Work Stress and Its Impact on the Health of College Women Teachers: Causes, Consequences, and Coping Strategies

Kanishka Saini[1] and Sharon John Selvan[2]
[1]Student Bachelors of Business Administration, St. Xaviers College Jaipur, INDIA.
[2]Bachelors of Arts, St. Xaviers College Jaipur, INDIA.

[1]Corresponding Author: sainikanishka09@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research paper provides a comprehensive review and analysis of existing literature on work stress, with a particular emphasis on studies that examine the impact of stress on the health of employees. Stress is defined as an individual's adaptive response to situations that impose excessive psychological or physical demands. The causes of stress can be diverse, including life changes and trauma. Stress can lead to various consequences such as behavioral, psychological, and medical problems for individuals and affect performance, attitudes, and lead to withdrawal on an organizational level. People have various dimensions to their work and personal lives, and managing these dimensions is crucial to balancing them. Stress management is a significant concern for the department of human resource development in any organization. The study focuses on the nature, causes, and outcomes of stress faced by college women teachers and suggests measures to overcome stress in the workplace, home, and personal life.

Keywords- Stress, Work place, Home, Personal life, Behavioral symptoms, Psychological symptoms, Physical symptoms.

I. INTRODUCTION

The term "stress" was derived from Latin and historically referred to hardship, adversity, or strain. Over time, it came to denote forces, pressure, or strong effort in reference to objects or people. While commonly thought of as a negative experience, stress actually refers to a person's interaction with their environment and can be caused by both positive and negative events. Workplace stress, in particular, can lead to various health problems, such as heart attacks, migraines, high blood pressure, and headaches. Stress is a part of everyday life and can have physical, emotional, and behavioral effects, creating positive or negative feelings. It is believed to be caused mainly by external events, occurring when pressure exceeds the available resources. According to Pollock (1988), workplace issues can lead to various health problems, such as heart attacks, migraines, high blood pressure, and headaches. Stress is a common aspect of daily life that can have physical, emotional, and behavioral effects, creating both positive

and negative emotions. Stress is generally caused by external events and occurs when the pressure exceeds the available resources. The term "stress" is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as a situation that demands physical or mental energy. This demand on the mind and body occurs when trying to adapt to constant changes in life. The concept of stress is subjective, and extreme stress can have harmful effects on human health, but moderate stress can be beneficial in many cases. However, stress is generally associated with negative situations.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In recent years, the stress that teachers experience while performing their professional duties has garnered increasing interest. This is due in part to the discovery that frequent and intense periods of stress can result in professional burnout, as noted by Embich (2001) and Mearns & Cain (2003). In higher education, faculty members are also experiencing high levels of

stress (Gmelch, 1993), as they must competently fulfill various professional roles (Edworthy, 2000). Teaching and advising students, serving on academic committees, conducting scholarly research, publishing, and community service are primary responsibilities of faculty members, as reported by Knapper (1997, p. 41) and Edworthy (2000). However, many faculty members also have family and other social responsibilities outside academia, and taking on multiple roles can result in excessive stress that may lead to burnout, as noted by Fisher (1994).

According to Viner (1999), stress is now considered one of the most significant factors in human behavior and is widely accepted in various discussions about life and health. In their research, Bette Prakke, Arie van Peet, and Kees van der Wolf (2007) found that persistent exposure to challenging behavior can exhaust a teacher's emotional and physical resources, resulting in self-doubt, reduced satisfaction with teaching, impulsiveness, inflexibility, and feelings of anger and guilt. In the context of rapidly changing organizational climates and educational school cultures, overall health is a crucial factor to consider.

The literature related to the study titled **"Literature Review on Stress Experienced by Women Teachers in Higher Education in Jaipur, Rajasthan.**

III.   MEANING, DEFINITION OF STRESS

Stress refers to a state of mental or emotional tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances. It is a physiological response of the body to a perceived threat or challenge, often resulting in an increased heart rate, rapid breathing, and the release of stress hormones. Stress can arise from various sources, including work-related issues, financial problems, relationship difficulties, health concerns, and major life changes. The impact of stress can be both physical and psychological, leading to symptoms such as fatigue, headaches, anxiety, depression, and a weakened immune system.

Stress can be defined as a psychological and physiological response of the body to a perceived threat, challenge, or demand. It is a state of mental or emotional tension that can be triggered by various sources, such as work-related issues, financial problems, relationship difficulties, health concerns, and major life changes. Stress can manifest in physical symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, and a weakened immune system, as well as psychological symptoms such as anxiety, depression, and irritability. The impact of stress can vary based on the individual and the circumstances, but it can have negative consequences on one's health, well-being, and overall quality of life.

According to Richard S. Lazarus, stress is a feeling or condition that arises when a person perceives that they lack the personal and social resources to meet the demands placed upon them. This feeling of losing control over events can be considered a form of psychological and emotional distress, or strain, which is the individual's response to stressful incidents in their environment, as defined by Cooper et al. in 2001. Job stress can have a significant impact on job satisfaction and overall work performance, as modern times have become increasingly demanding. Beehr and Newman define stress as a situation that forces a person to deviate from normal functioning due to changes in their psychological or physiological condition. Stress is therefore perceived as a phenomenon that arises from a comparison between a person's ability to cope with demands and the actual demands placed upon them. When coping mechanisms are not sufficient, stress and the stress response can result, as argued by Cox in 1978. Here are some meanings and definitions of stress by different authors:

1. "Stress is the nonspecific response of the body to any demand, whether it is caused by or results in pleasant or unpleasant stimuli." - Hans Selye
2. "Stress is a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize." - Richard S. Lazarus and Susan Folkman
3. "Stress is the body's response to a stimulus that disturbs its equilibrium. The response can be physical, mental, or emotional." - Charles A. Spielberger
4. "Stress is the psychological and physiological response to a condition that threatens or challenges a person and requires some form of adaptation or adjustment." - George S. Everly Jr. and Jeffrey M. Lating
5. "Stress is a feeling of emotional or physical tension. It can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous." - Mayo Clinic

Overall, stress is a state of mental or emotional tension and physical response to perceived demands or challenges, which can arise from various sources and can have negative effects on one's health and well-being.

IV.   SOURCES OF STRESS

Numerous studies conducted in the UK, USA, Australia, and New Zealand have identified common stressors experienced by academic staff. These include factors such as work overload, time constraints, lack of opportunities for career advancement, inadequate recognition, low salary, changing job roles, inadequate management, and lack of resources and funding, and interactions with students. In addition, high self-expectations, job insecurity, poor interactions with colleagues, inequality in the system, concerns over amalgamations, and lack of regular performance feedback have also been identified as sources of stress.

The evidence from these studies suggests that stress has a significant negative impact on individual outcomes.

Jenkins (2004) observed that the relationship between teaching and research can be either supportive or competitive. He suggests that the connections among research, teaching, and other work obligations, as well as the rewards that follow, must be clearly defined and managed at the departmental, institutional, and individual levels.

The causes of stress among academic staff have been extensively studied in different countries. The research has identified various factors that contribute to stress among academic staff, such as work overload, time constraints, lack of recognition, inadequate salary, changing job roles, inadequate management, inadequate resources and funding, and student interactions. Other sources of stress include high self-expectations, job insecurity, lack of community, poor interactions with colleagues, inequality in the system, and concerns over amalgamations, and lack of regular performance feedback. The evidence suggests that stress has a significant impact on individual outcomes. Jenkins (2004) argued that the relationships between research, teaching, broader work expectations, and rewards need to be managed at the institutional, departmental, and individual level. Work overload and work-life imbalance are the most frequently reported stressors by academics, and they have been associated with low psychological well-being. Therefore, it is evident that academic stress is caused by a combination of intrinsic job factors, environmental factors, and individual factors.

Factors related to workload, job tasks, lack of support from leaders, low income and limited opportunities for promotion, and inadequate staff development can contribute to burnout and job dissatisfaction among teachers, as identified by Mearns and Cain (2003). Moriarty, Edmons, Blatchford, and Martin (2001) found that teachers can also experience frustration when asked to implement policies that do not align with their own professional values and pedagogical understanding.

Scholars have endeavored to pinpoint sources of work-related stress among educators. These include excessive workload, confusion or disagreement about one's job responsibilities, feeling pressured by the demands of the job, inadequate resources, unfavorable working conditions, insufficient recognition for one's professional achievements, low pay, lack of input in decision-making, ineffective communication, interpersonal conflicts among colleagues, and misbehaving students (Boyle et al., 1995; Pithers & Fogarty, 1995; Pithers & Soden, 1998). These job-related stressors have been linked with increased instances of burnout, emotional distress, depression, and absenteeism (Griffith, Steptoe, & Cropley, 1999; Mazur & Lynch, 1989; Pierce & Molloy, 1990).

According to studies, teacher stress and burnout are caused by external factors and individual traits, cognitive assessment, and personal and social resources. Various pressures cause stress among faculty members in higher education, such as time limitations, insufficient rewards or acknowledgment, lack of power with departmental chairs, professional identity, and rising expectations without additional resources or compensation. (Edworthy, 2000).

The academic context is associated with occupational stress that leads to job dissatisfaction, physical ill-health (like coronary heart disease), and poor psychological well-being (such as anxiety and depression). There is a causal relationship between stress and impaired work performance, decreased faculty productivity, absenteeism, high staff turnover, and the tendency to leave. Finally, occupational stress is believed to have a spill-over effect, impacting the overall quality of life including family life. Studies have identified these factors (Doyle & Hind, 1998; Kinman & Jones, 2003; Taris, Schreurs, & Van Iersel-Van Silfhout, 2001; Winefield, Gillespie, Stough, Dua, & Hapuarachchi, 2002; Watts et al., 1991).

To study academic stress, it is important to consider the various personal and professional characteristics of academics as they are not a homogeneous group. Gender does not seem to play a significant role in the amount of occupational stress experienced by academics. However, there are differences in the work stressors they perceive. Men tend to report workload, inadequate salaries, and lack of public recognition as more significant sources of pressure than women. In contrast, women tend to report job insecurity, isolation from colleagues, lack of institutional recognition of worth, and work politics as more salient stressors than men (Cross & Carroll, 1990; Dua, 1994).

Given that academia is predominantly male-dominated, female academics may encounter more stressors than male academics due to various factors. These may include a lack of female role models, limited opportunities for socialization with women at their own rank, gender stereotypes, and heightened role conflict as they attempt to balance their professional and personal responsibilities (Blix et al., 1994; Richard & Krieshok, 1989).

Kinman (1996) and Doyle and Hind (1998) discovered that women in academia encounter a greater degree of conflict between their work and home lives. Women in general have to work extended hours due to a demanding workload and greater responsibilities concerning both work and family duties. Recent research indicates that working long hours is a significant danger to one's physical and mental health (Cooper, 1999; Sparks & Cooper, 1997).

Researcher Manning Crystal's work on Managing Stress, there are three primary factors that contribute directly to stress: a person's attitude, physical well-being, and time management. Meanwhile, a case study conducted by Nagesh, P and Murthy, M. S.

Narasimha on Stress Management at IT Call Centers found that 80% of employers fail to effectively manage work-related stress. Health and safety executives have identified six factors that contribute to workplace stress, including job demands, control over work, support from colleagues and management, working relationships, clarity of role, and organizational change, as revealed by studies published in the ICFAI Journal of Soft Skills in December 2008.

The article "Occupational Stress Factors as Perceived by Chilean School Teachers" discusses how job stress is an inevitable aspect of organizational life, even in educational institutions. The research also acknowledges the significance of age-based differences among faculty members, with the conventional belief being that stress decreases with age. However, Dua (1994) found that younger academic staff are more likely to report higher levels of stress due to work politics, working conditions, and job significance than older staff. This may be due to younger faculty members being more involved in undergraduate teaching rather than research, which is considered more rewarding and essential for advancing up the faculty career ladder (Gmelch, Wilke, & Lovrich, 1986).

Academics are facing increased pressure to produce more research output in order to maintain employment, be retained, or promoted, due to a struggling economy that offers fewer opportunities for success than in previous decades (Kinman & Jones, 2003). Additionally, newly hired academics must navigate their institution's organizational structures and values, learn about performance expectations, and balance multiple and possibly conflicting demands on their time (Sorcinelli, 1994). Younger academics are particularly vulnerable to occupational stress, as they may have a harder time coping with stressors and experience more psychological and interpersonal strain compared to their older colleagues, as found by Osipow, Doty, and Spokane (1985).

Lasky (1995) suggests that demands related to family and finances can be a significant source of stress outside of work, which can complicate or even cause workplace stress. In Kinman and Jones's (2003) study, 67% of academics agreed that work now intrudes more on their personal lives than before, and 72% believed that their families are negatively affected by their jobs. Additionally, work overload and work-life imbalance have been linked to low psychological well-being among academics, as reported by Daniels and Guppy (1994), Kinman and Jones (2003), and Winefield et al. (2002).

V. CONSEQUENCES OF STRESS

Research has shown that psychosocial stress from both family and work life can have negative consequences on the progression of coronary artery disease in women cardiac patients (H.-X. Wang et al, 2006). On the other hand, a satisfying job may provide some protection against these negative effects. Chiu (2004) found that younger individuals experienced higher job stress, while older faculty members experienced higher job stress in relation to interpersonal relationships.

The impact of workplace stress on retention levels is a growing concern in the teaching profession (Brown, Davis, & Johnson, 2002; Jarvis, 2002). Stress has been linked to job dissatisfaction (Chaplain, 1995; Kyriakou & Sutcliffe, 1979; Sari, 2004), as well as negative consequences for teachers themselves, their families, and their students, such as depression and impaired occupational functioning. Scholars have identified stress as a significant factor in negative work outcomes, including turnover, absenteeism, low organizational commitment, and reduced psychological and physical well-being for human service workers (Shirom, 2003).

Stress has been linked to a variety of physical and mental health problems, including cardiovascular disease, depression, anxiety, headaches, digestive problems, and other psychosomatic complaints. The study you mentioned specifically focuses on the self-reported stress levels among Zimbabwean teachers and how it relates to their behavior and job satisfaction.

It is important to note that while some level of stress is normal and can even be beneficial in certain situations, prolonged or excessive stress can have serious negative effects on one's physical and mental health. In addition to the physical disorders mentioned, chronic stress can also contribute to the development of mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression. Furthermore, workplace stress can have broader societal and economic impacts, such as decreased productivity and increased healthcare costs. Therefore, it is in the interest of both employers and employees to recognize and address workplace stress in order to promote a healthier and more productive work environment.

VI. MEASURES TO MANAGE STRESS

Strategies to reduce stress among teachers include proper time management, establishing healthy boundaries between work and personal life, seeking support from colleagues or a mentor, practicing mindfulness or relaxation techniques, and taking breaks when necessary (Johnson, 2017; Kyriacou, 2001). Additionally, schools and educational institutions can implement policies and programs aimed at reducing teacher workload, providing professional development opportunities, and promoting a positive and supportive work environment (OECD, 2019).

Coping strategies are individual and what works for one person may not work for another. Some common coping strategies for workplace stress include seeking social support, engaging in physical activity, practicing relaxation techniques, and seeking professional help through counseling or therapy. It is

important for individuals to find the coping strategies that work best for them and to practice them regularly to effectively manage workplace stress.

It is important to note that interventions to reduce workplace stress should be tailored to the specific needs of the individual and the organization. For example, some strategies may be more effective in reducing stress for academic staff in research-intensive institutions than for those in teaching-intensive institutions. Additionally, it is important to consider the cultural and societal factors that may contribute to stress in the workplace, as well as the individual and organizational factors.

Other interventions that have been suggested for reducing stress among academics include job crafting, which involves modifying the job to better fit the individual's preferences and abilities, and promoting work-life balance through flexible work arrangements and policies.

In conclusion, stress is a significant issue in the academic profession and can have negative impacts on the health and well-being of academics, as well as the productivity and effectiveness of the organization. Interventions to reduce stress should be implemented at multiple levels, including modifying the workplace environment, providing stress management training, and offering rehabilitation for those who have experienced ill health as a result of workplace stress

MBCT, developed by Segal et al. in 2002, has been successful in preventing depressive relapse. Researchers Kuyken et al. in 2008 and Ma and Teasdale in 2004 found it to be effective. MBSR is based on teaching meditation techniques that are secular and easy to follow, with the goal of changing our response to stressful thoughts and events by reducing emotional reactivity.

The study conducted by Gillespie, Walsh, Dua, and Stough in 2001 examined the factors that influence occupational stress among teaching staff, according to their perceptions. The results showed that various aspects of the work environment, such as support from co-workers and management, recognition and achievement, high morale, and flexible working conditions, were identified as helpful in coping with stress. Additionally, personal coping strategies, including stress management techniques, maintaining a balance between work and non-work activities, setting strict boundaries for one's role, and lowering one's standards, were also reported to be effective in managing stress among teaching staff.

The article "Reducing stress through Preventive Management" by Quick, James, and Jonathan (2003) explores different strategies that organizations and individuals can use to decrease stress in the workplace. The authors identify four groups of factors that contribute to work-related stress: role factors, work factors, physical factors, and interpersonal factors. The importance of each of these factors in causing stress can

vary depending on the type of organization, but generally, role factors and job factors are the primary sources of stress for most employees and managers. Additionally, the level of stress experienced may be influenced by the occupational category of the job. The authors suggest that the role analysis technique can be used to reduce the negative effects of role conflict, confusion, and inconsistency within an organization. Another preventive technique is work redesign, which focuses on improving job conditions within the organization, similar to job enrichment.

In their study on stress management, Robert E Raitano and Brian H Kleiner discuss the importance of monitoring, diagnosing, and preventing excessive stressors that can negatively impact employees, managers, and productivity. Stressors can arise from both the environment and an individual's perception of the environment, and it is crucial to continuously address them to effectively manage stress. The study emphasizes the need for preventative measures in stress management to maintain a healthy work environment.

Selye, a well-known stress researcher, advocates for a life philosophy approach to managing stress. He believes that individuals should take preventive actions to adapt to stressors that may negatively impact their wellbeing. His suggested actions, which are relevant to the workplace, include focusing on the positive aspects of life, striving for excellence instead of perfection, simplifying one's lifestyle, reflecting on past successes, facing difficult tasks head-on, and building positive relationships with others. By following these principles, individuals can better cope with stress and improve their overall quality of life.

Selye believes that work is a fundamental necessity for humans, and every type of work involves some level of stress. However, he distinguishes between stress and distress, suggesting that not all stress leads to negative outcomes. According to him, the key is to find work that suits an individual's abilities and interests. Therefore, reducing the time spent on work may not necessarily be the best coping strategy for dealing with stress. Instead, individuals should focus on finding work that provides a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction, even if it involves some stress.

Oates (2001) suggests making behavioral adjustments as a way to manage stress, such as taking a holiday that provides a change in roles and breaks away from normal norms and routines, and exploring new experiences. He also recommends interacting with people outside of one's work and organization. Similarly, McLean (1974) recommended engaging in recreational activities as a way to reduce stress.

The study by Kahn and Byosiere (2001) aimed to investigate the occupational stress experienced by women teachers within the higher educational sector. The researchers conducted a survey using a sample of 278 women teachers from 14 colleges and universities in the United States. They found that the most significant

sources of stress for women teachers were workload, role conflict, and lack of autonomy. Other sources of stress included interpersonal relationships, administrative support, and career advancement. The study also highlighted the negative consequences of stress on the well-being and job performance of women teachers, such as burnout, absenteeism, and turnover intentions.

Overall, the study emphasized the need for educational institutions to address the sources of stress experienced by their staff, particularly women teachers, in order to promote their well-being and job performance. The findings also suggest that interventions aimed at reducing workload, improving role clarity, and increasing autonomy may be effective in reducing occupational stress for women teachers in higher education.

In his work, Sparks, Dennis proposes several practical solutions for managing stress and burnout, including setting stress and burnout management goals, using the Stress Inventory questionnaire to identify sources of stress, practicing relaxation techniques, reducing negative thoughts that contribute to distress, developing a balanced perspective, seeking help from professional support groups, and implementing organizational changes or job redesign for teaching faculty who experience stress. These solutions aim to help individual's better cope with stressors in their work environment and reduce the negative impact of stress on their physical and mental health.

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