

STRESS AND COPING STRATEGIES IN RELATION TO EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF STUDENT TEACHERS OF PUNJAB

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ABSTRACT

Teacher stress has been an area of concern since the previous century. Lot of researches has been undertaken in this area in India. But student teacher stress is almost an unexplored area which needs thorough investigation. Student teachers of the B. Ed course experience much stress before the commencement of the teaching practice. Teacher education programmes concentrate mainly on methodology and do very little in preparing student teachers to cope with the anxieties and stresses associated with student roles, relationships and responsibilities of teaching. Teacher education curriculum in Punjab also offers no provision to address such a grave problem. Hence the present study was undertaken mainly to investigate on the on the following key aspects related to the student teachers' stress.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching has been considered as a noble profession in this country since ancient times. In order to develop the personality of his students, the teacher had to impart knowledge, inculcate various skills and develop in them a particular attitude towards life and nature.

Teachers are responsible for creating a learning society, which continuously evolves, in its social, cultural and ethical aspects. Teachers are said to be the builders of the nation. They are expected to remain life long learners and prepare persons for every field of human activity. They are also supposed to provide good education to the younger generation and also guide the future society.

1.1.NEED OF THE STUDY

Teacher education programs concentrate more on methodology and less on preparing student teachers to cope with the inevitable anxieties and stresses associated with student roles, relationships and responsibilities of teaching.

Teacher education curriculum of the universities in Punjab offers no provision to address such a grave problem. Teacher training institutions also offer no stress management measures to student teachers to cope

effectively with the stress before and during the teaching practice. Not much attempt has been made to study this problem elaborately among the student teachers of Punjab.

Hence a comprehensive study in this area will bring new knowledge about this problem and will be helpful in chalking out new paradigms in teacher education so that the student teachers can be helped to become emotionally more intelligent having the best of coping strategies to meet the demands challenges of the 21th Century.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Stress and Coping Strategies in Relation to Emotional Intelligence of Student Teachers of Punjab.

1.3. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

Stress

Stress is the general term describing the psychological and physical response to a stimulus that alters the body's equilibrium. (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) In this study, Stress experienced by the student teachers in the preparatory stage of the teaching practice; in the previous week of teaching practice is considered.

Coping Strategies

Coping strategies are actions that people take to master, tolerate, reduce, or minimize the effects of stressors.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence refers to the capacity of recognizing one's own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships. (Goleman,1998).

Student Teachers

Student teachers are teacher trainees undergoing the secondary level teacher education program (B.Ed.) in colleges of teacher education.

1.4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the level of Emotional Intelligence on stress and Coping strategies of student teachers.
2. To study the influence of Emotional Intelligence on stress and Coping strategies of student teachers.

1.5. HYPOTHESES

1. There exists significant influence of Emotional Intelligence on Stress of students teachers.
2. There exists significant influence of Emotional Intelligence on Coping Strategies of Students teachers.

1.6. METHOD

The present study was undertaken to find out the relationship of stress and Coping Strategies with Emotional Intelligence of student teachers of Punjab at the secondary level (B.Ed.). Hence normative survey method was adopted by the investigator in the present study for collecting the data.

1.7. SAMPLE

The study was conducted on a representative sample of 500 student teachers from different teacher education institutions conducting B. Ed course. Stratified random sampling technique was used for the study.

1.8.TOOLS

Three major tools were employed in the study for the collection of the data. They are:

- i. Emotional Intelligence test for student teachers.
- ii. Stress inventory for student teachers
- iii. Coping Strategies inventory for student teachers

CONCLUSION

Levels of Emotional Intelligence, Stress and Coping Strategies of student teachers were found out by classifying them in to three groups namely High, Average and Low based on their scores in the Emotional Intelligence test, Stress Inventory and Coping Strategies Inventory. The results are as following:

1. It was found that 65.99% of student teachers possessed average level of Emotional Intelligence, 17.75% possessed high Emotional Intelligence and 16.35% possessed low Emotional Intelligence. The results indicate that ***majority of student teachers have average level of Emotional Intelligence.***
2. Majority of student teachers had average level of Stress (68.38%) before practice teaching. The proportion of student teachers in the High and Low Stress groups are 16.87% and 14.60% respectively. The result indicates that ***majority of student teachers have average level of Stress before the practice teaching practice.***
3. The proportion of student teachers in the High, Average and Low Coping Strategies groups are 12.21%, 65.2% and 22.67% respectively. The result indicates that ***majority of student teachers employ average level of coping Strategies to cope with the Stress before the practice teaching period.***
4. A notable finding is that the ***percentage of student teachers falling in the high group has decreased and that in the low group has increased in the case of coping strategies*** when compared to the percentages in the case of Emotional Intelligence and Stress.

5. Significant influence of Emotional Intelligence was identified on Stress of student teachers, when the three levels of Emotional Intelligence are compared. The calculated 'F' value is 61.73 at 2 and 792 degrees of freedom and the value exceeds 4.63, the 'F' value at 0.01 level of significance. The significant 'F' value indicates that *Emotional Intelligence has a significant role in reducing the stress of student teachers.*
6. Hence it is inferred that *student teachers of high Emotional Intelligence have better Coping Strategies compared to that student teachers average and low level of Emotional Intelligence.* In other words an increase in Emotional Intelligence will influence an increase in Coping Strategies and a decrease in Emotional Intelligence a decrease in Coping Strategies.

Teacher stress has been an area of concern since the previous century. Student teachers of the B.Ed course experience much stress before the commencement of the teaching practice. Teacher education programmes concentrate mainly on methodology and do very little in preparing student teachers to cope with the anxieties and stresses associated with student roles, relationships and responsibilities of teaching.

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