

A STUDY ON STRESS MANAGEMENT AMONG COLLEGE TEACHERS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THOOTHUKUDI DISTRICT

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Abstract—Occupational stress has become an important concern in higher education as college teachers are required to manage teaching, research, administrative, mentoring, and other institutional responsibilities. The present study examines the sources of stress experienced by college teachers and their impact on professional and personal well-being, with special reference to Thoothukudi District. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from 80 college teachers through a structured questionnaire, while secondary data were obtained from relevant journals, magazines, and websites. The respondents were selected using the convenience sampling technique. The collected data were analyzed using Percentage Analysis, Weighted Mean Score, and Chi-Square Test. The study identifies workload, administrative responsibilities, academic demands, and difficulties in maintaining a balance between teaching, research, and personal life as important areas associated with teachers' stress. The Chi-Square analysis indicates that age has no significant association with stress related to the preparation of lessons and academic materials or the management of administrative duties. However, a significant association exists between age and stress related to balancing teaching, research, and personal life. Based on the findings, the study recommends administrative support, appropriate workload planning, recognition and reward systems, wellness programmes, time-management training, mindfulness practices, peer support, and counselling services. Effective stress-management measures can contribute to improving teachers' well-being, job satisfaction, productivity, and teaching effectiveness.

Keywords: Stress Management, College Teachers, Occupational Stress, Workload, Work-Life Balance, Job Satisfaction, Teaching Profession, Thoothukudi District.

INTRODUCTION:

The academic environment has become increasingly demanding, requiring college teachers to manage a wide range of responsibilities within limited time and resources. Their role extends beyond classroom teaching to include research, student mentoring, academic preparation, administrative activities, institutional assignments, and the use of emerging technologies. Managing these responsibilities simultaneously may create considerable professional pressure.

Continuous exposure to such pressure can affect teachers' psychological well-being, job satisfaction, motivation, productivity, and teaching effectiveness. The difficulty of balancing professional commitments with personal responsibilities may further increase the level of workplace stress. When such stress remains unmanaged, it may contribute to emotional exhaustion, reduced work efficiency, absenteeism, and decreased motivation.

Effective stress management is therefore essential for maintaining the well-being and professional effectiveness of college teachers. Individual practices such as time management, mindfulness, physical activity, and social support, along with organizational measures such as administrative assistance and supportive institutional policies, can help teachers cope with workplace pressures.

In this context, the present study examines the major sources of stress experienced by college teachers in Thoothukudi District, the coping strategies adopted by them, and the role of institutional support in managing workplace stress. The study also examines the association between age and teachers' perception of stress in relation to selected workload factors.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

1. Research on occupational stress among teachers indicates that the teaching profession involves several work-related pressures that can affect both professional effectiveness and personal well-being. **Agyapong et al. (2022)**, in their review of studies concerning teachers, identified stress, burnout, anxiety, and depression as important concerns associated with the teaching profession. Their work highlights the need for appropriate measures to protect teachers' psychological well-being.
2. **Suttles (2024)** examined teachers' experiences of workplace stress and the coping mechanisms they use to deal with routine professional pressures. The study emphasizes the relevance of effective coping practices in reducing the adverse effects of stress and preventing burnout. This indicates that teachers' responses to occupational demands are an important component of stress management.
3. The relationship between workplace stress and educators' health has also received attention in recent research. **Cavallari et al. (2024)** explored educators' perceptions of workplace stressors and their health implications and reported that demanding work conditions continue to influence educators' well-being. The findings suggest that organizational and occupational factors should be considered when addressing teacher stress.
4. Technological approaches to stress management have also been examined. **Manning, Cox, and Blandford (2024)** investigated factors that influence teachers' use of consumer technologies for managing stress. Their study indicates that digital tools may provide opportunities for supporting stress-management practices, although their effectiveness depends on teachers' engagement and the surrounding conditions.
5. **Myke-Sotohn (2023)** examined stress management strategies and teacher effectiveness and identified factors such as excessive workload, inadequate remuneration, limited promotion opportunities, delayed salaries, and poor working conditions as potential sources of occupational stress. These findings demonstrate the influence of organizational and employment conditions on teachers' effectiveness.
6. **Kumar and Velmurugan (2021)** focused on work-life stress among married women teachers and examined the interaction between professional and family responsibilities. Their findings emphasize the importance of identifying work-life pressures and implementing suitable measures to reduce stress among teachers.

The reviewed literature indicates that teacher stress is influenced by a combination of workload, organizational conditions, interpersonal factors, technological demands, and difficulties in maintaining work-life balance. However, the specific experience of these pressures among college teachers in Thoothukudi District requires further examination. The present study therefore focuses on the sources of stress, coping strategies, and selected demographic relationships among college teachers in this geographical context.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The study has been undertaken with the following objectives:

- To identify the major sources of stress experienced by college teachers.
- To examine the coping strategies adopted by college teachers to manage and reduce occupational stress.
- To provide appropriate suggestions for the effective prevention and management of stress among college teachers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

College teachers are expected to fulfil several responsibilities simultaneously, including classroom teaching, academic preparation, research, student guidance, administrative work, and institutional activities. The increasing demands associated with these responsibilities may create different forms of occupational stress. In addition, maintaining an appropriate balance between professional commitments and personal life can become challenging for teachers.

Although teacher stress has been examined in different educational contexts, the nature and sources of stress may differ according to institutional conditions, professional responsibilities, and individual characteristics. There is therefore a need to examine these issues in the context of college teachers working in Thoothukudi District. The present study attempts to identify the major sources of stress, examine the coping strategies adopted by teachers, and determine whether age is associated with their perception of stress arising from selected workload factors. The study also seeks to provide practical suggestions for strengthening stress-management practices in higher educational institutions.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

The present study focuses on stress management among college teachers working in higher educational institutions in Thoothukudi District. Teachers belonging to different academic disciplines are considered within the scope of the study. The study examines workplace stress in relation to workload, interpersonal relationships, institutional policies, administrative responsibilities, and other professional demands. It also considers the coping strategies adopted by teachers and the role of institutional support in managing occupational stress. The study is intended to provide an understanding of the major stress-related challenges faced by college teachers and the measures that may support their professional well-being.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study follows a descriptive research approach and is based on both primary and secondary sources of information. Primary data were collected from 80 college teachers working in selected higher educational institutions in and around Thoothukudi District through a structured questionnaire. The respondents were selected using the convenience sampling technique. Secondary data were obtained from relevant journals, research publications, magazines, and credible online sources.

The collected data were systematically classified, tabulated, and analyzed using Percentage Analysis, Weighted Mean Score, and the Chi-Square Test. The statistical analysis was used to examine the sources of stress and to determine the association between selected demographic characteristics and teachers' perception of stress.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

The study has certain limitations that should be considered while interpreting its findings. First, the research covers a selected number of higher educational institutions in Thoothukudi District; therefore, the findings may not be fully generalizable to college teachers in other districts or regions. Second, the study is based on self-reported responses, and the information provided by respondents may be influenced by their individual perceptions or response tendencies. Finally, the limited duration of the study restricts the possibility of examining the long-term effects of occupational stress and the sustained effectiveness of different stress-management interventions.

ANALYSIS:

Relationship between demographic variables and perception score related to sources of stress:

In order to explore the relationship between demographic variables and responses of college teachers on various dimensions of sources of stress among workload, chi-square is applied.

AGE AND PERCEPTION SCORE OF THE RESPONDENTS:

Workload factor: (A) Preparing for lessons and academic materials:

The chi-square test was applied to determine whether there is significant association between the age of the respondents and their perception of stress related to Preparing of lessons and academic materials.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant Association between age of the respondents and their perception of stress related to the Preparation of lessons and academic materials. The results of the analysis are presented in the table 1.

TABLE 1
ASSOCIATION BETWEEN AGE AND STRESS PERCEPTION REGARDING PREPARING OF LESSONS AND ACADEMIC MATERIALS

	VALUE	DEGREES OF FREEDOM	P-VALUE
Pearson Chi-Square	17.927	12	0.118
Likelihood Ratio	17.069	12	0.147
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.283	1	0.595
No of valid cases	80		

Source: Primary Data

The results presented in Table 1 show that the Pearson Chi-Square value is 17.927 with 12 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.118. Since the p-value is higher than the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, no statistically significant association is observed between the age of the respondents and their perception of stress related to the preparation of lessons and academic materials.

Workload Factor: (B) Managing Administrative Duties:

The chi-square test was applied to examine whether age is significantly associated with teacher's perception of stress related to Managing Administrative Duties.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant Association between age of the respondents and their perception of stress related to Managing Administrative Duties. The results of the analysis are presented in the table 2.

TABLE 2

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN AGE AND STRESS PERCEPTION REGARDING ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES

	VALUE	DEGREES OF FREEDOM	P-VALUE
Pearson Chi-Square	14.880	12	0.248
Likelihood Ratio	15.096	12	0.236
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.049	1	0.825
No of Valid Cases	80		

Source: Primary Data

The results in Table 2 indicate a Pearson Chi-Square value of 14.880 with 12 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.248. As the p-value is greater than the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, the analysis does not indicate a statistically significant association between the age of the respondents and their perception of stress associated with administrative duties.

Workload Factor: (C) Balancing teaching, research and personal life:

The chi-square test was applied to determine whether there is significant association between the age of the respondents and their perception of stress related to Balancing teaching, research and personal life.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant association between age of the respondents and their perception of stress related to Balancing teaching, research and personal life.

TABLE 3

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN AGE AND STRESS PERCEPTION REGARDING THE BALANCE AMONG TEACHING, RESEARCH AND PERSONAL LIFE

	VALUE	DEGREES OF FREEDOM	P-VALUE
Pearson Chi-Square	25.573	12	0.012
Likelihood Ratio	24.736	12	0.016
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.103	1	0.748
No of Valid Cases	80		

Source: Primary Data

Table 3 presents a Pearson Chi-Square value of 25.573 with 12 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.012. Since the p-value is lower than the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, a statistically significant association exists between the age of the respondents and their perception of stress arising from the challenge of balancing teaching, research, and personal life.

FINDINGS:

The Chi-Square analysis indicates that age does not have a statistically significant association with teachers' perception of stress related to the preparation of lessons and academic materials ($p = 0.118$). Similarly, no significant association is observed between age and stress related to administrative duties ($p = 0.248$). In contrast, age is found to have a statistically significant association with stress arising from the need to balance teaching, research, and personal life ($p = 0.012$). Thus, while age does not appear to influence perceptions of stress associated with lesson preparation or administrative responsibilities, differences across age groups are evident in relation to work-life balance.

SUGGESTIONS:

The findings suggest that institutions should adopt systematic measures to reduce occupational stress among college teachers. Administrative support staff may be appointed to assist with routine non-academic duties, while unnecessary paperwork can be reduced through greater use of digital systems. Appropriate workload allocation and better planning of academic activities can help teachers manage their professional responsibilities more effectively.

Since the study identifies a significant association between age and stress related to balancing teaching, research, and personal life, institutions may consider developing supportive work arrangements that take teachers' differing professional and personal needs into account. Realistic academic deadlines, flexible assessment practices, and a well-structured academic calendar can help reduce workload and evaluation-related pressure.

Recognition and reward mechanisms may be introduced to acknowledge teachers' contributions and strengthen motivation and job satisfaction. Institutions can also organize programmes on time management, mindfulness, yoga, meditation, physical fitness, and other relaxation practices. Counselling facilities and peer-support groups may provide teachers with additional emotional and professional support. Training in communication and conflict resolution can also assist teachers in dealing with student- and parent-related challenges. Collectively, these measures can contribute to a healthier work environment and help teachers maintain a more sustainable balance between their professional and personal responsibilities.

CONCLUSION:

The study emphasizes the importance of addressing occupational stress among college teachers, particularly in relation to workload and the challenge of maintaining a balance between professional and personal responsibilities. The Chi-Square analysis shows that age is not significantly associated with stress related to lesson preparation and administrative duties. However, a significant association is observed between age and stress arising from the balance among teaching, research, and personal life.

These findings indicate the need for institutions to adopt supportive measures that address both organizational and individual aspects of workplace stress. Administrative assistance, effective workload planning, professional support, wellness programmes, counselling services, and opportunities for maintaining work-life balance can help teachers manage occupational pressures more effectively. A supportive academic environment can contribute to improved well-being, job satisfaction, productivity, and teaching effectiveness, thereby benefiting both teachers and the students they serve.

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