

A STUDY ON ACADEMIC STRESS COPING AMONG STUDENT TEACHERS AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL

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ABSTRACT: Academic stress is a common factor among university students. The performance of a student teacher mainly depends upon their psychological state of mind. Due to detrimental impact of stress on health, the student teachers adopt different coping strategies to deal with stress. In the present study the investigator intended to assess the ability of coping academic stress of student teachers at secondary school level studying in various universities in Kerala. The study also compares the ability of coping academic stress of male and female student teachers. A self-developed Academic Stress Coping Inventory was administered to 100 student teachers at secondary school level. The result showed that the student teachers have moderate ability of coping academic stress and there is no significant difference between the ability of coping academic stress of male and female student teachers at secondary school level.

Introduction

Academic stress is a common factor among university students. Stresses are the bodily processes created by circumstances that place physical or psychological demands on an individual (Selye, 1956). In teacher education programmes, especially in B.Ed; student teachers experience much stress in the period of criticism classes, preparatory stage of the teaching practice, teaching practice, practical examinations, theory examinations etc. Heavy workload due to preparation of lesson plans, preparation of teaching aids and other practical works also create stress before commencement of teaching practice who are taking the role of a teacher for the first time. The performance of a B.Ed. teacher trainee mainly depends upon their psychological state of mind.

For the individual, stress management is associated with coping strategies. Coping refers to how an individual after their appraisal of the potential harm of these stressors, or reduce the degree of damage that they will experience as a consequence of these stressors. (O Driscoll, & Cooper, 1996).

In active problem coping, when the individuals face stress, they solve their problems by looking at the centre of the problem and assist themselves or search for assistance. In active emotional coping the individuals adopt the attitude of emotional adjustment first, when faced with stress. In passive problem coping, the individuals adopt procrastinating and evasive behaviours when facing stress. Passive emotional coping points at passive situation like self-accusation, blaming God and others or giving up when the individual faces stress.

According to stress and coping theory of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) individuals are prone to psychopathological experiences primarily in the absence of healthy coping strategies.

Objectives of the Study

The present study is based on the following objectives

1. To assess the ability of coping academic stress of student teachers at secondary school level
2. To compare the ability of coping academic stress of male and female student teachers at secondary school level

Hypotheses of the Study

In view of the above objectives the investigator has formulated the following hypotheses.

1. Student teachers at secondary school level have moderate level of ability of coping academic stress
2. Male and female student teachers at secondary school level do not vary significantly in their ability of coping academic stress

Methodology

In the present study, the investigator adopted normative survey method for the collection of data. A sample of 200 student teachers at secondary school level (B.Ed.) in Kerala were selected by giving due representation to university (Mahatma Gandhi, Kerala, Calicut and Kannur) and type of institution (Government, Aided, Unaided and Centre for Professional and Advanced Studies). The sample consisted of 32 male and 16 female student teachers. An Academic Stress Coping Inventory (ASCI) prepared and standardized by the investigator was used for collection of relevant data. ASCI consisted of 40 items.

Analysis and Interpretation

For the purpose of analysis of the data, the investigator has taken the help of both the descriptive as well as inferential statistics. The mean, standard deviation and median were calculated in case of descriptive statistics and 't' test was calculated in case of differential statistics. The maximum ASCI score that can be obtained by a respondent is 160, the minimum possible score is 40 and the middle score is 100.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics Regarding Ability of Coping Academic Stress of Student Teachers at Secondary School Level

Mean	129.5
SD	16.8
Median	132.0

Table 1 shows the arithmetic mean for the total sample is 129.5 and the standard deviation is 16.8. Value of median obtained is 132 which show that 50% of student teachers had scored above 132. The statistics shows that the student teachers at secondary school level have moderate level of coping with academic stress

Table 2
Comparison of Ability of Coping Academic Stress of Male and Female Student Teachers at Secondary School level

Variables		Mean	SD	N	t	p
Gender	Male	127.5	17.2	32	0.7	0.441
	Female	129.9	16.8	168	7	

It is evident from table 2 that the female student teachers have scored higher mean value than male student teachers. The 't' value obtained is 0.77 which is not significant at 0.05 level ($t=0.77$; $p>0.05$). This shows that there is no significant difference in the coping academic stress score of male and female student teachers at secondary school level.

Conclusion

The present study was conducted to assess the ability of coping academic stress among student teachers at secondary level. When stress is continuous and pressures are intense, it is necessary to respond to stress in a positive way by using adaptive coping strategies. The study shows that there is no significant difference in the ability of coping academic stress of male and female student teachers and they have moderate level of coping academic stress. Proper guidance and counseling should be made available to the student teachers from parents, teachers and other experts in the field to create self interest and motivation to cope up academic stress.

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