

A Study on Identification and Measurement of Stress levels of College teachers with special reference to Gender and Generational Differences

Priyanka Malhotra

Research Scholar, IKG Punjab Technical University, Kapurthala

Abstract

The world is changing at an overwhelming speed. Everyone experiences stress, whether it is personal, professional or economic. Stress has become an important concern in the life of everyone, and is hard to avoid. The level of organisational stress experienced by individuals, often depends on the nature and demands of the professional setting. The study of stress among teachers has become a topic of interest with changes being introduced in the education system and the new generation of students with varied interests. Teacher's stress has been defined as the experience of unpleasant negative emotions such as anger, frustration, anxiety, depression and nervousness, by a teacher resulting from some aspect of their work (Kyriacou 1987). The study on Identification and Measurement of Stress levels of College teachers with special reference to Gender and Generational Differences was conducted on a random sample of 217 (58 males and 159 females) degree college teachers of Chandigarh and Panchkula. The stress levels have been measured on the basis of gender and generational differences especially taking into consideration Generation X and Generation Y teachers. From the analysis it is clear that majority of the teachers experience stress in their work but there are no major differences in terms of gender. The level of stress experienced by Generation Y teachers has been found out to be higher as compared to the Generation X college teachers.

Key Words: College Teachers, Stress, Generation X and Generation Y, Gender differences

Introduction

The world is changing at an overwhelming speed. Everyone experiences stress, whether it is personal, professional or economic. It has become an important concern in our lives and is hard to avoid. The level of organisational stress experienced by individuals often depends on the nature and demands of the professional setting. The study of stress among teachers has become a topic of interest with changes being introduced in the education system and the new generation of students with varied interests joining every year. Differences have been found in stress levels amongst male and female teachers. A large part of the workforce comprises of female teachers in educational institutions. Balancing personal and professional responsibilities is tedious for female teachers so the level of stress experienced by both the genders differs with females performing the balancing act. Also different generations especially Generation X, Y and Z teachers are working together whose working styles are diverse and an alignment of the same is difficult. The stress levels of the three generations differ in many ways due differential traits.

Review of Literature

Teacher stress is high as reflected in various studies, in fact teachers have been exhibiting high levels of stress than any other profession (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). Teacher stress has been defined by different authors in different ways. Teacher's stress has been defined as an experience of unpleasant negative emotions such as anger, frustration, anxiety, depression and nervousness, by a teacher resulting from some aspect of their work (Kyriacou, 1987). It has also been defined as physiological and mental reactions of an individual to the pressures from the environment, perceptions, and others (Grant et al., 2006; Hess and Copeland, 2006).

Teachers usually experience stress if the job demands do not fit their perceived capacity to meet the demands of their job. The reasons for Teachers' occupational stress can be due to several contextual factors such as time pressure, discipline problems, lack of resources, lack of professional recognition, lack of support and the diversity of tasks required (Kokkinos, 2007). Work-related stress results from a mismatch or a lack of fit between external and internal job demands and external and internal resources according to Otto (1986). Educational stress from workload, worrying about students' grades, self-expectation, and despondency were

negatively associated with social emotional learning (Jones R., 1993). Teachers struggle due to stress of performing required tasks or institutional factors, (Curry & O'Brien, 2012). As teachers battle exhaustion, so does their ability to cope and remain buoyant to the increasing social and emotional demands placed on them day in and day out which directly impacts wellbeing (Parker et al., 2012). Focusing on teacher's wellbeing is important especially if the institution wants the students' well-being (Roffey, 2012, McCallum & Price, 2010). There are very few researches about teachers' wellbeing and it remains relatively a new field (Parker et al., 2012). Factors like longer working hours and higher retirement age for both men and women, influence personal and professional lives and significantly correlate with occupational stress as well as one's work-life balance (Beauregard & Henry, 2009).

Many studies have revealed evidences of gender related behavioural, physiological and neuro-endocrinological differences in stress and coping. Quite a good number of the educated female work-force in India are teachers not by choice, but more so because of social, cultural, economic and family considerations. With the increase in the retirement age and continuity of service without a restriction to the retirement age, many Generation X teachers are still a part of workplaces, and labour forces are said to be very generationally diverse, and differ in perceptions with respect to work values. Researches have shown that people from different generations tend to differ in perceiving the concept of stress (Aydemir, Dinc, and Caglar, 2016; Cugin, 2012). Generation X and Y "work to live" (Twenge, 2010; Schweitzer, and Lyons, 2010; Aydemir, Dinc, and Caglar, 2016)

Research Question, Objective and Hypotheses

As discussed in introduction and observed in empirical literature, teachers, against the popular notion, do experience stress which may be because of many possible factors. Hence, it is beyond doubt that teaching stress is real and it has been established empirically. However, further exploring the depths of the problem, it becomes important to examine if the level of stress varies with the generational differences. The study has made an effort to examine the level of stress and compared the stress levels of teachers belonging to Generation X and Generation Y. Besides, the study has also compared stress levels of teachers on the grounds of gender and type of college viz. government and private.

Based on empirical findings, following hypotheses were formulated and tested during the course of research.

1. Generation Y teachers experience higher level of stress as compared to Generation X teachers.
2. There is no significant difference in the stress level experienced by male and female teachers.
3. There is no significant difference in the stress level experienced by teachers belonging to different colleges.

Research Methodology

The study has been conducted among teachers working in various colleges located in Chandigarh, Panchkula and Mohali. The data was collected from a sample of 217 teachers during January, 2018 based on their experiences related to teaching stress for the year 2017. Sample included 58 male and 159 female teachers. 95 teachers were from Generation X and 122 teachers were from Generation Y. The data was collected using survey method. The instrument used was scaled questionnaire adapted from Perceived Stress Measurement Scale as developed by Cohen, Kamarck, and Mermelstein in 1983. This scale was based on ten statements which were used to measure the stress level. These ten statements were as below.

Statement-1. During last year, how often have you been upset because of something happened unexpectedly?
Statement-2. During last year, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?
Statement-3. During last year, how often have you felt nervous and "stressed"?
Statement-4. During last year, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?
Statement-5. During last year, how often have you felt that things were not going your way?
Statement-6. During last year, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?
Statement-7. During last year, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?

Statement-8. During last year, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?

Statement-9. During last year, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?

Statement-10. During last year, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

Statistical Analysis and Interpretation

Data collected was analysed using summated method, whereby responses were given weightage from 1 to 5. Hence, weighted average scores were computed for each respondent. This helped in finding the level of stress among teachers. Thereafter, in order to compare stress levels of teachers based on generation, gender and type of college, Analysis of Variance has been used. Interpretation of the results is given below.

Responses of teachers have been shown in basic frequencies and percentages in table-1. It can be observed that majority of the respondent teachers have been upset because of something happened unexpectedly and they felt that they were unable to control the important things in their life so felt irritated frequently. They felt nervous and “stressed”, and seemed like things were not going their way. They felt that difficulties were piling up so high that they could not overcome them and this led them to be angry mostly. **Table-1:**

Responses to Stress related Statements

Sr.		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Total
	Weight	1	2	3	4	5	
Statement-1	Count	21	26	38	95	37	217
Sr.		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Total
	Weight	1	2	3	4	5	
	%age	10%	12%	18%	44%	17%	100%
Statement-2	Count	20	18	56	87	36	217
	%age	9%	8%	26%	40%	17%	100%
Statement-3	Count	12	19	55	93	38	217
	%age	6%	9%	25%	43%	18%	100%
Statement-4	Count	20	20	101	41	35	217
	%age	9%	9%	47%	19%	16%	100%
Statement-5	Count	16	23	41	100	37	217
	%age	7%	11%	19%	46%	17%	100%
Statement-6	Count	20	21	52	84	40	217
	%age	9%	10%	24%	39%	18%	100%
Statement-7	Count	14	27	48	80	48	217
	%age	6%	12%	22%	37%	22%	100%
Statement-8	Count	9	21	105	58	24	217
	%age	4%	10%	48%	27%	11%	100%
Statement-9	Count	23	20	48	78	48	217
	%age	11%	9%	22%	36%	22%	100%
Statement-10	Count	12	30	59	79	37	217
	%age	6%	14%	27%	36%	17%	100%

The table-2 shows the average stress level among sample teachers. It has been computed based on responses of ten statements of questionnaire. As shown in table-1, weights were assigned to each response ranging from 1 to 5. Weighted sum and weighted mean were calculated for each respondent. Thereafter, overall sum and overall mean values have been derived. On the scale of 1 to 5, it can be said that average stress level experienced by teachers during last year was sometimes to frequent.

Table-2: Average Stress Level among Teachers

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Stress Level*	217	1.90	4.30	727.00	3.3502	.47308
Valid N	217					

* Reverse Scoring has been done in case of statement no. 4 and 8 (Table-1).

Table-3 deals with comparison of male and female teachers with regards to stress level experienced. Null hypothesis in this case is that there is no significant difference between male and female teachers with regard to level of stress felt during the year 2017. Mean values show that stress levels have been closer for both the genders, though male teachers were slight higher on stress level. However, F-value has been .016 which is insignificant. Hence, it can be said that both male and female teachers have experienced similar stress level and gender is not a differentiator with respect to stress level. Hence, null hypothesis stating no significant difference between male and female teachers with regard to level of stress felt during the year 2017 stands accepted. The male teachers faced the same level of stress as their female counterparts.

Table-3: Gender and Stress Level

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	F	Sig.
Male	58	3.3569	.45964	.016	.901
Female	159	3.3478	.47930		
Total	217	3.3502	.47308		

Table-4 deals with comparison of Gen-X and Gen-Y teachers with regards to stress level. Null hypothesis in this case is that there is no significant difference between Gen-X and GenY teachers with regard to level of stress felt during the year 2017. Mean values show that stress levels have been higher in case of Gen-Y teachers. F-value has been found to be 60.89 approximately which is significant. Hence, it can be said that Gen-Y teachers have experienced higher stress level than Gen-X teachers. Hence, null hypothesis stating no significant difference between male and female teachers with regard to level of stress felt during the year 2017 stands rejected. The challenges faced by both the genders were almost similar.

Table-4: Generation and Stress Level

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	F	Sig.
Gen-X	95	3.0989	.50180	60.892	.000*
Gen-Y	122	3.5459	.34019		
Total	217	3.3502	.47308		

* Significant at 5% level of significance

Finally, table-5 presents the comparison of stress levels among teachers based on type of college they are teaching in. Three Types of policies have been covered including Government Colleges, private aided colleges which get grant in aid from the government, and finally private unaided colleges which are based on self-financing mode. It can be observed that every stress level has been experienced more by the teachers teaching in government colleges followed by private unaided colleges. Teachers in private aided colleges experienced relatively less level of stress than their counterparts.

Table-5: Type of College and Stress Level

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Government College	53	3.4075	.40376	3.883	.022*
Private Aided College	34	3.1471	.48507		
Private Unaided College	130	3.3800	.48551		
Total	217	3.3502	.47308		

* Significant at 5% level of significance

Analysis of variance results in significant differences among teachers teaching in these colleges. Null hypothesis in this case has been that there is no significant difference in the stress level experienced by teachers working in different colleges. In other words, it assumed that the type of college is not a significant factor in defining the stress level of teachers. Fvalue has been found to be significant. Hence, null hypothesis stands rejected. It leads to the finding that teachers in government colleges experience more level of stress.

Conclusion

This study has presented a significant outcome that teachers in Generation Y are experiencing higher level of stress in teaching profession whereas they counterparts from Generation X seemed to be rather comfortable. The reasons may be many like the teachers maybe having more workload or more responsibilities as compared to Generation X teachers. However, the possibility is also that Generation Y teachers, being relatively new in teaching profession are experiencing more stress and it may be phased out with experience only. From the institute point of view, steps may be taken to ease out stress from Generation Y teachers. Importantly, no significant difference of stress level has been formed based on gender of the teachers. It somehow subtly confirms gender equality in teaching profession which indeed is a good sign. Nevertheless, effort should be made to study and lessen the stress from the teachers so that they may teach more productively.

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