

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON JOB STRESS AMONG MEMBERS OF FACULTY IN TELANGANA REGION: A SUGGESTED RESEARCH DESIGN

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ABSTRACT

*A teacher needs to spend a lot of energy in his daily chores in the classroom while also taking care of his personal and family commitments. Due to this, teaching, like many other professions, is increasingly becoming a stressful occupation as teachers have to shoulder multiple roles and responsibilities keeping in mind the deadlines. These roles may include as an assessor, planner, curriculum development, information provider, role model, facilitator, and resource generator. The responsibilities may include planning lessons, effective teaching, class supervision, maintenance of discipline, evaluation, assessment and accountability of student performance, conducting co-curricular activities, etc. Despite performing these roles and responsibilities, they have to be cordial with the administration, principal, and colleagues on the one hand and on the other hand, they have to take due care of their family life. In response to increased work demands and the challenge of educating a diverse student population, many teachers are leaving the field of teaching, citing stress as a main reason for leaving. In this background, an attempt is made to suggest a **Research Design Format** for the prospective Research Scholars intending to take up and pursue research leading to the award of a Doctoral Degree.*

Keywords: *Job Stress; Faculty Members; Literature Review; Organizational Factors; Coping Strategies for Stress.*

INTRODUCTION

In earlier days, teachers enjoyed their esteem, honor and love from their students. Teaching profession was considered to be a labor of love. Teachers were considered next to the parents and at times next to God. However, today's scenario has changed and the plight of teachers is becoming more stressful and less glorious. This may be due to new trends in the education system, less support from the employers, poor facilities provided to the teachers and many more. However, there seems to be a dearth of research in India with regard to stress levels experienced by members of faculty working in colleges affiliated to State-funded Universities. Of course, there have been some studies on teacher stress and burnout and mental health. There is a crying need for research into the social and psychological aspects of the teaching profession.

In the face of growing public criticism, some young, enthusiastic teachers turn into bored and aloof professionals in a few years' time. Many of our teachers are apathetic and uninvolved and make no effort to improve their scholarship and skill while some others, placed in the same working milieu, are enthusiastic, committed and show a constant desire to grow professionally. We should be concerned about the potential consequences of such declining public confidence on education in general, and the teaching community in particular whose self-esteem and professional self-image are adversely impacted. In this backdrop, every attempt has to be made to examine the factors that cause job stress among the members of faculty.

➤ A FEW DEFINITIONS OF STRESS

According to *Van Wyk*, stress is derived from the Latin word “*strictus*” that translates into taut, meaning stiffly strung (Olivier and Venter 2003). Stress can be defined in general terms as people feel pressures in their own life. The stress due to workload can be defined as reluctance to come to work and a feeling of constant pressure associated with general physiological, psychological and behavioral stress symptoms. Therefore, stress is 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 and job stress can lead to poor health and even injury (*Islam et al. 2012*). Stress is increasing due to globalization and economic crisis, which affects all professions, and as well as families and societies, almost all countries of the world (*Bharatai and Newman 1978*).

Stress is our body’s physical and emotional reaction that frightens, irritates, confuses, endangers, or excites us and places demands on the body. Stress can be caused by events that are pleasing as well as events that create crises in our lives. But stress is a normal part of daily life and the effects of stress are not always negative. In small quantities, stress is good; it can motivate us and help us to become more productive, but too much stress or a strong response to stress can be harmful. Stress can arise from any situation or thought that makes one feel frustrated, angry, or anxious. Everyone sees situations differently and has different coping skills, so, no two persons will respond exactly the same way to a particular situation. Situations that are considered stress provoking are known as stressors. Many professionals suggest that there is a difference between what we perceive as positive stress, and distress as negative stress. But we often use the term stress to describe negative situations. This leads many people to believe that all stress is bad for us, which is not true actually (*Stress and Stress Management 2010*).

Stress is a psychological and physiological response to events that upset a person’s personal balance in some way. When faced with a threat, whether to physical safety or emotional equilibrium, the body’s defenses kick into high gear in a rapid, automatic process known as the “fight-or flight” response. It’s well known what this stress response feels like: heart pounding in the chest, tensed up muscles, breathing comes faster, every sense is on red alert. Stress is an inevitable and unavoidable component of life due to increasing competitiveness in living standards. The speed at which change is taking place in the world today is certainly overwhelming and breathtaking. In the fast changing world today, no individual is free from stress and no profession is stress free. Everyone experiences stress, whether it is within the family, business, organization, work, study, or any other social or economic activities. The specific stress experienced by the people, often depends on the nature and demands of the setting in which people live. Thus, teachers, doctors, engineers, managers and people in other professions experience different types of stress to different degrees. Stress is a psychological and physiological response to events that upset a person’s personal balance in some way. When faced with a threat, whether to physical safety or emotional equilibrium, the body’s defenses kick into high gear in a rapid, automatic process known as the “fight-or flight” response.

It's well known, what this stress response feels like heart pounding in the chest, tensing up, muscles, breathe comes faster, every sense on red alert. Each profession causes a specific level of stress. However, teaching is the one among the professions that cause more stress compared to other professions (**Hargreaves, 1999**). **Ofoegbu and Nwadiani (2006)** found that the level of stress among academics was significantly high. High stress results in the lowering of intellectual ability and functioning, irrespective of one's age, education and background. At a personal level, teaching related stress can affect a teacher's health, well-being, and performance (**Larchick and Chance, 2004**). From an organizational perspective, it translates to unproductive employee behaviors such as alienation, apathy, and absenteeism (**Gugliemi and Tatrow 1998**). Previous research findings stimulated research amongst teachers working in colleges selected for the study. Here the problem of the study was to investigate the perceived level of occupational stress amongst faculty in selective colleges and to identify the key factors predicting Job stress amongst faculty. Previous studies have investigated various aspects of educators' stress, including its prevalence (**Ngidi and Sibaya 2002; Adams 2001**).

Research conducted in the United Kingdom (UK), United States of America (USA), Australia and New Zealand has identified several key stressors commonly associated with stress among academic staff. These include work overload, time constraints, lack of promotion opportunities, lack of regular performance feedback, inadequate recognition, inadequate salary, changing job role, inadequate management and/or participation in management, inadequate resources and funding and student interactions.

· **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

According to **Dewe (1986)**, sources of teacher stress are varied. So the researcher intends to identify the variables predicting job stress amongst faculty in select colleges. According to **Filan et al., (1986)** faculty stress levels and satisfaction are very important factors in the overall success of the institution. **Lord (1996)** reported a relationship between job performance and the stressors of role conflict and role ambiguity. **Vakola and Nikolaou 2005** found in their study that Job stress will lead to reduced job satisfaction and poor organizational commitment. Further, even the researcher makes an attempt to estimate the impact of Job stress amongst faculty on productivity/Performance.

· **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Hans Selyes: Contribution in this field is highly acknowledged. He worked up four methods like effort, fear, success and tiredness which occur in stress. Hence he considered stress as a conflict between our external environment and the individual himself, leading to emotional and physical pressure. **Alwin Toffler:** Coined the term "future shock" to describe the feeling of anxiety that arises among people due to fast changes. When demand on a person is more his capacity decreases and this leads to anxiety and stress. **According to Beehr and Newman:** Job stress is a condition arising from interaction of the people and their jobs and characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning. **Jeffrey et al., (2009)** found in his study that marketing professors who were not tenured or in tenure-track positions reported more pressure with regard

to over half of Gmelch's Faculty Stress Index items. The "themes" included lack of recognition and reward, time-related matters (meetings, interruptions), and perhaps a feeling of isolation from the rest of the faculty.

Women marketing professors appear to experience more stress over work related matters that conflict with family and recreational **Tytherleigh et al., (2007)** carried out a national benchmarking exercise of occupational stress in English Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) using the ASSET (an organizational stress screening tool), with a stratified random sample of all categories of staff. This paper presented a secondary analysis of these data by gender for full-time, permanent staff only. Results showed that when differences in age and job exposure (i.e. type of university; category of employee; salary level; hours worked per week; and additional responsibilities) were accounted for, men and women reported similar levels of stress for work relationships, work-life balance, overload, job security control, resources and communication, and job overall. They also reported similar levels of commitment. In contrast, their results show that men are more vulnerable to the negative effects of stressors associated with pay and benefits, and women are more vulnerable to the negative outcomes of health, and not by differential exposure to them.

Aslaug et al., (2000) identified the main stressors in their study that are lack of information, communication, and respect between professions, as well as the need for professional and personal development. The participatory intervention had a positive, but limited effect on work-related stress, job characteristics, learning climate and management style, and seemed to have started a beneficial change process. There were no negative short-term effects on work-related stress and job demands. Organizational interventions may be a potential training ground for acquiring participatory skills and resources, and if sustained over the intervening period, they can have long-term effects on problem solving, job stress and employee satisfaction.

Pandey and Tripathy (2001) found in their study that teaching is a stressful occupation. Job stressors among engineering college teachers are role ambiguity and unreasonable group pressure. **Fauzia Khurshid et al., (2011)** found in their study that as a whole the university teachers experience moderate to high levels of occupational stress. However, teachers working in the public sector universities experienced higher stress as compared to the private sector university teachers. The key reason for the occupational role stress of public sector university teachers was their relationships with their colleagues, whereas for the private sector teachers their workload caused occupational role stress. The study also explored the effects of demographic variables age, gender, marital status, qualification, income, experience, and nature of job contract on teachers occupational role stress.

Archibong et al., (2010) revealed that students were the greatest source of stress to academic staff with respect to interpersonal relationships, with respect to research sourcing funds for research was the highest source of stress. With regards to teaching, it was a collation of results, sourcing funds for career development was considered as the highest source of stress. Overall, the results show that career development is the greatest source of stress to academic

staff. The results also indicated that male and female academics differed in perceived stress level in teaching. *Gillespie et al., (2001)* focused on understanding staff's experience of occupational stress, and perceptions of the sources, consequences and moderators of stress. Both general and academic staff reported a dramatic 46 increase in stress during the previous five years. As a group, academic staff reported higher levels of stress than general staff. Five major sources of stress were identified including: insufficient funding and resources; work overload; poor management practice; job insecurity; and insufficient recognition and reward. The majority of groups reported that job-related stress was having a deleterious impact on their professional work and personal welfare. Aspects of the work environment (support from co-workers and management, recognition and achievement, high morale, flexible working conditions), and personal coping strategies (Stress management techniques, work/non-work balance, tight role boundaries and lowering standards), were reported to help staff cope with stress.

Pithers and Soden (1998) highlighted role overload as a significant stressor among teachers. They assessed levels of strain, organizational roles and stress in Australian and Scottish vocational and FE (Further Education) lecturers. The strain was found to be average in both national groups, but there were high levels of stress, with role overload emerging as the major cause. Yagil 1998 revealed that inexperienced compared to experienced teachers perceived an overall higher level of stress. The major sources of stress for inexperienced teachers are interacting with pupils' parents and workload. Inexperienced teachers are less involved emotionally in their work, especially in regard to the incidents of unsatisfactory performance. *Carolyn McCracken (2001)* identified in his study that stress among community college faculty in east Tennessee was determined to be inversely related to job-satisfaction levels. In agreement with *Herzberg (1966)* satisfaction among the surveyed faculty was more likely to stem from the intrinsic factors related to the nature of the work, professional freedom, and the enjoyment of teaching and the academic environment, rather than from the extrinsic values associated with rewards.

As stress inversely related to job satisfaction in this study, stress levels among community college faculty in east Tennessee was found to be moderate to low whereas the general satisfaction with the job was high. *Beena and Poduval (1992)* conducted a study on a sample of 80 (40 male and 40 female) executives in different organizations. They found that when age increases, perceived stress also increases due to the increase in the responsibility of the executives. Female executives showed higher rates of stress because women experience a greater amount of work change than men do.

➤ **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

• **Research Gap and Significance of the Study**

It was noticed that the study of stress of college faculty was not extensively attempted by researchers. Hence there was a gap in this area and I am interested to look into this aspect of college faculty. The study helps to identify stress faced by members of faculty working in colleges and consequently provide appropriate coping strategies. This study identifies the areas of stress and tries to prevent or reduce it in College Faculty.

➤ **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. How do members of faculty perceive that they are undergoing stress?
2. What is the level of impact that different demographic variables produce on Job stress amongst faculty in select colleges?
3. To what extent does the Job Stress amongst faculty affect their job performance?
4. What are the different factors predicting the Job Stress amongst faculty in select colleges?

➤ **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The present study will be confined to the issues related only to Job Stress experienced by the members of faculty working in colleges selected for the study from Hyderabad and Ranga Reddy Regions. The factors considered for the present study are as under:

1. Organizational Factors
2. Factors related to the Management Support
3. Economic Factors
4. Social Factors
5. Factors related to the Peers
6. Personal / Family Factors

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the role of **Organizational Factors** on Job Stress among the members of faculty
2. To study the role of **Management Support Related Factors** on Job Stress among the members of faculty
3. To study the role of **Economic Factors** on the Job Stress among the members of faculty
4. To study the role of **Social Factors** on the Job Stress among the members of faculty
5. To study the role of **Peer Group Factors** on the Job Stress among the members of faculty
6. To study the role of **Personal /Family Factors** on the Job Stress among the members of faculty.

HYPOTHESES

- H₀₁: There is **NO** impact of Organizational Factors on the level of Job Stress experienced by the members of the Faculty.
- H₀₂: There is **NO** impact of Economic Factors on the level of Job Stress experienced by the members of the Faculty.
- H₀₃: There is **NO** impact of Management Related Factors on the level of Job Stress experienced by the members of the Faculty.
- H₀₄: There is **NO** impact of Social Factors on the level of Job Stress experienced by the members of the Faculty.
- H₀₅: There is **NO** impact of Peer Group Factors on the level of Job Stress experienced by the members of the Faculty.

- H₀₆: There is **NO** impact of Personal/Family Factors on the level of Job Stress experienced by the members of the Faculty.

➤ SOURCES OF DATA AND PERIOD OF STUDY

This study makes use of both Primary and Secondary data and the primary data will be collected from the respondents through a well structured questionnaire. Secondary data will be collected from various Journals and Periodicals such as Magazines, Business newspapers, and books and websites related to the subject under study.

The period of study for secondary data will be the preceding ten years from this current year viz., 2022 and primary data will be collected from respondents during 2023.

➤ SAMPLING METHOD

Despite the fact that a *simple convenience sampling* is considered to be the technique as all elements have equal chance to be included in the sample and hence it yields greater validity and reliability (*Shaughnessy and Zechmeister 1997*), a *stratified random sample* will be selected. It allows the population to be divided into subsets or strata which are then randomly sampled, and in this manner increases representativeness of the sample and minimizes sampling error (*Lehman 1991*).

➤ THE SCALES TO BE USED :

Likert Scale of summated rating will be used for the questionnaire. Likert five-point Scale having statements from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree” will be employed. Against each item, there would be five responses from among which the employees need to choose any one response which describes their best individual response. Where 1=Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Neutral, 4= Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree for positive items and it will be reversed for negative items. Data analysis and interpretation will be done based using both qualitative and quantitative techniques and tools. Statistical software like SPSS® version 22 would be used for calculating and drawing inferences. Appropriate statistical tools will be used for data analysis. For the present study, Sample frequency distribution, frequency distribution converted into percentages (i.e., ratios), averages, and chi-square test are going to be used. The data is going to be interpreted and analyzed with the help of statistical tools and techniques such as frequency tables, percentages, averages, tables, charts figures, comparative analysis approach, chi-square test, and Multiple regression analysis.

➤ LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study is largely based on the opinions collected from members of faculty from the selected affiliated colleges located in and around Hyderabad and Ranga Reddy Districts and the opinions may or may not convey the whole truth and results cannot be generalized to the whole teaching fraternity working in all other places. As the present research is only a sample study, it has the limitation of generalization.

[APPENDIX]: QUESTIONNAIRE

I. ECONOMIC ASPECTS

1. Employee is being paid a fair amount for his/her work
 2. Fringe benefits are adequate
 3. The benefits employees receive are as good as most of other organizations are offering
 4. Employees are satisfied with their chances for salary hikes.
 5. Medical insurance to employees is adequate
 6. Performance based incentives are there in the organization
 7. Medical benefits to the family members are provided
 8. Annual appraisal is paid in your organization
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II. ORGANIZATION CULTURE ASPECTS

- The infrastructure facilities are best in the organization
 - Working environment is safe to work in the organization
 - The safety of employees is at high priority in the organization
 - Physical conditions in the job allows employees to be more productive
 - Work load in the organization is manageable
 - Lunch room and rest facilities
 - Recreational & enlightenment facilities are there in the organization
 - Emergency situation procedures are there in place in case of any even in the organization
 - The element of privacy and security at workplace exists in the organization adequately
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III. SOCIAL ASPECTS AND PERSONAL RECOGNITION

- Cordial relationship exists among colleagues
 - Communication and information flow in the department is satisfactory in the organization
 - Work assignments are fully communicated by the superior to the employees
 - The suggestions given by employees are accepted and motivated by the superiors support
 - Interpersonal relations among the employees are good in the organization
 - Cooperation from subordinates in work is satisfactory in the organization
 - Employees are recognized for their contribution periodically
 - Employees feel a sense of pride in doing their job in the organization
 - Employee is treated with utmost respect in the work place by superior
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IV. MANAGEMENT SUPPORT & RELATED ASPECTS

- The promotion policy is fair enough in the organization
- Employees feel their efforts are fairly rewarded the they should be
- Satisfactory level of promotional chances exists in the organization
- There is provision for career development by employee development programs in prestigious academic institutions in the organization
- The organization provides support to employees in their career development
- Availability of internal career counseling facility is there in the organization
- There is lot of scope for career advancement in your organization

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CHAPTERIZATION

- **CHAPTER-I:** Introduction
- **CHAPTER-II:** Review of Literature
- **CHAPTER-III:** Research Methodology
- **CHAPTER-IV:** Data Analysis and Interpretation

- **CHAPTER –V: Findings, Conclusions, and Suggestions**
 - **CHAPTER–VI: Scope for Further Research Work**
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