	66	34.73	124	65.27	
2	Are you comfortable at your present level of Stress?	190	77	40.52	113	59.48	
3	Do you feel that there are negative changes in your behaviour at home, caused by job related Stress?	190	115	60.53	75	39.47	
4	Have you ever felt that you have neglected your family/friends due to work pressure?	190	101	53.16	89	46.84	
5	Do you feel tired and fatigued even with enough sleep?	190	82	43.16	108	56.84	
6	If you feel you are under stress, which you feel the main contributory factor? Problems at Work-place(1)/Problems at Home(2)	190	122	64.21	68	35.79	
7	What do you feel about working on Holidays/Weekdays? Good(1) / Bad(2)	190	50	23.62	140	73.68	
8	Rate your present level of Stress on average High(1)/Moderate(2)/Low(3)	190	57	30.00	92	48.42	41/21.58
9	How do you feel at your present level of your Stress? Good(1)/ Bad(2)	190	63	33.15	127	66.85	

TABLE B: PRESENT LEVEL OF JOB STRESS OF FACULTY MEMBERS ON DIFFERENT JOB-RELATED VARIABLES

Sl.No.	Job -related Variables	N	Low		Moderate		High		MEAN	SD	DEGREE
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%			
A	Extra-Organizational Stressors										
1	Family related problems	190	91	47.89	63	33.16	36	18.95	2.53	1.229	Moderate
2	Problems arising out of relocation	190	44	23.16	76	40.00	70	36.84	3.24	1.223	Moderate
3	Residence related problems	190	115	60.53	43	22.63	32	16.84	2.35	1.202	Low
4	Finance related problems	190	59	31.05	64	33.68	67	35.26	3.05	1.314	Moderate
5	Transportation related problems	190	18	9.47	79	41.58	93	48.95	3.57	1.051	High
B	Organizational Stressors:										
1	Strict management control	190	31	16.32	101	53.16	58	30.53	3.23	1.093	Moderate
2	Role conflict and ambiguity	190	129	67.89	40	21.05	21	11.05	2.16	1.089	Moderate
3	Changes in subject taught/allocated	190	44	23.16	85	44.74	61	32.11	3.13	1.140	Moderate
4	Additional responsibilities(Academic/Non-academic	190	81	42.63	77	40.53	32	16.84	2.67	1.173	Moderate
5	Work Assignment and Workload	190	65	34.21	82	43.16	32	16.84	2.86	1.193	Moderate
6	Inadequate/ insufficient infrastructure	190	74	38.95	92	48.42	24	12.63	2.60	1.102	Moderate
7	Rules/Regulations/Policies of the Organization	190	65	34.21	52	27.37	73	38.42	3.01	1.369	Moderate
8	Providing cover for teacher shortages on absences	190	115	60.53	54	28.42	21	11.05	2.29	1.111	Low
9	Insecure job climate	190	36	18.95	63	33.16	91	50.00	3.41	1.208	Moderate
10	Faculty Performance Appraisal	190	91	47.89	61	32.11	38	20.00	2.63	1.235	Moderate
11	Poor HR Policy	190	75	39.47	69	36.32	46	24.10	2.81	1.241	Moderate
C	Individual Stressors:										
1	Long hours of work	190	90	47.37	60	31.58	44	23.16	2.58	1.256	Moderate
2	High degree of resistance towards changes	190	105	55.26	49	25.79	36	18.95	2.43	1.294	Low
3	Little control over the work-environment and on the job	190	97	51.10	60	31.58	33	17.37	2.47	1.233	Low
4	Constant pressure on deadlines and schedules	190	56	29.47	79	41.58	55	28.95	2.98	1.161	Moderate
5	Maintaining discipline in the Class Rooms	190	85	44.74	37	20.53	21	11.10	2.51	1.053	Moderate
6	Time constraints	190	79	41.58	65	34.21	46	24.21	2.75	1.233	Moderate

Note: Mean – 1.00 – 2.49 means the Faculty members have LOW LEVEL of Job Stress. Mean 2.50 – 3.49 means the Faculty members have MODERATE LEVEL of Job Stress. Mean 3.50 – 5.00 means the Faculty members have HIGH LEVEL of Job Stress.

TABLE C: DEGREE OF IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGIES TO REDUCE JOB STRESS

Sl.No.	Job -related Variables	N	Low		Moderate		High		MEAN	SD	DEGREE
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%			
A	Organizational Strategies / Steps										
1	Organizing stress-coping programmes/Work-shops	190	26	13.68	87	45.79	77	40.53	3.43	1.109	Moderate
2	Involving Faculty members in decision making process	190	15	7.89	51	26.84	124	65.26	3.88	1.034	High
3	Faculty Development Programme	190	53	27.89	79	41.58	58	30.52	3.06	1.174	Moderate
4	Supportive Organizational Climate	190	34	17.89	108	56.84	48	25.26	3.11	0.997	Moderate
5	Improving Communication Channel	190	47	24.74	95	50.00	48	25.26	2.98	1.066	Moderate
6	Encouraging Faculty members to express their ideas	190	36	18.95	43	22.63	111	58.42	3.61	1.296	High
7	Sound HR Policies	190	21	11.05	78	41.05	91	47.89	3.55	1.134	High
B	Individual Strategies / Steps										
1	Exercise / Yoga	190	21	11.05	120	63.16	49	25.79	3.24	0.966	Moderate
2	Meditation	190	27	14.21	108	56.84	55	28.95	3.27	1.052	Moderate
3	Avoiding Confrontation	190	19	10.00	54	28.43	117	61.58	3.77	1.072	High
4	Discussing problems/expressing feelings to others	190	36	18.95	99	52.11	55	28.95	3.15	1.112	Moderate
5	Plan Ahead and Prioritize	190	27	14.21	69	36.32	94	52.11	3.55	1.148	High
6	Have a Healthy Home life	190	64	33.68	75	39.47	51	26.84	2.92	1.227	Moderate
7	Develop and maintain a positive attitude	190	36	18.95	82	43.16	72	37.89	3.26	1.152	Moderate
8	Do something nice for some one	190	79	41.58	61	32.11	50	26.32	2.78	1.290	Moderate
9	Read interesting Literature	190	97	51.05	56	29.47	41	21.58	2.56	1.282	Moderate
10	Watch a favourite Movie	190	98	51.58	50	26.32	42	22.11	2.57	1.196	Moderate
11	Listening Music	190	116	61.05	42	22.11	32	16.84	2.31	1.200	Low
12	Create support net work of friendship and co-workers	190	39	20.53	89	46.84	62	32.63	3.17	1.037	Moderate
13	Have realistic expectation	190	52	27.37	59	31.05	79	41.58	3.25	1.284	Moderate

RESEARCH RESULTS

Table A Data showed that the respondents presently experienced 30.00% High level of Stress, 48.42% Moderate level of Stress and 21.58 % Low level of Stress. From the analysis of the data it was also clear that most of the Faculty members do experience Stress and experience the negative impact of it both in the family and work life.

Table B Data indicated that the respondents expressed High level of Stress on "Transport related problem" (Mean-3.57) followed by "Problems arise out of relocation" (Mean - 3.24) in the Extra Organizational Stressors Category. In the Organizational Stressors Category, the High Stress occurred in "Insecure Job Climate"(Mean - 3.41) followed by "Strict Management Control" (Mean - 3.23) and "Changes in Subject Taught/Allocated"(Mean - 3.13), while the Lowest Stress happened to be "Role Conflict and Ambiguity"(Mean - 2.16) followed by "Providing cover for Faculty Shortages on Absence"(Mean- 2.29). Faculty members felt moderate level of Stress on descending order like "Rules/Regulations/Policies of the Organisation"(Mean- 3.01) , "Work Assignment and Workload"(Mean - 2.86), "Poor HR Policy"(Mean - 2.81), "Additional Responsibilities"(Mean - 2.67)) and "Faculty Performance Appraisal"(Mean - 2.63). In the Individual Stressors Category the highest Stressors were "Constant pressure on Deadlines and Schedules(Mean - 2.98) followed by "Time Constraints"(Mean - 2.75).

Table C Data revealed that Faculty members were of the opinion -"Involving Faculty members in decision making process"(Mean- 3.88) was the most important step/strategy to be undertaken by the Management in reducing the Stress Level followed by "Encouraging Faculty members to express their ideas"(Mean - 3.61) and "Sound HR Policies"(Mean - 3.55) . The strategies to be adopted on individual basis, the highest degree of importance in reducing the stress Level was "Avoiding Confrontation" (Mean -3.77) followed by "Plan Ahead and Prioritize"(Mean -3.55).

CONCLUSIONS

Stress is a fact of life, but it need not be a way of life. Every job has stress. It is an inevitable consequence of living and working with others. We don't always have control over what happens to us, says Allen Elkin, Director of the Stress Management Counseling Center in New York City, and yet that does not mean we have to react to a difficult, challenging situation by becoming frazzled or feeling overwhelmed or distraught. Being overly anxious is not just a mental hazard; it is a physical one too. The more stressed out we are the more vulnerable we are to a host of chronic or life-threatening illness and less open to the beauty and pleasure of life.

Some amount of stress may be normal as well as beneficial. Too much stress, however, has negative effects. Negative stressors can lead to adverse physical, psychological, and/or behavioral consequences. Moreover, the education system can be negatively affected by poor teacher performance; absenteeism and turnover rates (West and West, 1989-47). If teachers' stress is not minimized or unresolved, it will directly or indirectly have ripple effects on the teachers' emotional, mental and physical health which may have negative effects in teaching and learning process. Obviously, when teachers are stressed, education system will be impaired, thus inefficiency may ensue. Academic Administrators, primarily the HR Managers, should adopt effective strategies to reduce the harmful effects while retaining the energy and creativity needed to work and live in a stressful environment.

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