

# Impact of Work Stress on Teacher's Performance

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**Abstract** - This study investigates the complex relationship between stress and job performance among primary school teachers and presents its findings. Because a child's academic and personal growth are both laid to rest during their time in primary education, the function of primary school teachers is of the utmost importance. Nonetheless, the rigors of this profession can cause teachers to experience substantial stress, which can invariably have an effect on how well they accomplish their work responsibilities. This research investigates the complex nature of stress, its sources, and the consequences that it has on the job performance of primary school teachers through a thorough analysis of the available literature on the topic. We also investigate the many coping techniques and interventions that are available to reduce the effects of stress and improve the overall performance of teachers. The findings highlight how important it is to reduce stress among primary school teachers in order to ensure that quality education is provided to students.

**Keywords** - Stress, Job performance, Impact

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## INTRODUCTION

early children's minds need to be nurtured and equipped with critical knowledge and life skills from an early age, and primary school instructors play a crucial part in this process. The standard of an elementary education has a considerable impact on the adult life of a child. However, because teaching elementary school may be so demanding at times, teachers frequently experience significant levels of stress in their careers. There is a significant problem that must be addressed, and that problem is the influence that stress has on the job performance of primary school teachers. These teachers shape the brains of students and create a solid groundwork for succeeding generations. Not only is it vital for the well-being of teachers to address the sources of stress and apply measures to reduce its effects, but it is also essential for the quality of education that instructors deliver their students. We can make sure that teachers in elementary schools have the resources they need to fulfill the critical part they play in determining the future of our children if we acknowledge the significance of this problem and work together to find solutions to it.

## Definitions of Stress

It seems everybody now - a-days is talking about stress. The term is not only discussed in our daily conversation, but also in radio, television, newspapers, magazines, conferences, etc. Different people think differently of this term, as stress is experienced from a variety of sources. The business man thinks of stress

as an emotional tension, a concentration researcher as a problem and an athlete as a muscular tension. In short, people experience stressful situations in nearly every human activity, and sometimes feel that their own occupation is most stressful.

During the last few decades, stress has become an area of interest for researchers and practitioners in many fields. Selye (1946) described stress as the body's unspecific response to any demand it had made for adoption. Not all stress is harmful to the body and some stress is needed to foster growth, the word stress is generally recognized as being associated with stress that harms the body. In a particular situation where the perceived consequences are important, when there is a perceived imbalance between situational demands and one's ability to respond to those demands, the individual may experience high stress levels.

Selye (1956) defines stress as "the rate of wear and tear in the body." A later more rigorous definition which reads that stress is "the state manifested by a syndrome consisting of all the non-specific charges in the biological system." In this specific syndrome, known as Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS), glucocorticoids are secreted by the adrenal cortex in response to the desperate stressors such as heat, cold, hunger and other environmental insults placed on the organisms. Hence, no specific charges were induced by the expression. Selye (1950) restricted the concept of stress to a characteristic physiological response and

distinguished it from 'stressors'-the agents that produce stress.

According to Selye, all those agents that produce stress have one thing in common, that is, they increase the demand for re-adjustment, the performance of adaptive functions that restore normalcy. As has already been said before, after Selye's work psychologists became interested in the concept and the academy adopted the same.

Appley and Trumbill (1967) mentioned three reasons why stress is apparently popular as a psychological concept. Firstly, since the term gained attention and status as a research topic, it was used as a substitute for what might otherwise have been called anxiety, conflict, emotional distress, extreme environmental conditions, ego threat, security threat frustration etc. Secondly because the term has been used extensively in biology. And thirdly, the concept became popular because of a genuine interest in stress phenomenon, partly stimulated by the growing concern about the effect of the unusual environment in which man was being placed in military and space operations, etc. these days (Appley and Trumbill 1967)

### Types of Stress

Stress can be classified into:

- Eustress (good stress) and distress (bad stress)
- Constructive (good stress) and destructive stress (bad stress)
- Functional and dysfunctional stress
- Temporary & mild and long term & severe
- Role-related stress, task-related stress and environmental stress in organizations.

### Concept of Stress

Stress has different meanings for different individuals. To some it is the 'spice of life,' while to others it is a courage to be avoided at all costs. What is stressful to one person may be source of pleasure for another, Stress results from the interaction between a person and his or her environment. This environment can be an inner or an outer one.

Stress and burnout is experienced whenever an individuals motives are thwarted either by obstacles that block or impede his progress towards the desired goal or by the absence of an appropriate goal. A wide range of obstacles, both environmental and internal can lead to frustration. Frustration resulting from personal limitations and mistakes are likely to be particularly stressful and burnout since they lead to devaluation.

In many instances stress and burnout results not from a single obstacle but from a conflict between needs or valued goals in which happiness is often measured, in terms of material success, people have become more dependent on material means as a source of security and power. In such a society, people are more

vulnerable to stress, because material attachment cannot bring lasting peace and tranquility. Therefore, in studying the nature and response to life stress and crisis, we need a broader vision. We need to evaluate experiences in the light of the psychological, spiritual and physical dimensions of humanity.

Stress appears when there is a discrepancy between the demands made upon a person and his or ability to respond to these demands. Individual perceptions of, and attitude towards stress important bearing on its management. If we can make sense of a life crisis and recognize its relevance to the purpose of our lives, this realization may bring a new understanding that helps us, accept the painful event. Cultural values and spiritual insights expand our vision of life events and shape our attitude them. Indeed, societal attitudes and values have a powerful influence on our psychological responses to stressors.

### Occupational Stress

Once considered a 'low stress career' (Fisher 1992), the teaching profession was envied for employment, light workloads, versatility and other advantages such as trips abroad to research and conferences (Winefield 2003). Nevertheless, recent studies have shown that university professors encounter stress rates that are unmatched in any other category of working persons. University professors tend to experience higher levels of stress than normal, and those high levels of stress have increased over the last 6 years. Compared with other occupations (Korotkov et al. 2008), professors' average stress rates are now second only to the newly unemployed. One potential reason for this is that academic incomes have plummeted in real terms in countries like the USA, the UK and Australia. Increasing numbers of academic jobs are now untenured, growing loads of research and growing pressure on academics to 'publish or perish' (Winefield 2003).

Other causes of stress, such as work-related technology (Totten and Schuldt, 2009), family life and work balance (Korotkov et al., 2008), years of experience (Totten and Schuldt, 2008), career type category (Dua, 1994), work climate management (Golnaz, 1997) and people-environment compatibility (Korotkov et al., 2008), were highlighted in a number of studies. Besides education and training, the faculty of universities also plays a vital role in the development and dissemination of knowledge and innovation. The above-mentioned research has shown that if left unchecked and unmanaged, high rates of workplace stress will undermine the efficiency, productivity and innovation of the employees' work and employee well-being (Gillespie et al 2001).

### Job and Stress

Stress at work can be caused by too much or too little work, time pressures and deadlines with too many decisions, fatigue from the work environment's physical strain, excessive travel, having to cope with

changes in work and the expenses (monetary and career) of making mistakes. At some point or the other these factors can be the source of pressure for individuals. Among other factors mostly identified were: working conditions and overhead work. Poor mental health related directly to unpleasant working conditions, the need to work quickly, to expand a lot of physical effort, and to excessive and inconvenient hours. Repetitive and dehumanizing environments have adverse effects on physical health, too.

### **Job Satisfaction**

The word "job satisfaction" has been used often in industrial psychology publications to describe how a person feels about certain specific aspects of their overall working environment. The term "job" is used in a regulated meaning to refer to a specified work. While the phrase "job satisfaction" refers to actions or aspects of work that are primarily connected to human needs and their fulfilment at work. It is created by observing how effectively a person's employment meets his many wants. In 1925, Elton Mayo conducted research on the attitudes of employees and created the "human connection" idea. The release of the renowned Hawthorne studies revolutionised the investigation of the actions of those engaged in the field.

One of the most extensively researched aspects of organisational behaviour is job satisfaction. It speaks to a person's feelings and loyalty to their present employment positions. When it comes to job satisfaction, attitude is very important since a good emotional state at work may lead to job contentment while a bad emotional state can lead to workplace discontent. Both intrinsic and extrinsic elements have been discovered to have an impact on an individual's job happiness. Extrinsic motivation often stems from sources outside of the environment, such as incentives, special awards, etc., but intrinsic motivation may be influenced by acceptance, curiosity, honour, power, and other things.

### **Teaching Profession**

Teachers, who enable interaction among the main elements of educational system such as student, educational program, teacher and environment (Posner, 1995) and who take on the task of educating young individuals that the society needs, have a distinctive place and importance within the scope of these main elements. Teaching profession began to develop with the emergence of education as a field of profession and vocation. It has been argued for a long time whether teaching is a profession or not. In the end, it was agreed that teaching is a distinctive profession and that it possesses all of the qualities that a profession should possess (Tezcan, 1996). Teaching profession could be described as "a professional occupational group of education sector possessing social, cultural, economical, scientific and

technological dimensions" (Hacıoğlu, 1997; as cited in Erden, 2007). For an occupational group to be classified as a professional occupation, it is necessary that it provides services in a determined field, goes through formal training which offers expert knowledge, possesses professional culture, has admission control, possesses professional ethics, owns professional establishments and is considered as a profession by the society (Erden, 2007; Tezcan, 1996).

### **Main sources of Teachers stress**

Teachers' stress refers to the stress a teacher undergoes. The fast advancement of time, increase of complexities in life, competitive nature of students in this dynamic world gives pressure on the teachers. If the pressure is great, it makes them suffer from high stress. When a teacher has high level of stress, the teacher may not be able to concentrate on his/her daily activities and may show unwanted behaviour like absenteeism and mistakes in work place. Teachers are the backbone and most resourceful group of an institution. The core activity of an institution is performed by them. They teach and make other learn. If they remain in stress, they may not impart quality instructions to the students and there will be hindrances in the development of the institution. Consequently, it will be difficult to achieve the common goal and even the overall image of the institution may be stained.

There are different causes of teachers' stress. Forlin (1998) and Naylor (2001) identified that some common causes of teachers' stress are excessive workload, increasing class sizes and inability to spend quality time with students. Kuehn (1993) further explained that attitudes of provincial government and the inclusion of students with special needs are also some of the causes. Besides, indiscipline of the students, inappropriate leadership styles of the Principal is also one of the causes of stress. Management of such stress is very important to a person to become an efficient and effective teacher.

### **Teacher Effectiveness**

Effectiveness is concerned with productivity. It means the attainment of goal (Hersey and Blanchard, 1996, p.140). It is the foundation of success by doing right things. Therefore, teacher-effectiveness means attainment of goals by a teacher which are set for herself/himself or set by others. Generally, it is the ability of the teacher to improve student learning and produce gains in students' achievement. Teacher-effectiveness is concerned with the competence and performance of a teacher. It can also mean the capability of the teacher to impart knowledge and skill.

When a teacher does not possess the characteristics of a teacher, his/her effectiveness will be affected. Being unable to perform his/her duties well, s/he will

have low teacher-effectiveness. This may emerge as a serious problem which may affect everyone - teachers, support staff, students and even parents. It may also create another hindrance in the overall development and achievement of the common goal of the institution. According to Naylor (2001), teachers who are exhausted, frazzled and demoralised by their work are not effective and creative in the classroom.

### Teachers Job Performance

A teacher's job performance is typically evaluated based on various criteria and factors that assess their effectiveness in educating students and contributing to the overall learning environment. The specific evaluation methods and criteria may vary from one educational institution to another, but here are some common aspects that are often considered when assessing a teacher's job performance:

### Importance of Teacher Job Performance

The importance of teacher job performance cannot be overstated, as it plays a critical role in shaping the quality of education and the future of students. Here are some key reasons why teacher job performance is of utmost importance:

According to UNESCO (2003) suggests that, an averaging of the characteristics of the education systems of various countries that seem to be under way to reach EFA targets, that a reasonable level for an average teachers' salary would be about 3.5 units per capital GDP this level was to be aimed at most African countries would certainly have to carry on decreasing salaries paid to their teachers. This supported by UNICEF (2000) who points that low wages drive teachers into other activities to the detriment of teaching. An also low salary is the most harmful factor for the education sector in general (African Development Bank, 1998).

### Impact of Stress on Job Performance

Stress being a status happens when an individual recognises that the conditions that are facing them may be more than their endurance. It results from an imbalance between demand and resources. Job stress has become a frequent problem across occupations as many organisations nowadays demand a lot from their employees to outrun their competitors. This has led to the built up of numerous stressors that further create challenging and stressful situations for individuals.

Several studies concluded have shown that job stress negatively affect employee performance considering the various factors involved and especially employee job satisfaction. This has been confirmed by recent studies (Ahmed & Ramzan, 2013) shows that, there exist a negative correlation between job stress and employee performance. A study similar to this was conducted which reveals that factors such as workload, role conflict and inadequate monetary

reward are prime source of stress that decreases employee performance. Furthermore, Jeyarai, (2013) investigated the impact of occupational stress among teachers and found out that, stress causes teachers to absent, increase tendency to quit and less likely to pursue teaching career, hence negatively correlated. The relationship that exist between these two has been very contentious as it animates within the academic cycles. However, there is surprisingly a mixed result within different organisational setting. Four types of relationship has been projected to exist which include: the negative linear relationship which is to the effect that productivity decreases with stress, stress which is not negative can have tremendous impact in that productivity may increase as a consequence of stress (eustress), thereby implying a positive relationship between the two, thirdly, there can be a U-shaped or curved relationship whereby delicate stress may increase productivity ab initio up to a certain level or peak and thereafter it declines as the person gradually descends into a state of distress. Fourthly, there can be no relationship between the two.

### Moderators in the Effects of Stress on Performance

Moderators in the context of the effects of stress on performance refer to factors that can either enhance or mitigate the impact of stress on an individual's ability to perform tasks or function effectively. These moderators can influence whether stress has a positive or negative effect on performance.

It's important to recognize that the relationship between stress and performance is complex and can vary from person to person and situation to situation. Moderators can either amplify or buffer the impact of stress, and understanding these factors can help individuals and organizations take proactive measures to manage stress and optimize performance in stressful situations.

### CONCLUSION

The role of primary school teachers in shaping young minds and future generations is undeniably critical. This review paper highlights the profound impact of stress on job performance among primary school teachers, shedding light on the various factors contributing to stress and the repercussions it has on their professional lives. As concluded from the extensive literature review, it is evident that stress can lead to reduced job satisfaction, burnout, absenteeism, and decreased teaching effectiveness. This not only affects the teachers' well-being but also has far-reaching consequences for the students they serve. In conclusion, this paper underscores the need for a comprehensive approach to address stress among primary school teachers, recognizing that their well-being directly correlates with the quality of education provided to the students. By implementing measures to reduce stress and enhance job performance among primary school

teachers, we can ensure a brighter and more productive future for the next generation.

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