

Job Stress: A comparative study of male and female university Teachers of Punjab

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Abstract

Stress is a major factor impacting the performance of teaching faculty and it is important for educational institutions to adopt relevant stress coping strategies to enhance job productivity. The purpose of the study is to analyze the job stress prevalent among male and female university teachers in Punjab. The data for the study was collected from university teachers of Punjab, using a questionnaire in which both the genders were included in the same proportion. The data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and t-test. Some major considerations for conducting the analysis were the quality level of the students in the university, the working environment of the university, work expectations, availability of time and salary structure. The findings of the study reveal that there is a significant difference in job stress among male and female teachers working in universities of Punjab. The analysis of the mean scores of male and female teachers indicate that the major reasons for stress were the assignment of responsibility of the weak students, departmental politics, and lack of clarity in expectations from juniors by the seniors.

Keywords:- Job stress, gender, male and female, university teachers, Punjab

Introduction

Stress is a state of intense strain and pressure in the mind, derived from the word "Stringere," which refers to "Draw Tight" (Hayward, 2005). Canon (1929) was one of the first persons to have used the term stress. He explained stress is a psychological and physiological mechanism (Sharma, 2017). The concept of stress is said to have been introduced by Hans Selye in Life Sciences (Selye, 1936). World Health Organization (2023) define stress as the stage of worry or mental tension arising out of a tough situation. Several signs can help in the recognition of stress such as experiencing headaches, anxiety, a state of depression and other health-related challenges. Different people may respond differently to stress depending upon their coping style and ability to bear stress. The profession of teaching is regarded as one of the most stressful occupations. Stress infers the feeling of physical and emotional tension. Job stress is said to occur when teachers perceive their efforts are not rewarded as per their potential. Job stress leads to several health issues. If unattended, a teacher is likely to undergo unpleasant emotions such as anger, anxiety, frustration as well as depression. The increasing level of consciousness in the education domain has widened the competition and stress levels among teachers (Bodiwala & Chaithani, 2020).

Literature Review

Bharti (2018) conducted a study to find out the stress levels of teaching staff with special reference to the gender of the employee and college management. Primary study was conducted among both male as well as female college teachers. A Hindi version of the stress scale developed by Bhatt in 1992 was used in studying the stress related to the organisational role. The study revealed that gender had been a discriminating factor impacting job stress among faculty members. A significant difference was found in the perception of organisational role-related stress in male and female teaching faculty. On the other hand, it was found that college management had no direct impact on the stress levels of teachers.

Panda & Chettri (2019) investigated the role of gender differences in perceiving occupational stress among the teachers at government colleges in Sikkim. Non-random sampling method was used to collect the data from the respondents. The results of the study revealed that there was not much difference between stress levels based on gender. However, the study mentioned that both male and female teachers in government colleges experience stress due to factors like peer group pressures, lack of audit work, socio-economic status, and personal factors. The study also recommended that colleges should consider stress as a major concern and redesign the jobs to reduce work-related stress among teachers.

Valkov & Peeva (2020) conducted a study to determine how perceived stress levels of university teachers get influenced by factors such as age, marital status, sex, and teaching experience. As per the study, no significant relationship existed between demographic factors and job stress. The study revealed that lack of availability of resources, lack of recognition, and overtime working hours were the major causes of stress among teachers irrespective of age, gender and marital status.

It was recommended that universities should hold stress management events and courses for the teachers to help them in coping with workplace stress.

Florez et al. (2020) analysed the differences in the levels of stress and burnout among male and female university teachers in Spain. The research was carried out using the cross-sectional method, and various factors, such as differences in gender, mind-set, and nutrition consumption were taken into account while framing the questionnaire. Data was collected from 470 Spanish university teachers. The findings of the study revealed that work-related anxiety was found more among female teachers than among male teachers due to variance in coping with emotions, diet intake, and physical activities. The results showed that female lecturers, less involved in entertainment and sports were more prone to stress than their male counterparts. The research recommended that universities should intervene and develop disciplinary programmes to control burnout or stress-related factors among the university staff.

Solanki & Mandaviya (2021) conducted a study to find out the difference in perceived stress levels based on gender. The study indicated that females experienced high levels of stress in managing work-life balance. It resulted in stronger work detachment. The male participants were reported to have health-related concerns compared to female teachers on account of job stress as well as work-life imbalance. Furthermore, female teachers were reported to lower-level career resilience on account of female responsibilities and characteristics.

Patel & Prajapati (2021) examined the job stress of teachers in Gujarat by conducting a review of available teachers. The study indicated that there exists a relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and female teachers' burnout. Lack of job description, lack of time, lack of autonomy and lack of creativity were reported to have high levels of stress. Self-efficacy plays a significant role in the job stress of female teachers. A prolonged level of stress among females takes a negative toll on the mental health of the person in the long run.

Kreuzfeld & Seibt (2022) conducted a study to determine the factors leading to early retirement among the male and female faculties in Punjab. The study found that there were significant differences in handling of stress among the male and female teachers. Furthermore, female teachers reported increased occupational stress levels specifically dealing with colleagues and students. Increased level of emotional exhaustion and workload, led to a high level of stress among the female teachers in comparison to the male counterparts.

Agyapong et.al (2022) described that stress is one of the persistent issues among teachers. The study indicated that female teachers were reported to experience higher burnout in comparison male teachers. Socio-economic determinants which included sex, age, work associated factors also played a role in impacting the stress. Similarly, emotional exhaustion is associated with gender, age and marital status. Working women have extended demands at home and also striving to fulfil both the roles increased their level of stress. Other than that, interpersonal conflict, higher workload, and organizational conflicts were found to be other major reasons for stress among teachers.

Relevance of the study

There are significant disparities between male and female in terms of source of job stress. The present study attempts to analyse whether or not there exists a significant difference in job stress based on gender in university teachers of Punjab.

Research Gap

The review of existing literature indicated that there exists numerous research that show differences in stress levels among university teachers on the basis of gender, age, experience, nutrition consumption, mindset, and other associated factors. However, there has not been much research conducted to acknowledge the impact of gender-based differences on job stress in context of Punjab region. The study has majorly focused on covering the impact of workplace stressors such as curriculum structure, the quality level of the university, university administration, work expectations, salary structure, responsibility of weak students, lack of clarity in expectations from juniors by the seniors and departmental politics.

Objective of the Study

To analyze the job stress present among the male and female faculty working in the universities of Punjab

Hypotheses

H₀: There is no significant difference between the job stress among the male and female teachers working in the universities of Punjab.

H_a: There is significant difference between the job stress among the male and female teachers working in the universities of Punjab.

Significance Level = 0.05

Research Methodology

This study makes use of descriptive research where the focus has been on the collection of primary data using questionnaire to collect relevant data as per the objective of the study. A five-rating Likert scale was to collect the responses.

The universities were selected on the basis of National Institute Ranking Framework (2023 Ranking). The NIRF ranking is recognised as a benchmark to access the performance and quality of an institute. Four top ranked universities of Punjab i.e. two Government and two Private Universities were selected from the list of Top 100 Ranked Universities of India. The private universities selected for the study were Chandigarh University (rank-27) and Lovely Professional University (rank-38) as per the above criteria. The government universities selected for the study were Guru Nanak Dev University (rank-48) and Central University of Punjab (rank-100) on similar basis (NIRF, 2023).

The sample size consisted of 100 male and female university teachers, with an equal proportion by using a 5-point Likert scale. The respondents with a teaching experience of at least two years were selected based on convenient and purposive sampling.

Validity and Construction of Questionnaire

Validity infers the instrument's ability to assess what it is intended to assess (Taherdoost, 2016). To assess the validity of the questions, content validity was used where experts' opinions in this field were used to validate the questions. The items in the questionnaire were based on the scale designed by Singh & Srivastava (1981).

Data Analysis Methods

To find the significant difference between the job stress among the male and female teachers working in the universities of Punjab, mean, standard deviation and t-test were performed using SPSS to compare the scores of job stress of male and female university teachers.

Results and Variables of the study

The male and female teachers working in government and private universities were compared on the basis of 14 job stress statements enquired in the questionnaire. The findings of the analysis have been summarized in the given table.

Table 1 Statistical Analysis (t-test, Mean and Standard Deviation) of Male and Female University Teachers

S.no	Statements	Mean		SD		t-test	p-value*
		Male	Female	Male	Female		
1	Curriculum based on Ancient Ideology.	2.32	2.22	1.133	1.234	19.247	.000
2	The Quality Level of the University is satisfactory.	1.9	2.16	0.678	0.71	28.881	.000
3	University Administration is impartial.	2.66	2.66	1.319	1.206	21.16	.000
4	Vice-chancellor believes open door policy.	2.12	2.16	0.94	0.997	22.194	.000
5	Weak students' responsibility is imposed.	3.16	2.96	1.201	1.029	27.382	.000
6	Lack of Clarity in Expectations from Juniors by the Senior.	2.92	2.5	1.14	1.111	23.778	.000
7	Department is free from politics.	2.92	2.58	1.192	1.144	23.398	.000
8	Annual increment system is suitable.	2.68	2.66	1.22	1.189	22.285	.000
9	Salary offered is as per experience.	2.54	2.68	1.147	1.236	21.964	.000
10	Salary offered is as per qualification.	2.34	2.36	1.022	1.12	22.021	.000
11	Time Available for Family Obligation	2.52	2.48	0.931	1.129	24.275	.000
12	Enough Time Available for Maintaining Social Contact	2.8	2.6	1.03	1.088	25.499	.000
13	Sufficient Time Available for Own Self	2.68	2.62	1.039	0.923	27.088	.000
14	Sufficient Time for Academic Research and Publications	2.74	2.64	1.157	0.942	25.591	.000

The **mean score of male teachers was higher than female teachers** in case of curriculum structure, responsibility of weak students, lack of clarity in expectations from juniors by the seniors, departmental politics, sufficient time available for own self, academic research and publications. However, the **mean score was same** in case of 'university administration is impartial' and **almost same** in case of 'vice-chancellor believes open door policy, annual increment system is suitable, salary offered is as per qualification, time available for family obligation and enough time available for maintaining social contact.' The **mean score of female teachers was higher than male teachers** in case of 'quality level of the university is satisfactory and salary offered in terms of experience.'

To determine the overall difference of stress between the male and female respondents on the basis of t-test, the calculated significance value for all the 14 statements comes out to be 0.000 which is less than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, this evidence is statistically significant to reject the null hypothesis. It indicates **there is a significant difference in stress levels among university teachers based on gender**. However, the relevance of job stress is different for males and females on the basis of diverse items.

The analysis of mean scores indicates that the mean score of assignment of weak students' responsibility, departmental politics, and lack of clarity in expectations from juniors by the seniors **were reported to be the highest among both the genders**, on account of these academic related stress, it decreases their motivation and are likely to increase employee turnover and mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, etc.

Conclusion

It can be concluded from the study that there are significant differences in the perceived level of stress among the male and female teachers working in the universities of Punjab. Also, the impact of stress is different on the performance of male and female teachers. The analysis of the mean scores of male and female teachers indicate that the major reasons for stress among both include the assignment of responsibility of the weak students, departmental politics, and lack of clarity in expectations from juniors by the seniors. Based on research as stress is prevalent in both the male and female teachers. As per the different studies conducted by Meharunisa (2019), Alboliteh (2019) Adasi et al. (2020), Annapurna & Latha (2020), it was suggested that stress coping mechanism is required for the management of stress in maintaining work-life balance. Hence, it is important for the teachers as well as the educational institutions to adopt relevant stress management strategies or measures in order to cope with stress.

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