

Institutional Approaches to Managing Teacher Stress in Private and Government Universities: A Systematic Review and Comparative Analysis

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Abstract: *Stress is a worldwide phenomenon that impacts workplaces on a global scale. The aim of this study is to conduct a critical analysis of approaches used by the institution in management of the stress level in government and private universities. This study presents a systematic review on the basis of data collected from different university teachers of Punjab. Study makes the use of questionnaire for collection of data from both the government as well as private universities in equal promotion. Use of both closed-ended as well as open-ended questions have been made in the questionnaire to assist in collection of qualitative and quantitative data for assessment of stress levels and coping mechanisms used by government and private university teachers. Data analysis has been done on the basis of review of literature. The study reports that there are different strategies or methods employed by government and private teachers in order to cope up with job stress, which include adoption of recreational activities, counseling sessions, meeting and conferences, yoga and meditation, and various other activities.*

Keywords: *Stress*

I. INTRODUCTION

Stress, which has also been a part of human experience throughout history is not new in modern society, as most people suffer from distress, anxiety and trauma. Stress can have a significant impact on efficiency and performance by creating enormous pressure (Panigrahi, 2016). There is an increasing noise about the high costs of stress-related disorders that come along with stress in the workplace. For instance, countries like China and Japan are known for their long work hours which may lead to guolaosi and karoshi (death by overwork) respectively in some cases. Countries like Japan and Korea have recognized suicide as an official reason for work-related stress. Furthermore, Health and Safety Executive (HSE) analysis (2002) has found that anxiety, stress and depression impact 1.3% of the workforce severely. Also, it has been found that stress in the workplace happens to be one of the major reasons for the occurrence of 80 to 90 % of industrial accidents. As per the study conducted by The Indian Express (2020), it was found that 74 % of the Indian population suffered from stress and 88% from anxiety. In another study published in Times of India in 2021, 82 % of Indians were reported to suffer from stress. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define stress as a relationship between the person, the internal and external environment which is evaluated by exceeding resources and endangering the person's well-being. Bennet (1994) has defined stress as the group of psychological and physical symptoms that arise from the challenges encountered by people while trying to adapt to the environment.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ellovido and Quirap (2024) explored the relationship between stress coping mechanisms and occupational stress among teachers. The study made use of a questionnaire to collect data from 145 teachers. The study revealed that workplace conditions, subject-related preparation and pressure to grow were among the several factors that had an impact on the stress levels of teachers. Furthermore, the study recommended that it is important for the management to focus on finding better ways of identifying, reporting and managing stress among the teachers in the workplace.

Kumar and Velmurugan (2021) studied work and life stress management of married women teachers in governmental and self-financing colleges. This study included both primary and secondary data sources to achieve the purpose. The data were analysed with the help of mean, t-test, standard deviation. The research study's findings stated that lack of support from seniors, issues with students and colleagues, lengthy working hours, lack of support from family, and problems with family members were among the causes of work-life stress in teachers. The study results found that work-related stress majorly affected self-financing college teachers more than government college teachers. The study revealed that psychological and physical factors such as headaches, back pain, hypertension, and diabetes were experienced by teachers. The study concluded that stress coping strategies included practising religion, physical activities, and social support from the family.

Adasi et al. (2020) conducted a study on the type of stressors and stress-coping strategies adopted by teachers at the University of Ghana. The study aimed to identify the difference between stressors faced by males and females. The study also discusses various coping strategies adopted by the universities to minimise the stress. The research was based on a collection of primary data with the help of questionnaires. The study concluded that inadequate resources, adapting to flexible teaching practices and financial pressure were the reasons for the prevalence of high stress among female teachers. The research recommended the use of effective practices such as meditation in controlling self-distraction which can help both male and female teachers to counter stress.

III. RESEARCH GAP

Although there has been research done on exploring the stress level among individuals in government as well as private universities, but the existing literature confines itself to assessing this impact on an individual level. Not much effort has been made to draw a comparison on the basis of organizational level strategies for drawing a comparison. In addition to this, there is lack of integrated comparison when it comes to comparison of results from secondary studies as well as primary studies. This calls for the need for a comparative study focused on identification and analysis of organizational approaches in management of stress in higher education institutions. Thus, the present study attempts to cover this gap by evaluation of methods and strategies adopted by government and private universities and provides practical insights by integrated comparison of primary as well as secondary survey findings.

Objective of the Study

To find out various methods and strategies adopted by private and government universities to reduce stress and propose suggestions for the same.

Research Methodology

The sample size chosen for the study was 600 respondents of which half of them i.e. 300 respondents were taken from private universities and the remaining 300 respondents from government universities of Punjab.

This study has employed a two-stage sampling approach combining stratified sampling in the first stage and convenience sampling in the second stage.

Validity

Validity refers to the degree to which a research instrument measures what it is designed to measure (Taherdoost, 2016). In this study, content validity was established by obtaining expert opinions from professionals in the relevant field to ensure that the questionnaire items were appropriate, relevant, and aligned with the objectives of the study.

Methods/Tools/Testing

This objective is thoroughly explained using qualitative methods such as open-ended question and descriptive, providing in-depth insights and detailed descriptions.

Analysis of the study

Stress cannot be avoided but there are ways and means in which it can be controlled and minimised. The presence of stress in the education sector has been reported by several studies from time to time. Selve (1920) conducted research on stress after completion of his medical training at the University of Montreal. Selve defined stress as the non-specific strain on the body that results from the irregularities caused in the normal functioning of the body (Lupien, 2019). Further, in 1956, he discussed the concept of 'the General Adaption Syndrome' (GAS) model which is associated with the release of the stress hormones. GAS model has further explained stress as a dependent variable which includes three stages i.e. the alarm, the resistance and the exhaustion stage (Walinga, 2010). There is a common phenomenon that is present behind the release of stress hormones which can be understood by the specific recipe for stress i.e. NUTS:

N= Novelty

U= Unpredictability

T= Threat to the Ego

S= Sense of Control (Lupien,2019).

The Anxiety Depression Association of America (ADAA) has listed several strategies to cope with stress. Stress in the teaching profession is forcing many teachers to switch their professions from teaching to others. Thus, there is a growing need for the adoption or implementation of suitable strategies and methods to minimise to impact of stress on the teaching faculty.

In the present study, both primary data and secondary data have been collected and analyzed. Primary data have been collected with the help of a questionnaire making use of seven close-ended questions and one open-ended question. The respondents were asked about the stress management strategies and methods adopted by i.e. the government and private university teachers. Secondary data have been collected through a literature review by exploring the studies made by various researchers on stress and stress management.

The major purpose of collecting primary data was to improve the validity of the research by collecting fresh data from the respondents. Close-ended questions have been used to follow a standard format for ease of analysis and to avoid any ambiguity. Moreover, it also allows to exert control over the responses as the respondents need to choose from a given set of responses by considering all the options provided.

Overview of the Primary Study

This study has found that there are various levels of stress ranging from low, medium to high levels of stress among the teachers. Stress has emerged as a global phenomenon and the World Health Organisation (WHO) has also taken notice of this global issue of stress and has mentioned that stress impacts both the physical as well as the mental health of people and thus, it is imperative to learn the measures to cope with stress (WHO , 2023).

Discussion of the Responses from Close-Ended Questions

The analysis reveals that both government and private universities have adopted various strategies to reduce stress among teachers, though the level of implementation varies slightly between the two sectors.

Regarding management's interest in reducing stress, 68% of respondents from government universities and 72% from private universities agreed that university management is concerned about stress reduction. However, nearly one-third of respondents from both sectors disagreed, indicating that not all teachers perceive management efforts as sufficient.

Recreational and cultural activities are widely practiced as stress-reduction measures. A significant majority of respondents (81% government and 86% private) confirmed that such activities are frequently organized. Furthermore, 89% of government and 87% of private university teachers stated that these activities help them feel better. This suggests that recreational programs are one of the most positively received stress management initiatives in both sectors.

Seminars, workshops, and orientation programs aimed at stress reduction are also commonly implemented. Approximately 76% of government and 83% of private university respondents agreed that such programs are organized. Private universities appear slightly more proactive in conducting structured stress management sessions. Counselling sessions were considered helpful by 67.3% of government and 66.6% of private university respondents. However,

nearly one-third from both sectors did not find counselling effective, indicating the need to review and strengthen institutional counselling mechanisms.

Physical stress management strategies such as yoga, games, and leisure activities were supported by 80% of government and 89% of private university respondents, showing strong acceptance, particularly in private institutions. Similarly, mental stress management strategies including music, recreation, and social gatherings were acknowledged by 76% of government and 79% of private respondents. Overall, the findings indicate that both government and private universities are actively implementing stress management strategies. However, private universities demonstrate slightly higher levels of engagement in structured programs and physical stress management activities. Despite majority approval across measures, a considerable minority of respondents in both sectors perceive gaps in implementation, highlighting the need for continuous evaluation and strengthening of institutional stress management practices.

Discussion of the Responses from an Open-ended Question

The major reason behind the inclusion of open-ended question was to allow the respondents to talk freely so that varied ideas could be obtained regarding stress management as open-ended question encourage respondents to offer their varied views flexibly by promoting more engagement. Some of the useful insights obtained from the analysis of responses are given below:

- Flexible Work Policies
- Financial Literacy Workshops
- Review Meetings
- Providing Residential Accommodation
- Short Trips
- Community Engagement Programs

Secondary Study: Stress Management Strategies and Methods

The secondary study helps in the identification of research gaps in the existing literature which can be addressed with the help of the current study.

Increased level of job stress is related to a decrease in the quality of life of a worker and adversely impact health on account of increased risk of mental disorders and cardiovascular diseases. Furthermore, increased job stress can lead to increased absenteeism and adversely affect the performance of the employees. Stress management strategies and methods exert a positive impact on the physical as well as mental health of employees (Park & Min Kyeong Jang, 2019).

In Oxford dictionary terms, a ‘method’ can be understood as a way of doing something whereas a ‘strategy’ can be understood as a plan of action for achieving something.

Developing a Stress Management Plan

There are four important steps in developing a stress management plan for an organization. The first step is the identification of the different sources of stress. After identification of the source, the next step is to prioritize the sources of stress in terms of action needed to treat or control it. This will be followed by the identification of different stress management techniques for carving out an effective stress management plan (Sujaritha et al., 2022).

Organizations can manage stress by adopting a sound step-by-step approach. In this regard, 4As of Stress Management discuss the steps needed to adopt in the process of managing stress. (Mayo Clinic, 2021).

(a) Coping with Stress

An individual experiences stress when the need or demand from the situation is more than the ability of the individual to deal with the situation. Lazarus (1966) and Lazarus & Folkman (1984) introduced the ‘Transactional Model of Stress and Coping’ to help people deal with stress. There are three major steps in this model: -

- i) Primary Appraisal - The impact of the stressors on the well-being of an individual
- ii) Secondary Appraisal- This step includes all the resources that will prove helpful in coping with stress.

iii) Use Coping Strategies- These can be emotion-based or problem-based strategies
Individuals or organisation needs to work out effective methods for stress management. This study has grouped stress management methods into four segments i.e. cognitive, physical, environmental and others (Walinga, 2010).

Table 1: Methods and strategies of Stress Management by Scott (2023)

Type of Stress	Strategies	Methods
Acute Stress	Quick relaxation techniques	Breathing exercise, cognitive changes, mini meditation, progressive muscle relaxation (PMR)
Chronic Stress	Self-care strategies	Cultivating supportive relationships, Exercising regularly, Listening to music, Maintaining a healthy diet, Meditating regularly and Online therapy
Emotional Stress	Combination approach (emotion-focused techniques and solution-focused coping techniques)	Let music aid you, Practice mindfulness, Talk to a friend, Talk to a therapist, Write in a journal
Burnout	Enjoyment	Get more enjoyment out of your current job, spend time on hobbies you enjoy, maintain a sense of humor and take some time off

Table 2: Methods and strategies of stress management by Scott (2023)

Strategies	Action Needed	Method
Emotion-Focused Strategies	-Focus on optimism -Maintaining a good sense of humour	-Journaling our emotions -Practicing meditation -Visualizing positive outcomes
Solution-Focused Strategies	Adoption of changes	-Managing time -Helping others -Resolving conflicts

Table 3: Methods and strategies of stress management by Villines (2022)

Level of Stress	Strategy	Method
Acute	Breathing	Slowly breathe in and out Holding the breath Exhale Wait for 4 seconds Repeat
Episodic	Muscle relaxation	Finding pain points in the body and relaxing those muscles by holding or stretching slowly.
Chronic	Mindfulness-based stress reduction	Live and enjoy the present by practicing deep breathing and yoga (Villines, 2022)

Table 4: Methods and Strategies of Stress Management by Sujaritha et al. (2022)

Strategies	Action Needed	Method
Time Management	Ranking of tasks	Proper prioritisation of the tasks as per their importance
Relaxation	Deep breathing	Taking a few minutes to relax, breathing in and out
Exercise	Yoga and workout	Deep breathing as well as muscle movement practiced on regular basis
Balancing Workload	Task Delegation	Splitting up the work into parts and assigning parts to different people as per their expertise (Sujaritha et al., 2022)

Table 5: Methods and Strategies of Stress Management by Crocker (2021)

Strategy	Action needed	Method
Action-Oriented	Taking action to change the situation	i) Establishing clear communication ii) Time management iii) Creating healthy boundaries iv) Minimising noise and moving on
Emotion-Oriented	Changing our perception of the stressful situation	i) Taking control of the affirmations ii) Cognitive restructuring iii) ABC Technique A- Adversity B- Beliefs C- Consequences
Acceptance-Oriented	Facing and dealing with stressful situations	i) Exercise and diet ii) Meditation iii) Building resilience iv) Sleep

Table 6: Methods and Strategies of Stress Management by Kassymova et al., (2018)

Strategy	Action Needed	Method
Deep Breathing	Reduce anxiety with deep breathing technique	Take deeper breaths Inhale more oxygen
Progressive Muscle Relaxation	Performing muscle exercises to reduce stress	i) Sit on the chair, scrunch your face and then relax ii) Move arms and shoulders one by one and relax iii) Move chest and legs one by one and relax iv) Relax and breath out tension
Mental Health Promotion	Promotion of mental health among individuals	i) Create an overall culture of well-being and belonging. ii) Organize role plays to motivate respondents to speak up iii) Provide social skills training and emotional training

Table 7: Methods and Strategies of Stress Management by Moos and Billing (1982)

Strategies	Action Needed	Method
Appraisal Focussed Coping Strategy	Apprising or motivating individuals based on their performance	Need to change the thinking style of the person
Problem Focussed	Learning or adopting new problem-solving skills	Need to identify the cause of the problem and then deal with the situation
Emotion Focussed	Focus on emotional well-being and healthy behaviour	Focus on building emotional intelligence among the individuals (Raizada & Saxena, 2019)

Some Other Useful Stress Management Strategies

Developing a Supportive Environment, Changes in the Lifestyle, Set Realistic Goals and Expectations, Seeking Professional Help, Developing Coping Mechanism Skills and Open Communication (Enebe, 2024).

IV. FINDINGS

Regarding the methods and strategies identified by the government and the private university teachers to reduce the job stress, both the government and the private universities managements were interested in reducing the stress, by introducing recreational activities which are frequently organized in the university as they believe it helps teachers to feel better. Furthermore, many of the respondents responded that counselling, physical stress management strategies such as playing games, practicing yoga and taking out time for leisure and mental stress management strategies which includes listening to songs, watching a music video, recreation, social gathering, chanting prayers and mantras on regular basis.

The important methods and strategies identified by the government and the private university teachers to reduce the job stress on the basis of open-ended question are recreational activities, festival celebrations, counselling sessions, meetings and conferences, yoga and meditation sessions, short trips, extra-curricular activities, one-to-one meetings and activity expansion, university organized workshops and seminars, etc.

V. CONCLUSION

To sum up, it can be stated that there are different strategies and methods available for coping with stress. Villines (2022) have mentioned the use of breathing, mindfulness and muscle relaxation as important strategies. WHO has also mentioned breathing and meditation as effective strategies for managing stress. The survey conducted from 600 respondents from the private and the government universities also shows that more than 80 % of the respondents agreed that physical activities and workshops such as Yoga and meditation sessions play an important role in combatting stress. Furthermore, Scot (2023) in his study has also proposed different strategies such as breathing, relaxation and enjoyment for stress management at different levels of professional work. Sujaritha et al. (2022) has also mentioned time management, exercise and balancing work-load as effective stress relief strategies. Furthermore, Crocker (2021) has divided the stress management strategies into three categories i.e. action-oriented, emotion-oriented and acceptance-oriented. This has also been supported by Scott (2023) who diversified stress management strategies into emotion oriented and solution-oriented. Furthermore, various measures have been recommended by WHO for managing stress which include lean stress management measures to work on building skills in coping with stress regularly which further constitutes maintenance of daily routine, regular exercise, healthy nutrition and building relations with peers at the workplace (WHO, 2023). Furthermore, ADAA has prescribed several stress coping strategies such as exercising daily by following a proper routine, eating balanced meals and taking the help of a friend or colleague in the journey of stress management (Libre Texts Medicine, 2024). The United Nations Organization (UNO) has also proposed that exercise, nutrition, relaxation and balancing workload as effective strategies for dealing with stress (United nations, 2023). The survey results also show that most of the respondents from the government as well as the private universities agreed that management should organize counselling sessions to help the 140 faculty in controlling stress. The latest surveys conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) indicate the need for the application of checkpoints to identify and reduce workplace stress. The conditions at the workplace should be properly optimized for smooth working and the prevention of stress. This study further advocates the importance of maintaining workplace stress prevention policy in the major documents or policies. The use and implementation of tailor-made strategies are important at the workplace to make it more relevant and achieve better results. Moreover, Sujaritha et al. (2022) in their study on stress management has proposed the development of a stress management plan that calls for effective time management by setting priorities for important tasks and this will in turn control the stress. Thus, it can be said that there is the existence of stress on a global scale but stress can be managed by the adoption of effective stress management strategies and methods. Thus, it is true that managing stress is of utmost importance and stress management can be done by the adoption and implementation of suitable strategies and methods. Various strategies suggested provided by organisations such as WHO, UN, ILO and ADAA have shown the importance of adopting effective strategies for managing stress. Analysis and comparison of the studies done by different authors and

institutions show the importance of stress management in positively affecting the performance of teachers. The data collection instrument for this objective is a questionnaire. Both the open-ended and close-ended questions have been used in the questionnaire so that it facilitates the collection of quantitative as well as qualitative information on the different stress levels and stress coping mechanisms. Analysis of data has been done and it has provided in-depth insights. The focus of primary data has been on getting insights about the perception of the teaching staff about stress and its management. The analysis of the primary data can help in identifying the role of stress management strategies and methods. Thus, the collection of primary data have done a fair job in justifying the objective of gaining an understanding of stress management strategies adopted by the government and the private universities of Punjab. The secondary data for the study have been collected through a literature review conducted by reputable sources such as UN, ILO, WHO, ADAA and other reputed journals and researchers. This has laid the groundwork for understanding different types of stress 141 management strategies and methods. Furthermore, this forms the theoretical basis for understanding the relevant stress management theories and best practices being followed in the industry. Similarly, collection of the secondary data has helped in justifying the objective by providing a theoretical framework for identifying the best practices of stress management and complementing the findings from the primary data. Thus, the collection of primary as well as secondary data does a good work of complementing or validating the stress management strategies and methods that have been identified. Majorly, primary data provide inputs about the perception of stress management among teachers. Thus, both the secondary as well as primary data hold great relevance and importance of stress management of the teaching faculty in the government as well as the private universities of Punjab.

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