

An Exploratory Study of Teacher Educators' Sources of Stress

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Abstract

The primary purpose of the study was to explore teacher educators' sources of stress. A total of 300 teacher educators from Yangon University of Education, Sagaing University of Education, Taungoo Education College, Mawlamyine Education College, Thingangyun Education College and Bogalay Education College participated in this study. In this study, there was no significant gender difference on sources of stress. Regarding the designation, significant differences were found to be on overall scale, discipline and motivation, emotional and physical reaction to stress factors. There was no significant disciplinary difference on sources of stress. Concerning the universities and colleges, significant difference was found among universities and colleges. However, there was no significant difference on sources of stress among service as well as marital status.

Key word: Sources of Stress

Introduction

Within the general area of occupational stress, teaching has been identified as one of the most stressful occupations in many countries (Cooper, Sloan & Williams, 1988). In the field of teaching profession, teachers have tremendous responsibility in shaping the life of individual and society. Teacher stress is defined as a teacher's experience of 'unpleasant negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration or depression resulting from some aspect of their work as a teacher' (Kyriacou, 2001). At a personal level, teaching related stress can affect a teacher's health, well-being and performance (Larchick & Chance, 2004).

Teaching profession is generally considered as a noble profession with lots of expectation from the parents towards their children's education and the development of their personalities. These expectations may contribute as sources of stress (Rajendran, R., 2007). With the increasing demand from students and parents, the stress levels are steadily increasing. Teacher

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educators' stress may have an impact on teachers as individuals, on the schools in which they work and on the pupils they teach.

It has also been recognized that student academic improvement is a worthy goal but it is not achieved in isolation. Teachers' attitude and performance are critical to that endeavor. If we have a chance to create a stress free environment for teacher educators, they will serve our society with high performance. Before creating the stress free environment, it is necessary to explore the sources of stress encountered by teacher educators.

Purposes of the Study

The purposes of the study are as follows;

1. to investigate teacher educators' sources of stress by gender, designation, service and marital status.
2. to identify teacher educators' sources of stress by discipline
3. to investigate teacher educators' sources of stress by universities and colleges

Definitions of Key Terms

Stress: Stress can be defined as the response to events that threaten or challenge a person (Brown & McGill, 1989).

Sources of Stress: Personal and environment events that cause stress are known as sources of stress (Yusoff, M. S. B., 2009).

Teacher Stress: Teacher stress is defined as a teacher's experience of unpleasant, negative emotion such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration or depression, resulting from some aspect of their work as a teacher (Kyriacou, 2001).

Literature Review

Stress has become the core concern in the life of everyone but everybody wants stress free life. Stress is a part of day to day living. It affects all of us regardless of age, gender, race or class. Stress is a negative emotional experience accompanied by predictable biochemical, physiological, cognitive and behavioral changes that are directed either towards alerting the stressful event or accommodating its effects (Feldman, 1993). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) described stress as "the result of an individual's perceptions that they do not have the resources to cope with a perceived situation from the past, present or future (Robothamb & Julian, 2006). It is created when there is an imbalance between an environment demand and the ability to meet that demand (Fisher, 1994).

Stress can come from any situation or thought that makes us feel frustrated, angry or anxious. Everyone sees situations differently and has different coping skills. For this reason, no two people will respond exactly the same way to a given situation. Additionally not all situations are stressful for instance, the birth of a child, being promoted at work or moving to a new home may not be perceived as threatening. However, people may feel that situations are stressful because they don't feel fully prepared to deal with them (Ansari, 1991). Stress has been considered as one of the major factors in work organization (Agrawal et al., 1979).

Occupational Stress

Sources of stressors in the employment organization identified by Pestonjee (1992) are work, role, personal development, interpersonal relations and organization climate. Work which require a lot of manual dexterity have a greater chance of including stress in the worker who work there. Work in the organization can induce stressors when the activities to be performed are either too difficult and complex or repetitive and monotonous. Uncomfortable working conditions extract extra energy from the worker. Stress is inevitable and unavoidable when large amount of work is expected beyond the capacities of the worker and work has to be performed keeping in view the set deadlines. The five aspects related to stressors intrinsic to work like boredom, physical working conditions, time pressure and deadlines, work demands, job design and technical problems.

Occupational stress is known as stress at work. It occurs when there is a discrepancy between the demands of the workplace and that of individuals (Kmrozek, 2009). Job stress also known as occupational stress, has been defined as the experience of negative emotional states such as frustration, worry, anxiety and depression attributed to work related factors. Some jobs are classified as high stress occupations such as secretary, social worker, sale manager and firefighters. Low stress job include farm laborer, heavy equipment operators and college professors. These classifications are based on self- reports of job related stress by workers in these various occupations. Because certain jobs are especially stressful, they exact a heavy physical and psychological toll from people who serve in those occupations (Kyriacou, 2001).

Method and Procedures

Participants

In addition, two Universities such as Yangon University of Education (YUOE) and Sagaing University of Education (SUOE), four Education Colleges such as Taungoo Education College (TGEC), Mawlamyine

Education College (MEC), Thingangyun Education College (TEC) and Bogalay Education College (BEC) were purposefully selected for this study. A total of 300 teacher educators participated in the sample. Specifically, 50 teacher educators from each University and College participated as sample of the study.

Instruments

Teacher stress inventory was used to explore the sources of stress among teacher educators. To examine teacher educators' sources of stress, Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI) developed by Fimian and Fastenu (1990) was used in this study. It was with a total 26 items questionnaire. Fimian and Fastenu (1990) published a review of the questionnaire that the questionnaire was useful to assess the sources of stress and had shown the high level of validity. This instrument contained five subscales namely time management, work related, professional stress, discipline and motivation and emotional and physical reaction to stress. Item number 1 to 4 stands for time management. Item number 5 to 8 stands for work related. Item number 9 to 13 stands for professional stress. Item number 14 to 16 stands for discipline and motivation. Item number 17 to 26 stands for emotional and physical stress.

Procedure

After preparing the measuring scales, expert review was conducted for face validity and content validity by fourteen experts from Yangon University of Education who have special knowledge and close relationship in the field of education. And then, items were revised in length and wording. The pilot testing was done during the first week of December in 2016 to test whether the wording of items, statements and instructions had their clarity in Myanmar version and appropriate and relevant to teacher educators. the modified measure of TSI consists of 26 items. The target participants must answer five point Likert scales (1=strongly disagree, to 5= strongly agree). With the permission of administrative personal of institutions, questionnaire was administered to the teacher educators from six selected teacher educat

Results of the Study

Table 1 showed that there was no significant gender difference on sources of stress. It can reasonably be said that teacher educators' sources of stress do not depend on gender. This finding was consistent with the previous finding of Su Sandi Htun (2015). Su Sandi Htun found that there was no significant difference on gender.

Table 1 Results of Independent Sample *t*-test for Teacher Educators' Sources of Stress by Gender

Sources of Stress	Gender	Mean	S D	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Male	72.59	11.594		
	Female	70.91	13.070		

Table 2 showed that tutors suffered more sources of stress on professional stress, discipline and motivation, and emotional and physical reaction to stress factors.

Table 2 ANOVA Results of Teacher Educators' Sources of Stress by Designation

Sources of Stress	T	AL	L	AP	P	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Time Management	11.82	11.76	12.03	10.80	9.83	0.923	0.451
Work Related	11.50	11.08	12.08	10.80	10.50	1.584	0.178
Professional Stress	15.04	13.94	14.96	14.60	12.67	2.561	0.059
Discipline and Motivation	9.36	8.52	9.08	8.00	8.00	2.666*	0.033
Emotional and physical Reaction to stress	24.97	23.10	24.45	22.80	17.33	3.531**	0.008
Total	72.69	68.4	72.6	67	58.33	3.356**	0.010

T = Tutor, AL= Assistant Lecturer, L= Lecturer, AP= Assistant Professor, P= Professor

Table 3 Post-Hoc Analysis of Teacher Educators' Sources of Stress by Designation

Subscales of Sources of Stress	(I) Designation	(J) Designation	Mean Difference (I-J)	<i>p</i>
Discipline and Motivation	Tutor	Assistant Lecturer	.843*	.039
		Lecturer	.283	.887
		Assistant Professor	1.362	.620
		Professor	1.362	.536
Emotional and Physical Reaction to Stress	Tutor	Assistant Lecturer	1.873	.147
		Lecturer	.522	.971
		Assistant Professor	2.169	.924
		Professor	7.363*	.015
	Lecturer	Tutor	-.522	.971
		Assistant Professor	1.351	.583
		Assistant Lecturer	1.647	.972
		Professor	7.114*	.033

Regarding the discipline and motivation, the mean score of tutors was significantly higher than assistant lecturers. This may be due to the fact that

tutors were not strong enough to teach the student with behavior problems and students who have less motivation to learn. And then, concerning the emotional and physical reaction to stress, the mean score of tutors and lecturers were significantly higher than that of professors. This may be due to the fact that tutors and lecturers were easily irritated, anxious or depressed, impatient with heavy work load.

Mean Comparison of Teacher Educators' Sources of Stress by Discipline

Although a slight variation of mean score exists, there was no significant difference between two disciplines. It can reasonably be said that teacher educators' sources of stress do not depend on discipline.

Table 4 Results of Independent Sample *t*-test for Teacher Educators' Sources of Stress by Discipline

Sources of Stress	Discipline	Mean	S D	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Academician	71.09	12.734	-0.04	0.997
	Educationist	71.10	13.174		

Mean Comparison of Teacher Educators' Sources of Stress by Universities and Colleges

Table 5 showed that there was significant difference among universities and colleges.

Table 5 ANOVA Results of Teacher Educators' Sources of Stress by Universities and Colleges

Sources of Stress	U ₁	U ₂	C ₁	C ₂	C ₃	C ₄	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Time Management	11.94	11.22	11.98	12.88	10.84	11.94	2.948*	0.013
Work Related	11.20	11.88	10.86	12.08	11.94	11.04	1.830	0.107
Professional Stress	14.08	13.80	15.06	15.26	14.50	15.26	2.195	0.055
Discipline and Motivation	8.94	8.20	8.72	9.26	9.48	9.44	2.729*	0.020
Emotional and physical stress	22.92	22.44	22.96	27.62	23.84	25.00	5.829***	0.000
Total	69.08	67.54	69.58	77.1	70.6	72.68	3.624**	0.003

U₁ = University 1, U₂ = University 2, C₁ = College 1, C₂ = College 2, C₃ = College 3, C₄ = College 4

Table 6 Post-Hoc Analysis of Teacher Educators' Sources of Stress by Universities and Colleges

Subscales	(I)University/College	(J) University/College	Mean Difference(I-J)	<i>p</i>
Time Management	College 2	College 3	2.040*	.007
Discipline and Motivation	College 3	University 2	1.280*	.031
	College 4	University 2	1.240*	.041
Emotional and Physical Reaction to Stress	College 2	University 1	4.700*	.001
		University 2	5.180*	.000
		College 1	4.660*	.001
		College 3	3.780*	.012

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 6 showed that regarding time management factor, the mean score of teacher educators from College 2 was significantly higher than that of teacher educators from College 3. Concerning the discipline and motivation, the mean score of teacher educators from College 3 and College 4 were significantly higher than that of teacher educators from University 2. Relating with emotional and physical reaction to stress, the mean score of teacher educators from College 2 was significantly higher than those of teacher educators from University 1, University 2, College 1 and College 3.

Mean Comparison of Teacher Educators' Sources of Stress by Service

Table 7 showed that there was no significant difference on sources of stress among teacher educators who have different years of experience.

Table 7 ANOVA Results of Teacher Educators' Sources of Stress by Service

Sources of Stress	≤10	11-20	21-30	31-40	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Time Management	11.71	11.76	12.08	11.89	0.210	0.889
Work Related	11.51	11.53	11.43	11.52	0.014	0.998
Professional Stress	14.58	14.84	14.57	14.85	0.166	0.919
Discipline and Motivation	9.03	9.18	8.94	8.56	0.564	0.639
Emotional and physical Reaction to stress	24.21	25.13	23.06	23.19	1.466	0.224
Total	71.04	72.44	70.08	70.01	0.416	0.742

Mean Comparison of Teacher Educators' Sources of Stress by Marital Status

Table 8 showed that there was no significant difference on sources of stress among marital status. This finding was consistent with the previous finding of Chona (2009). Chona found that there was no significant difference among the marital status on stress.

Table 8 ANOVA Results of Teacher Educators' Sources of Stress by Marital Status

Sources of Stress	Single	Widow	Divorced	Married	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Time Management	11.77	12.25	16.00	11.79	0.707	0.549
Work Related	11.41	11.50	14.00	11.67	0.453	0.716
Professional Stress	14.57	15.25	16.00	14.82	0.264	0.851
Discipline and Motivation	8.91	9.50	13.00	9.15	1.518	0.210
Emotional and physical Reaction to stress	24.29	21.00	24.00	23.91	0.465	0.707
Total	70.95	69.5	83	71.34	0.322	0.810

Conclusion

Concerning the teacher educators' sources of stress, no significant gender difference was found to be. Regarding the designation, a slight variation of mean score was found in all factors as well as overall scale, significant differences were found to be on discipline and motivation as well as emotional and physical reaction to stress factors. The overall mean score of tutors' sources of stress was the highest among other designations. It may be due to the fact that tutors were not enough experience about disciplinary matter and a little experience about how to motivate their students. In addition, they may be easily irritated, anxious or impatient with students. According to the discipline, there was no significant difference on overall sources of stress.

Regarding the universities and colleges, there was significant difference among universities and colleges. Post-hoc results by universities and colleges cluster showed that the mean score of teacher educators from College 2 was significantly higher than that of teacher educators from College 3 on time management. Concerning the discipline and motivation,

the mean score of teacher educators from College 3 and College 4 were significantly higher than that of teacher educators from University 2. Finally, the mean score of teacher educators from College 2 was significantly higher than those of teacher educators from University 1, University 2, College 1 and College 3 on emotional and physical reaction to stress factor.

Looking across the different service groups, the overall mean score of (11-20) years' service group teacher was slightly higher than other groups. There was no significant difference on sources of stress among teacher educators who have different years of experience. Concerning the marital status, the overall mean score of divorced teachers was slightly higher than that of other groups of marital status. There was no significant difference on sources of stress among marital status.

Discussion and Recommendation

In 21st century, the world is changing rapidly in science and technology and these changes have put new pressures and stress on teachers. Stress affects the efficiency of the individual. So, it is necessary to provide proper environmental support to each to maintain individual stress at their workplace.

It is very important that the Educational Universities and Colleges understand the needs of its employees and provide what is best for the teacher educators. Motivation is a key factor as well as in affecting job stress among them. Highly motivated teachers will feel happier and are more willing to work for the organizations.

Suggestion for Further Research

There is no doubt to take additional research on sources of stress and job satisfaction among teacher educators. In addition, the future researches should conduct the studies with larger sample size from different states and regions to be more generalized, reliable and valid. Qualitative design such as interview, observation, case study should be used to have in-depth information sources of stress and job satisfaction of teacher educators.

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