

Administrative stress and coping strategies among Secondary School Headmistresses in few districts of South Bengal, West Bengal.

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Abstract

Administrative stress has become increasingly common in teaching administrative position largely because of increased occupational complexities and increased economic pressure on individuals. The aim of the study is to identify the sources of administrative stress and effective coping strategies to reduce these types of stress. The research study employed a descriptive survey design to collect information about this. A simple random sample is used to select the school. The sample consists with 60 headmistresses. A set of questionnaire instrument is used to collect data. Different descriptive statistics is used for data analysis such as frequency, percentage; mean etc. The study identified the various sources of administrative stress as in mandatory work, work load, inadequate support from colleague, too many pupils in one class etc. The effective coping strategies which are used by headmistresses are practice for good human relation skills with staffs, students and parents, maintain a sense of humor, having a healthy home life etc. This paper concluded that there are various sources of administrative stress and to reduce these stress headmistresses used a lot of coping strategies.

Key Word: Administrative stress, coping strategy, secondary school.

Introduction

The pressure of modern life, coupled with the demands of a job, can lead to emotional imbalances that are collectively labeled as stress. Hans Seyle(1936) defined stress as “a syndrome produce by diverse nocuous agents”. He described stress as a non specific response of the body to “noxious stimuli”. According to *Lazarus (1976)* “stress occurs when there are demands on the person, which taxes or exceeds his adjustive resources”.

Modern world is marked as the world of stress that has become a predominant feature of human life. Stress affects all man from their childhood to old age. Every person affected in their everyday lives as well as in their work. Various needs and aspirations, pressure of meeting deadlines, uncertainty of future, tough competition etc have made life highly stressful.

Teacher moreover headmistress (administrator) in school occupies important and prestigious place in society. Teachers are considered as the creators of leader scientist and Social reformer. The role of administrator includes leadership functions, administrative roles, management skills and tough competition. According to Sachs and Black More (1984), administrators are required to cope with multiple demands created by external pressures and to be more efficient, effective and economic in how they go about their work.

Administrators are responsible for the education of all pupils, Andrews and Soder (1987) define the administrator as an instructional leader who are responsible for improvement of instructional programs and class room environment that will enhance student learning. At the same time, administrators are accountable for all decision in their school and face scrutiny by school committee and parents for unpopular decision (Vanderpol, 1981).

Due to the various needs and multiple demands, administrators experience a lot of stress. Sometimes, this stress may be considered as a chronic factor of life as well as an occupational hazard (Vanderpole, 1981). To get rid of occupational stress, stress management is an important act. Stress can be managed by effective coping strategies. Many activities like exercise, relaxation activities and healthy food habits, practicing Yoga can contribute significantly to reduce the stress through effective coping.

At last, it is said that stress cannot be avoided, identification of effective coping strategies may provide administrator to reduce the amount of stress in their environment and to moderate the effect of stress on them.

Significance of the study

School administrators face stress at one time or another in their job. Their ability or failure to cope with stress may reverberate throughout an entire school system, affecting teachers as well as students. The significance for this study obtained from a lack of research on administrative stress and coping strategies among secondary school headmistress in few district of South Bengal, West Bengal. Most stress research in education has focused on stress experienced by teachers or headmasters or principals. This study was designed in understanding the sources of administrative stress and effective coping strategies experienced by secondary school headmistresses in few districts (Hooghly, Kolkata, South 24 Parganas) of South Bengal, West Bengal.

Review of Literature

The literature cites the various studies conducted in this area. The sum of the studies conducted in this area has been discussed in the following:

- Owusu.et.al, (2014) focused on stress management among senior staff female administrators in the University of Cope Coast. The case study Approach in the form of descriptive survey design was used to gather evidence to interrogate the research questions and the hypothesis for the study. It was concluded that there was a significance direct connection between experience and coping strategy.
- Wadesango.et.al, (2015) examined occupational stress among school head teachers: a case for Hwedza district secondary school's head teachers. A sample of 30 secondary school head teachers and 30 secondary school ordinary teachers were taken. A questionnaire for school heads and interviews for ordinary school teachers were used as instruments for data collection. It was concluded that the phenomenon of occupational stress among school heads is a real international issue. It was showed that teachers in general are affected physiologically, psychologically and behaviorally.
- Hassan.et.al, (2018) focused on assessment of work stress and coping strategies among primary school teachers. A simple random sample used to select 12 schools and all teachers include in this study sample (378). The study showed that there were a significant positive correlation between teacher's age and stress. This study concluded that majority of teachers had moderate and high level of stress and used emotional focused coping more than problem focused.
- Parveen N. (2009). investigated occupational stress experienced by working and non working women of Hyderabad city. A sample of 180 working women was taken. Out of which 90 were married and 90 were unmarried. Five point Likert scale was used to measure occupational stress in this study. It was found that unmarried working women experiences low stress as compared to the married women. It was concluded that household responsibilities, marital adjustment, child caring issues and family relationship are the sources of stress for married working women.
- Kumar .A. et.al (2014). examined the occupational stress among working women in the national capital region. A sample of 120 working women has been taken. It was found that working women above 55 years faces the problem of occupational stress more as compared with other age groups.
- Rani.G.(2017). Evaluated occupational stress for male and female married and unmarried high school teachers. A sample of 80 teachers has been taken. Results found that occupational stress index is the highest in case of married male teachers, while it is lowest in case of unmarried female teachers.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To find out the sources of administrative stress among secondary school headmistresses in few districts of South Bengal, West Bengal.
2. To analyze the coping strategies which are used to reduce administrative stress of headmistresses from their work experience?

Research Questions

1. What may be the root cause of administrative stress among secondary school headmistresses in few districts of South Bengal, West Bengal?
2. Which of the coping strategies more effective to reduce the administrative stress?

Research Methodology

In this paper, descriptive survey was used to investigate the administrative stress and coping strategies among secondary school headmistresses in few districts (Hooghly, Kolkata, South 24 Parganas) of south Bengal, West Bengal. A sample of 60 headmistresses was taken from different Govt. and Govt. aided secondary schools. Simple random sampling technique has been used to collect data.

A set of questionnaire were used to collect data and descriptive statistics is used for data analysis. In this paper the data is presented by the use of frequency table and percentage.

Results

Demographic result: 60 headmistresses covering a board range of types school, ages, experience as shown in table 1 as described below. Regarding 'school type' 41 (69.33%) headmistresses were of Girls' school, 9 (15%) were co-ed and 10 (16.67%) were of boys school. Table 1 also reveals that 35 (58.33%) headmistresses age were between 40-49, 19 (31.67%) headmistresses were between 50-59 and 6 (10%) of them were from 30-39 years old, while there was no headmistresses below the 30 years old. As regards experience of headmistresses, 29 (48.33%) headmistresses working for 1-10 years and 16(26.67%) from less than 1 year while 15 (25%) worked from greater than 10 years.

Table 1: Percentage distribution of headmistress's demographic characteristics (N=60)

Types of school	Frequency	Percentage
Co-ed	9	15
Girls	41	69.33
Boys	10	16.67

Age of Headmistresses	Frequency	Percentage
Under 30	0	0
30-39	6	10
40-49	35	58.33
50-59	19	31.67

Experience as Administrator	Frequency	Percentage
<1	16	26.67
1-10	29	48.33
>10	15	25

Stress Factor Result: The entire headmistress rating scores (0-5) on five point Likert Scale for each stress factor in the Administrative Stress Index (ASI) was calculated and then it was used to rank the stress factors by severity as shown in the table 2. 'Inadequate support from colleague' was considered to be the most severe stress factor by the headmistresses in this study. It should be noted that there is very little difference between the rating totals for some of the others stress factors.

Table 2: The top ten administrative stress factors

Rank	ASI Item	Mean
1	Inadequate support from colleague	4.74
2	Mandatory Work	4.63
3	Work load	4.53
4	Too many pupils in one class	4.53
5	Changeable education policy of the Govt.	4.53
6	Pupils misbehavior	4.37
7	Role expectation	4.21
8	Role conflict	4.05
9	Pupils lack of motivation	3.72
10	Political interference	3.70

Coping Strategies results: The Coping Preference Scale (CPS) was developed by selecting the most frequently chosen coping strategies on each of this scale. Table 3 displays the top 10 preferred coping strategies in this study. Practice for good human relation skill with staffs, students and parents were considered to be the most effective coping strategies in this study.

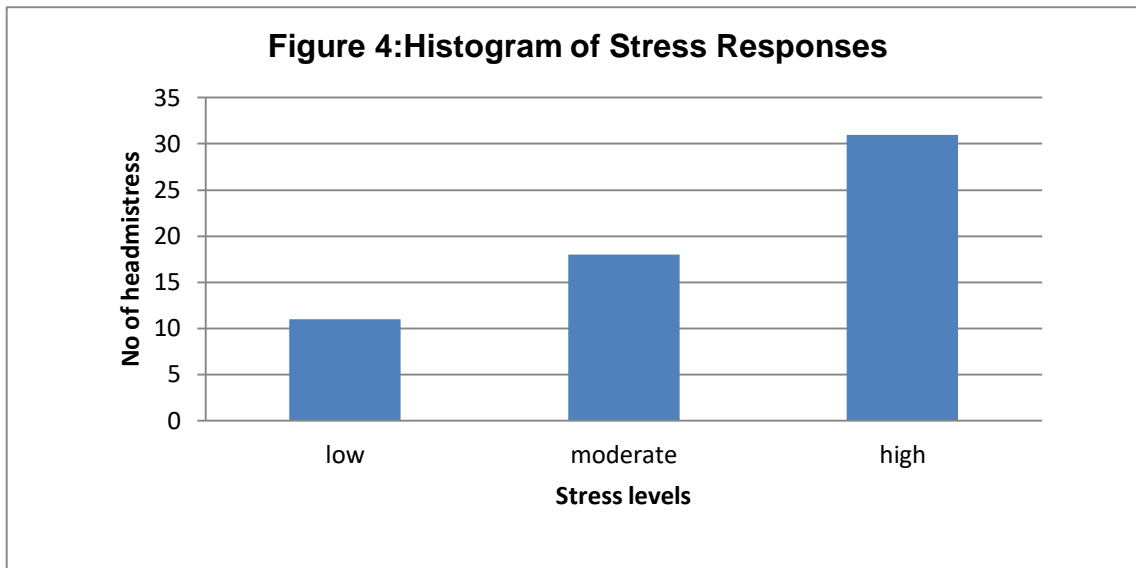
Table 3: The top ten coping strategies

Rank	CPS Items	Mean
1	Practice for good human relation skills with staffs, students and parents	4.63
2	Practice for good time management	4.28
3	Utilized in-service opportunities to increase repertoire of management and communication skills	4.25
4	Maintain a sense of humor	3.97
5	Having a healthy home life	3.92
6	Regular physical exercise	3.92
7	Spend time with social media	3.82
8	Take mini vacation that is weekend away	3.82
9	Set realistic goals	3.72
10	Work harder	3.60

Stress responses and satisfaction result: 18.33 % (N=11) of the headmistresses respondent that they had a low level of stress by scoring 1 or 2 on a 5 point Likert scale. On the other hand 51.67 % (N=31) considered that they had a high level of stress on the scale. 30% are considered that they had moderate level of stress scoring 3 on the scale. The results showed that a majority of headmistress reported that they had high level of stress. The data will be shown in the table 4 and figure 2.

Table 4: Stress Responses of Headmistresses

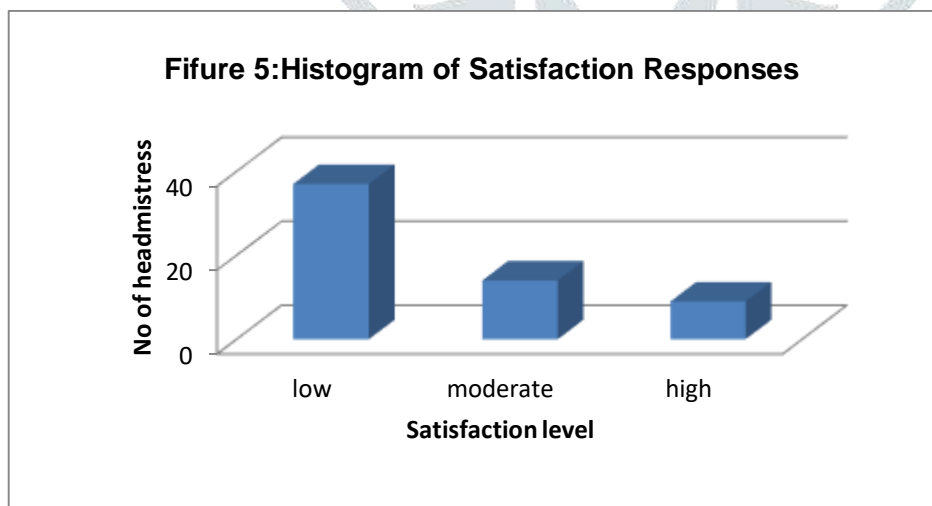
Stress level	Frequency	Percentage
Low	11	18.33
Moderate	18	30
High	31	51.67



Out of the 60 headmistresses, 37 (61.67%) said that they had low level of satisfactory and rated their satisfaction level at (4 or 5) on a 5 point Likert scale. 14 (23.33%) headmistress reported that they had moderate level satisfaction (rate 3) and 9 (15%) said that they had high level of satisfaction (rated 1 or 2). The data will be shown in the table 5 and figure 5.

Table 5: Satisfaction Responses of Headmistresses

Satisfaction level	Frequency	Percentage
Low	37	61.67
Moderate	14	23.33
High	9	15



Discussion:

Stress is a physical, mental or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension. Stress can be external (from the environment, psychological or social situations) or internal (illness or from a medical procedure). Administrative stress refers to a mental and physical condition that affects an individual's productivity at the work

place as well as one's effectiveness, personal health and quality of work. Headmistresses cum administrators in school had a high level of stress due to their job or occupation.

The result of the current paper revealed that more than half of headmistress's age was between 40-49 years old. From the researcher point of view age of headmistresses sometimes could affect on the handing of situation in a positive way.

The current study also investigated that majority of headmistress worked for 1-10 years. Regarding sources of administrative stress, this research study showed that there are various sources of administrative stress. Among their 'Inadequate support from colleague' was considered to be the most severe factor experienced by headmistress.

In relation to coping strategies used by secondary school headmistresses, results of the study showed that 'practice for good human relations skills with staffs, students and parents' was considered the most effective coping strategy for all the headmistresses. Beside this everyone used different types of coping strategies to reduce their stress.

The results of this study also revealed that more than fifty percent of headmistresses had high level of stress due to mandatory work, workload etc. While thirty percent has moderate and approximately one fifth of headmistresses has low level of stress.

In relation to satisfaction level, the results found that more than sixty percentage had low level of satisfaction, above twenty percentage had moderate and fifty percentage had high level of job satisfaction.

Conclusion:

Based on the findings there are some conclusions such as

- Most of the headmistresses experience a high level of stress and most of them have a low level of job satisfaction.
- 'Inadequate support from colleague' was identified as the most significant administrative related stress factor.
- Headmistresses enlisted 'good human relation skills with staffs, students and parents' are a effective strategy in reducing administrative stress.
- Finally it is said that all the headmistresses are under stress and to reduce this type of stress they used different types of coping strategies.

Recommendations:

Based on the findings and conclusions, it is recommended that secondary education department should collaborate with policy makers to formulate strategies for stress reduction management of secondary school headmistress so that they may perform their best duties. District, Block level seminar, training and workshops should be arranged for secondary school headmistresses. Lastly it is said that implementing this recommendations, stress will be reduced.

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