

A STUDY ON PERSONAL STRESS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS WITH REFERENCE TO MANGOCHI, REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

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Abstract – This study is an investigation on personal stress among secondary school teachers with reference to Mangochi, Malawi. A total 31 secondary school teachers were randomly selected to form as participants for the study. Research questions were formulated to collect data and to identify the demographic profile of respondents from secondary school in Mangochi, Malawi. The objective of this study were to identify the personal causes of stress among teachers in secondary school at Mangochi, to identify the coping strategies what they are using and suggest to use some strategy to manage stress. The survey research type was employed. Data collected were subjected to percentage analysis.

The study identified the major causes of personal stress like Family Problems, Financial concerns uncertainty/ disappointments, Conflicting demands among secondary school teachers in Mangochi. The study identified some stress coping strategies which are followed by the teachers such as Listening to music, talking to partner/ family member, get more sleep and watching movies. It is suggested that the teachers should come forward and promote various efforts in order to reduce personal stress level of teachers.

Key words: secondary school teachers, stress, personal stress factors, stress coping strategies.

I. INTRODUCTION

Stress is an emotional and physical response to situation that affects individual total wellbeing. J. C. Quick and J.D Quick, defined “Stress, or the stress response, is the unconscious preparation to fight or flee a person experiences when faced with any demand”.

Nowadays, many tasks faced by individual in life can yield stress. Stress has been developed as a common problem that almost everybody has to cope with particularly those who engage in intellectual activities such as teaching profession.

In African countries, especially in Malawi most of the teachers those who are teaching in secondary school have obtained diploma and bachelor degrees. They are directly or indirectly forced to do their higher studies during their service periods. They are also pressurized to do part time job in order to meet the family expenses. It creates stress among those secondary teachers. Especially for the secondary school teachers in Malawi.

Stress Management

High level stress affects the individuals straightly and through this, it will affect their family and organization. Hence, efforts must be made to overcome the negative consequences of high stress. Stress management is compulsory when an individual is incapable to deal with the demanding environment. This incapability generates anxiety and produces defensive behavior so as to overcome the consequences of stress. Such actions may be taken at individual level as well as organizational level. There is no “one size fits all” solution to manage stress. Every individual has an exceptional response to stress, so experiment with a variety of methods to manage or to avoid stress. Stress can be managed if we recognize the reasons that cause stress and the level of stress. The key is to understand the signal of stress, select a few suitable techniques of stress management like, physical exercise, balanced diet, focused thinking, control of anger, maintaining calmness in stressful situation, having positive attitudes towards life, yoga, effective time management, positive thinking, meditation etc.

II. FEW LITERATURE SURVEY

Investigation conducted in USA, UK, New Zealand and Australia has identified numerous key factors commonly associated with stress among teachers in school. These factors include: work overload, time limitations, insufficient recognition, lack of promotion opportunities, low salary, changing job role, low management or participation in management, less resources and funding, and less student interaction.

Kyriacou (2001) identified the main sources of stress faced by teachers such as students who lacked motivation, maintenance of discipline, time pressures and workload, coping with changes, being evaluated by others, dealing with workmates, self-confidence and status, administration and management, role conflict and ambiguity, poor working environments, all these could affect the teachers’ productivity.

In 2012, Mehta identified numerous factors of organizational stress among the management teachers as affected by gender and experience. Researcher also studied the association between organizational stress and conflict handling and identified the conflict handling styles used predominantly by teachers to resolve arguments in the institution. Role stagnation was found the highest contribution to stress followed by role erosion

Group included Marie Bolton, National College of Ireland, 2015, found out that majority of respondents experienced high levels of stress and majority of respondents experienced stress for at least half of their typical week. Their closer investigation found out over workload, time issues, lack of recognition, poorly motivated students and lack of effort from students are primary sources of stress. Another finding was the female teachers experienced high level of stress compared to male participants. And in another result teacher in urban school experienced high level of stress frequently compared to teachers in rural school. And another result was those who are having experience between 11 to 15 years experienced higher level of professional investment stress than those who are having lesser than 11 years' experience. They recommend that school management should provide adequate training on a number of soft skills including supporting teachers, negotiations skills, how to deal with conflicts, and communication skill and effective leadership would be helpful to reduce the stress of teachers. And they mentioned training should include workshops on effective management, this also help to eradicate some portion of stress from teachers.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify the demographic profile of respondents from secondary school in Mangochi, Republic of Malawi
- To identify the personal causes of stress among teachers in secondary school at Mango chi
- To suggest to use some strategy to manage stress

IV. METHODOLOGY

The present study is empirical in nature, primary data was collected with a questionnaire by adopting simple random sampling method. 31 samples were taken to study the objectives. The secondary data were collected from reports, books and publication etc.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The table 1 reveals that 32% of the respondents are in the age group of 31 – 40 years, which is followed by 29% in the age group of 41 – 50 years. 26% of the respondents belongs to the age group of 21 – 30 years and 51 – 60 years' age group constitutes 13%.

Age Distribution	%	Qualification	%	Subject Teaching	%	Experience in Teaching	%
21 - 30	26	Diploma / certificate	48	English	29	0- 5	25.8
31 - 40	32	Bachelor degree	52	Mathematics	16	6- 10	19.4
41 - 50	29			Science	13	11- 15	19.4
51 - 60	13			Agriculture	6.5	16 - 20	19.4
				History	6.5	> 20	16
				Life skills	9		
				Bible knowledge	10		
				Geography	10		

Qualification of the respondents also identified to check the experienced stress among teachers in secondary schools in Mangochi. Qualification shows that 48% of the teachers obtained only certificate or diploma, 52% of the respondents obtained Bachelor degree and no one have obtained master degree and doctorate.

Subjects teaching was also considered as one of the most important variable to find out the stress experienced by the teacher's in Mangochi. Subjects handled are not equivalent to each other. The understanding level of subjects by students were also not equal. Science and mathematics are hard to understand but history, life skills subjects are easy to understand. So this difficult in teaching hard subject creates stress among teachers. 29% of respondents are teaching English, 16% of the respondents are teaching mathematics, 13% of the respondents are teaching science, 6.5 % of the respondents are teaching agriculture, 6.5% of the respondents are teaching history, 9% of the respondents are teaching life skills, 10% of the respondents are teaching Bible Knowledge, 10% of the respondents are teaching geography.

Teaching experience was done in order to find out how respondents has been experiencing with stress. 25.8% of the respondents were having experience between 0 – 5 years, 19.4% of the respondents having experience between 06 – 10 years 19.4% of the respondents were having experience between 11 – 15 years, 19.4% of the respondents were having experience between 16 – 20 years, 16 % of the respondents were having experience more than 20 years.

Personal Causes of Stress Among Teachers

After analyzing personal profile of the respondents, it researched that personal factors of stress among secondary teachers.

Table - 2

S.NO	causes of stress	HUS	MUS	US	N	S	MS	HS	M	S.D
1	Stay far away from school	35.5	6.5	16.1	6.5	22.6	3.2	9.7	3.2258	2.0930
2	Child care Responsibilities	22.6	9.7	9.7	19.4	22.6	3.2	12.9	3.7097	2.0197
3	Eldercare Responsibilities	25.8	9.7	6.5	16	12.9	19.4	9.7	3.7742	2.1557
4	Family Problems	22.6	12.9	3.2	9.7	16.1	16.1	19.4	4.0968	2.3000
5	Physical Health Conditions	32.3	6.5	12.9	19.4	9.7	9.6	9.6	3.3548	2.0904
6	Conflict with loved ones,	16	22.5	9.7	19.4	9.7	9.7	12.8	3.6452	2.0256
7	Psychological health conditions	25.8	3.2	16.1	19.4	16.1	12.9	6.5	4.7742	1.5429
8	Financial concerns uncertainty/ disappointment,	3.2	6.5	6.5	22.6	22.6	9.6	29.0	5.0000	1.7127

Table - 2 presents the personal causes among secondary school teachers. The data pointed out that Financial concerns uncertainty/ disappointment, were the most reported causes of stress with mean=5, std. Deviation=1.71. Financial concerns uncertainty/ disappointment, was also one of the reason for the stress among academic staff of the university mentioned in the qualitative data.

Psychological health conditions were identified as the second most factors of stress among secondary school teachers with mean=4.77, std. deviation=1.54. The data suggested that some of the academic staff experienced with stress.

Family problems were identified as the third most causes for stress among secondary school teachers with mean=4.09, std. deviation=2.3. The data proposed that some of the academic staff experienced with stress because of family problem.

Other sources of personal stress that recorded high mean included Eldercare Responsibilities with mean=3.77, std. Deviation=2.15, and childcare responsibilities with mean=3.70, std. Deviation=2.01.

Identification of coping strategies to manage teacher's stress

This area deals with the third objective to identify the coping strategies to manage stress. In this the data were collected for strategies which are used by teachers from secondary school.

S.NO	STRATEGIES TO MANAGE STRESS	RANK
1	Listening to music	1
2	Talking to partner/ family member	2
3	Get more sleep	2
4	Watching movies	4
5	Going for a walk / jog	5
6	Practice Relaxation	6
7	Seek counseling	6
8	Practicing Meditation	8
9	Reading books / magazines	9
10	Taking bath	10
11	Eat well	11
12	Practicing deep Breathing	12
13	Drinking alcohol	13
14	Smoking	14

The above table shows that, respondents had given first rank to listen to musing while they feel stressed, second rank to Talking to the partner/ family member and to get more sleep, fourth rank for watching movies, fifth rank to going for a walk / jog, sixth rank to Practicing Relaxation and Seek counseling, eighth rank to do Practicing Meditation, ninth rank for Reading books / magazines, tenth rank for Taking bath, eleventh rank for Eat well, twelfth rank Practicing deep Breathing, thirteenth rank for Drinking alcohol, fourteenth ranking for Smoking.

VI. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

Personal stress is a real challenge for secondary teachers in Mangochi and also in secondary schools. It is important that teacher should be supervised continuously to deal stress problems. it is not only significant to identify stress difficulties and to deal with them but to promote healthy work and reduced harmful aspects of work. Work in itself can be a self can be a self-promoting activity as long as it takes place in a safe, development and health- promoting environment.

This study identified the major causes of personal stress among teachers are: Conflicting demand, Financial concerns uncertainty/ disappointment and family problems. And this study showing that most of the secondary school teachers following strategies such as Listening to music, talking to partner/ family member, get more sleep and watching movies to manage their personal stress in home.

Recommendation

For the secondary teachers to discharge their responsibilities effectively and efficiently there is need for school management to improve and implement the teachers' special salary scale this will serve as incentive for reducing financial problems and them to accomplish their duty with sense of obligation and dedication as this would reduce the financial stress among the secondary teachers.

If the secondary teachers concentrate and give more importance to financial problems and family problems level of depression rate will be reduced comparing with the present level.

So teachers should identify the personal factors which creates stress among them and they have to follow some strategies such as Listening to music, talking to partner/ family member, get more sleep and watching movies.

Secondary school teachers can work out regularly and get sufficient sleep. Make time to enjoy an activity outside the school premises.

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