

Work-Related Stress among Teacher-Educators: Evidence from Punjab

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The purpose of the study was to assess the work-related stress as perceived by teacher-educators of Government Colleges of Elementary Teachers in the Punjab province. The sample was 128 teacher-educators (subject specialists and senior subject specialists) of twelve Government Colleges of Elementary Teachers in affiliation with the University of Education, Lahore. Based upon their view of related literature and the researcher's own observations and experiences as a teacher-educator, an instrument of data collection was developed on the 5-point Likert scale comprised of 40 items (stressors) to assess work-related stress concerning teacher-educators. The findings revealed that all participants of the study were under work-related stress to some extent. The major job stressors included the absence of medical facilities at the campus; nonavailability of prescribed books, computer, and internet facilities; students' poor academic background; absence of adequate office facilities; excessive official paperwork; lack of opportunities for professional development; lack of proficiency in English; little time to relax during the day; and overcrowded classes. Future implications of the study were also discussed.

Keywords. Work-related stress, stressor, teacher, educator

Stress affects a person in every sphere of life, be it work, home, or interpersonal relationships. All jobs cause stress of varying degree and the phenomenon is becoming a growing concern at global level. In work scenarios related to human services, such as teaching and health sector, the jobs share many stressors which are inherent in other jobs, but also "present some other unique to client work, which is derive from intense involvement in the lives of others, which requires caring commitment and empathic responding" (Koeske, Kirk, &

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Koeske, 1993, p. 319). Helping professions, such as teaching, are generally more stressful than other occupations (Murray-Harvey, 1999). At global level it has been well established that teachers are suffering high level of stress. A wide survey on teachers' work-related stress, carried out by the European Trade Union Committee for Education in 27 countries of Europe, found that "teachers are among the professions reporting the highest level of work-related stress" (Billehoj, 2007, p. 3). Pine, Aronson, and Kafry (1981) pointed out that stress is a much serious and frequent problem among teachers than other professions, because, not only teaching is an emotionally strenuous and challenging job; it is also the fact that teachers' work is woven around clients (students, parents, community). According to Wilson (2002), the impact of teachers' stress can be wide-ranging, not only on the teacher as individual, but also on the school as an organization, and most importantly on the students.

Another area of concern is the economic side of this impact such as the "lost teaching time and additional costs of replacement teachers" (Wilson, 2002, p. 11). As asserted by Olivier and Venter (2003), "stress is currently a phenomenon that must be recognized and addressed in various professions, because of the complexity of present-day society, and the teaching profession is no exception" (p. 186). Farber (1991) rightly calls teacher stress as a *crisis in education*, which needs immediate attention of everyone involved with the education system. The present study is an attempt to explore the phenomenon of work-related stress with specific focus on teacher-educators, thus, differing from previous research work which is conducted mostly at school teachers, in general. The results of the study might be useful for educational planners to improve the workplace environment in teacher-education institutions, thus, ensuring a good teaching experience for teacher-educators, as well as a good learning environment for prospective teachers.

In literature, work-related stress has been defined in diverse ways. Some experts have defined it as the cause or stimulus (Fontana & Abouserie, 1993); some highlight it as the effect or response (Selye, 1985); while some have explained it on a broader canvas as a combination of interlaced factors (Grant, Ali, Thorsen, Dei, & Kathryn, 1995). As noted by Fontana and Abouserie (1993), stress definitions range from single words, for example, tension or pressure or burden to more multifarious explanations in physiological and psychological perspectives (Murray-Harvey, 1999). Selye (1985) illumined the conceptual landscape and contributed significantly to the body of literature regarding stress. Further, identified stress as the nonspecific response of the body to any demand, whether it is caused

by, or results in, pleasant or unpleasant conditions. Stress as such is all-inclusive, embodying both the positive and the negative aspects of these concepts (Selye, 1985). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) described stress as a sort of connection between a person and the environment such that when the person perceives a situation as taxing, it results in physical/emotional reaction. This notion of stress in the environment context is also acknowledged by Gold and Roth (1993) as disequilibrium state of an individual. Selye (1985) further elaborated the concept of stress by differentiating between positive (or good) and negative (or bad) stress. As viewed by Olivier and Venter (2003, p. 186), examples of eustress might be “an opportunity, a promotion, a challenge” while, examples of distress (negative/bad stress) are anxiety, worry, frustration, disappointment, which might lead to discomfort. This notion of two sides of stress is endorsed by Gold and Roth (1993), as it depends upon the individual’s interpretations of the stressor that determines whether the response or result will be positive or negative.

Teachers’ Work-Related Stress

Stress in the workplace is a critical concern not only for the well-being of individuals working in any organization, but to the overall performance and productivity of that organization (Leonard, Bourke, & Schofield, 2000). Work-related stress can be comprehended as the ability of an individual to cope with the workplace demands (Love & Irani, 2007). In view of Berg (1994), work-related stress involves a “subtle but progressive erosion of behavior, attitude, health, and spirit that eventually inhibits an individual's ability to function effectively at work” (p. 185). A job stressor, according to Beehr and Franz (1987), is some unpleasant incident in the workplace that leads to stress. Sutherland and Cooper (1988) categorized job stressors into six areas that is, intrinsic job factors (such as climate, workplace-design, light); task-related factors (such as workload, time management, modern technology like computer and internet), the role of the individual (such as role ambiguity, conflicts), interpersonal aspects (with the administration, colleagues, and other staff); professional development (promotion matters, learning, and grooming opportunities), and organizational climate (autonomy, decision-making powers, centralized or decentralized structure).

Teacher stress can be described as an interactive process in which the excessive and ever changing demands being placed on teachers might lead to “physiological and psychological distress”

(Forlin, Hattie, & Douglas, 1996, p. 203). In the context of teaching, the classroom, staffroom, and the whole organizational culture can be seen as the immediate environment of the teacher and the interaction is of ever-changing nature.

There are a variety of stressors inherent in the teaching profession. According to Forlin et al. (1996), three types of potential teacher stressors have been mentioned frequently in the literature: Administrative, classroom, and personal stressors. Litt and Turk (1985) argued that the role teachers perceived for themselves and the school climate, particularly, the relationship with administrators, may be extremely important in predicting job stress. Tsai, Fung, and Chow (2006) found lack of proper time-management is a major stressor for teachers. Kyriacou and Chien (2004) reported that shifting education policies of government and heavy workload are the two major causes of stress for teachers.

Moreover, Abel and Sewell (1999) found “pupils’ misbehavior and time pressures” as the highest stressors (p. 287). Discipline problems, lack of motivation on the part of pupils, and large class sizes are some of the contributors to teacher stress (Olivier & Venter, 2003). In another study, excessive paperwork, meeting deadlines, and overtime work turned out to be the highest ranking job stressors among American teachers (Torres, Lawver, & Lambert, 2009). In an in-depth qualitative study of British teachers, Brown, Ralph, and Brember (2002) found eight factors to be the causes of teacher stress. These included teacher-pupil relations (lack of discipline, class size), relations with colleagues (uneven workload distribution, poor communication and relations), relations with parents/community (parent pressure, the media not portraying a good picture of teachers), innovation/change (lack of resources/facilities, parallel diverse roles), school management (no part in decision-making, bad management, no training opportunities, excessive paperwork, limited opportunities for professional advancement), time factors (extra work, overtime, too many meetings, increased assessment load), school environment (such as overcrowded classes, poorly managed building, lack of cleanliness), and personal perceptions/feelings (no time to relax, feeling undervalued, no encouragement, bullying from management and colleagues).

In another qualitative research, Shernoff, Mehta, Atkins, Torf, and Spencer (2011) spotted lack of resources (basic supplies such as books, not enough security; no medical aid), excessive workload (covering the whole curriculum is difficult in the allotted time), and poor school organization as prominent sources of stress for teachers. Billehoj (2007) found workload, role overload, large class size,

students' behavior, poor school administration, lack of resources, bad school climate, and teachers' low social status as the prime causes of stress. In another study, the imbalance in work-life and the work-overload were found to be the key stressors (Phillips, Sen, & McNamee, 2007).

A study in India revealed that "the occupational factors that cause stress are fatigue due to long hours of teaching, heavy workload, overcrowded classrooms, less salary, and clerical work" (Holeyannavar & Itagi, 2012, p. 30). Chan, Chen, and Chong (2010) reported that "heavy workload, time pressure, education reforms, external school review, pursuing further education, and managing students' behaviour and learning were the most frequently reported sources of work stress" (p. 1). Farber (1991) claims that, apart from workplace stressors, teachers are under stress due to some public attitudes as well such as the fading out of respect for teachers in society; critics always aiming at teachers for problems in the education system; and the role of media in painting a depressing portrait of teachers and teaching.

Teachers' Work-Related Stress in Pakistan: Empirical Evidence

In Pakistan, literature review highlights that most of the research work in relation to teachers' work-related stress is carried out at school level. Hanif and Pervez (2003) found varying levels and sources of work stress in women school teachers. Time management and discipline/motivation were the major factors, while higher number of students in a class turned out to be the leading stressor among women teachers. Also, women teachers of secondary schools displayed high levels of stress as compared to primary school teachers. Majeed, Zia-ur-Rehman, and Rashid (2011) found major causes of stress in school teachers as poor working conditions, too many pupils in one classroom, and not enough teaching-resources. Similarly, Hanif, Tariq, and Nadeem (2011) asserted that teachers showed highest level of stress related to work. In a qualitative study, Sultana, Bano, Bano, and Shafa (2012) explored the nature of teacher stress in private schools of Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. The findings of the study revealed that "amount of time spent in class, preparing for class, counseling students, working with a large number of students, learning new technology, changes in administrative leadership, lack of financial and personnel support, and time pressure generated by deadlines" were the main work-related stressors (p. 71).

Furthermore, students' individual differences, lack of resources, lack of student interest, teachers' performance appraisal system, and low salary packages were also highlighted by teachers as the key stressors. The researchers further classified the stressors in two broad categories that is inside-school and the outside-school sources of stress. The inside-school stressors surfaced were overcrowded classes, lack of student interest, pupils' misbehavior, and workload; while outside-school stressors appeared were strict rules/regulations, lack of parents' cooperation, inadequate training opportunities, job security, and school administration as one teacher commented that "school owners are like dictators" (Sultana et al., 2012).

At the higher-education landscape, Usman, Ahmed, Ahmed, and Akbar (2011) conducted a study to examine the work stress experienced by the teaching staff of University of the Punjab, Lahore. They found that role conflict and role ambiguity are positively associated with the work stress experienced by the teachers in Punjab University. Chaudhry (2012) explored the levels of occupational stress in public and private sector university teachers (six universities of Punjab). Results showed that university-faculty in Pakistan are experiencing a moderate level of stress; the decreasing tendency of stress with the increasing of age; and nonsignificant difference between stress level of male and female teachers. The researchers, however, did not point out the specific stressors that affect university teachers. Riaz and Ramzan (2013) carried out a study to investigate stressors among university teachers of University of Education, Lahore; and inferred that time management turned out to be the major stressor for these teachers.

Teachers' work-related stress can have diverse negative effects not only on the teacher, but also on other teachers, the staff, the students, and on the whole organization. Teacher-educators, though part of the same teaching canvas as other teachers, are in a different league. In case of teacher-education colleges and institutes, the significance of the stress-free environment is even more profound. On one side, the teacher-educators might find the crucial responsibility of shaping the professional careers of their students (prospective teachers) as arduous and taxing; while on the other side, prospective teachers trying to understand the teaching, teaching profession, and the pedagogy might be disheartened by stressful experiences of their teachers resulting in the fading of interest in taking future opportunities as teachers. Thus, to retain teachers and to encourage prospective teachers to transform their training into teaching with a positive approach, it is imperative to ensure stress-free teacher-education, as much as possible. Therefore, it is vital to understand and

assess the work-related stress of teacher-educators. Literature review highlights that most of the research work in relation to teachers' work-related stress is carried out at school level (both locally and globally). A study on work-related stress was needed at the higher level, specifically, at colleges of teacher-education, where the next crop of teachers is prepared. This led to the present study, planned to assess work-related stress of teacher-educators and also to find out any links between stress and demographic variables. The major objectives of the study were to assess level of work-related stress of teacher-educators. It was also intended to determine any difference in work-related stress with regard to demographics that is gender, professional qualifications, position, age, and work experience.

Method

Participants

The population of the study comprised of teacher-educators belonging to all 33 Government Colleges of Elementary Teachers (GCETs) spread all across the Punjab province (Pakistan). The sampling technique used was single-stage cluster sampling, meaning that all the subjects from each of the selected clusters were included in the sample. Six cities having separate GCETs for men and women were selected for the study (Rawalpindi-Islamabad, LalaMusa, Kamalia, Multan, Bahawalpur, and Dera Ghazi Khan covering all zones in Punjab that is North, Central, and South). The sample thus consisted of 128 teacher-educators (male = 62, female = 66; age range: up to 44 years = 68, 45 to 60 years = 60; work experience: up to 20 years = 85, more than 20 years = 43; Position: Subject Specialist = 38, Senior Subject Specialist = 90; Professional Qualification: MA in Education/M.Ed.= 105, B.Ed. = 23). All the GCETs in Punjab are working under the Directorate of Staff Development, Lahore. The scheme of studies, the structure, and the design of teacher-education programs and the evaluation system are same across all colleges.

Instruments

Teacher Work-related Stress Questionnaire (TWSQ). An indigenously developed TWSQ comprised of 40 items (stressors) was used. This questionnaire contains a variety of aspects of work-related stress concerned with teachers that is, Health Concerns (example item:

No first-aid medical facilities provided at the college campus), Emotional Issues (example item: I get easily irritated over trivial matters), Teacher-Principal Matters (example item: Principal does not encourage me on my professional achievement/s), Teacher-Teacher Matters (example item: I don't receive cooperation from colleagues in professional matters), Teacher-Student Matters (example item: Most of class-time is spent in handling students' disruptive behavior), Teacher-College Issues (example item: I am under stress because of an unhealthy college ecology/environment/location); Instructional Matters (example item: The prescribed books in the course/s assigned to me are not available in the college library), and Time Management Concerns (example item: Maintaining official record/paperwork takes most of my time). All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale with 0 meaning no stress, while 4 meaning intense stress level for each item. The possible stress score on TWSQ was 0-160. The low, moderate, and high stress ranges were defined as 0-50, 51-110, and 111-160, respectively.

The instrument development was carried out in a number of phases. Initially, an item-pool was generated (more than 50 items on 5-point Likert scale) based upon: (a) The review of related literature; (b) researcher's own observations and experiences as a teacher-educator at GCET for a number of years; and (c) informal discussions with colleagues at GCET from time to time. The first draft of instrument was submitted to six senior subject specialists of GCET Lahore. The feedback from these six teacher-educators was used to revise/remove the items which were apparently ambiguous; did not correspond to the objectives of the study; poor in language context; or not particularly fit in the context of GCETs.

In the next phase, the instrument was further improved after receiving the professional feedback from the panel of experts ($N = 7$) that is, university professors of education in the teacher-education discipline, particularly in the area/s of educational leadership, educational psychology, and educational research. The feedback by these experts also helped in eliminating redundant items. The overall expert judgment was helpful to the researcher in refining the instrument. Prior to administering the instrument to the selected sample, a pilot study on small sample ($N = 30$) was conducted at GCET, Lahore, to test the validity and reliability of instrument. Based on comments by the respondents, the language of three items was simplified. For the pilot study, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the overall scale was found to be .95. The value of alpha was found to be reasonably high and statistically acceptable.

Procedure

Questionnaires were provided to teacher-educators of the selected twelve GCETs in Punjab. Official permissions were acquired from authorities and informed consent from participants was sought. They were ensured confidentiality of their data.

Results

ANOVA and Independent sample *t*-test were applied to test any differences in work-related stress with regards to demographics.

All the teacher-educators in the sample were having some kind of work-related stress. More than 75% respondents were found to be at low stress level, (range 0-50 from a maximum score of 160) while 23% respondents perceived themselves to be moderately stressed (range 51-110). Only one respondent was in the high stress range (range 111-160). Some of the lowest ranked stressors included 'feeling jealous of success of other teachers' ($M = .76, SD = .71$); 'no cooperation from colleagues in professional matters' ($M = .87, SD = .81$); 'feeling isolated among colleagues' ($M = .95, SD = .93$); 'someone criticizing my work' ($M = .95, SD = .93$); and 'lack of pedagogical/instructional competence' ($M = .98, SD = .78$). These low-ranked stressors were not so bothersome to the teachers; nonetheless, these contributed to the overall work-related stress, though, to a lesser degree.

The major stressors experienced by teachers of GCETs are listed in Table 1.

Table 1
Major Work-related Stressors Appraised by GCET Teachers (N=128)

Work-related Stressors	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
No first-aid medical facilities at the college campus	2.50	1.22
Prescribed books in the assigned course are not available in the college library	2.05	1.20
Frustration due to students' poor academic background	1.76	1.09
No facilities of computer/internet	1.70	1.29
No adequate office facilities	1.61	1.14
Extensive time consumed by official paper work	1.52	1.03
No opportunities for professional development	1.51	1.16
Lack of proficiency in English	1.51	.97
Little time to relax during the day	1.48	1.05
Over-crowded classes	1.48	1.10

Table 1 shows the major stressors appraised by GCET teachers. The findings explain a significant 69.7% of the variance in the overall work-related stress.

Group differences

Independent sample *t*-test and ANOVA were used to determine mean differences with regards to gender, professional qualifications, position, age, and work experience.

Results indicated nonsignificant difference with respect to work-related stress of teacher-educators of GCETs regarding gender ($t = .08$, $df = 126$, $p = .91$); professional qualification ($t = .65$, $df = 126$, $p = .51$); and between Subject Specialists and Senior Subject Specialists ($t = 1.18$, $df = 126$, $p = .23$).

Findings further revealed nonsignificant difference among age groups with respect to work-related stress [$F(3) = .33$, $p = .81$]. If the mean scores of different age groups for overall stress are compared, it shows that work-related stress lessens with age; however, the difference is not statistically significant.

Results of ANOVA showed nonsignificant difference among work experience groups with respect to work-related stress [$F(3) = .47$, $p = .70$]. If the mean scores of different work experience groups for overall stress are compared, it shows that work-related stress lessens with more experience; however, the difference is not statistically significant.

Discussion

The present study was an attempt to explore the phenomenon of work-related stress with a focus on teacher-educators, thus differing from previous research work which is conducted mostly at school level and teachers in general. The results of the study revealed that all teachers in teacher-education colleges have work-related stress of varying intensity (mostly lower or moderate). The major job stressors included the absence of first-aid medical facilities at the college campus; nonavailability of prescribed books, computer, and internet facilities; students' poor academic background; no adequate office facilities; excessive official paperwork; no opportunities for professional development; lack of proficiency in English; little time to relax during the day; and over-crowded classes.

The lack of basic first-aid medical facilities turned out to be the major stressor for teacher-educators in GCETs. Though, the finding is similar to that by Shernoff et al. (2011), it is rare in the previous teacher-related stress studies (especially, in case of teacher educators/trainers). In researcher's view, the presence of a health-professional and basic medical aid at the college campus might be a source of ease and comfort for teachers. In fact, the medical-aid or health-professional should be an essential part of the human resource in any educational setup, be it school, college, or university. Although, the present study only pointed to first-aid medical facility at the college campus, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 1998), in its special intergovernmental conference on the status of teachers focused on a variety of aspects of the status of teachers including that of teachers' concern for their health.

The UNESCO (1998) report addressed teachers' health concerns on a much broader scale such as medical care, sickness benefit, injury benefit, invalidity benefit, etc. According to the report, these facilities should be granted as a matter of right to the teachers and should take into account of their particular conditions of employment. The report signifies that in regions where there is a scarcity of medical facilities, teachers should be paid travelling expenses necessary to obtain medical care and sickness benefit should be granted throughout any period of incapacity for work. Teachers should be protected against the consequences of any injuries suffered at the workplace and any infectious diseases must be treated as occupational diseases when contracted by teachers who have been exposed to them by virtue of their contact with pupils. Similarly, invalidity benefit should be payable to teachers who are forced to discontinue teaching because of physical or mental disability. UNESCO (1998), in its recommendations concerning the status of higher-education teaching personnel, emphasized that higher-education teaching personnel should be provided with a work environment that does not have a negative impact on or affect their health and safety and they should be protected by measures for the protection of health and safety.

The nonavailability of recommended books for different courses, computer, and internet facilities is another serious concern. This situation should have improved with the advent of the Pre-Service Teachers Education Programme (Pre-STEP) launched by the Pakistani government that aim to improve the quality of teacher education. The program has been initiated at some of the GCETs and will be implemented gradually in the remaining colleges as well. However, despite these innovative reforms, "teachers are struggling with

identifying teaching resources due to the unavailability of the reference books and lack of internet facility in their colleges and institutions” (Ali & Parveen, January 6, 2013). The research evidence by Brown et al. (2002) also points to the lack of resources and facilities as a leading stressor for teachers. Billehoj (2007) concluded that the lack of resources is a primary cause of stress for teachers. Similarly, Sultana et al. (2012) also found that lack of resources (such as instructional resources, libraries, computer laboratories) is a critical cause of stress for teachers in Pakistan.

Another major stressor is the frustration due to students’ poor academic background, forcing a teacher to actually take a few steps back, whenever, it emerges that the students are not equipped with enough knowledge or basic ideas to move forward with the current coursework. This backtracking, though an important aspect of the teaching-learning process, might be annoying for a teacher in case it becomes a recurrent theme, as the teacher keeps on looping in circles without making any real progress regarding the course and the students. This might lead teachers to abandon the dialogue with students, and instead, take a monologue approach in order to move on with the course and finish it in time, without the realization of actual student-learning. A study by Chan, Chen, and Chong (2010) explored that managing students’ learning is one of the frequently cited stress for teachers. Olivier and Venter (2003) noted that scarcity of students’ motivation is a worrying factor for teachers. According to Brown et al. (2002), students’ performance seen by the parents and community as the sole responsibility of teachers is an added burden on teachers.

Another key stressor pointed out by GCET teachers is want of adequate office facilities. In research evidence by Shernoff et al. (2011), the problem of poor working conditions was spotted as a primary cause of teachers’ stress. A staff room or a faculty lounge is a good place to relax and talk, but it is important that teachers have their own space (or may be to share office with another teacher) to focus on research/reading/writing or to discuss any project or assignment with students. This way a teacher can better use the time for the improvement in the teaching-learning process.

Excessive paperwork is another concern for teachers, as it consumes a lot of time that could have been dedicated to the teaching-learning process. Torres et al. (2009) rated excessive paperwork as one of the substantial sources of stress among American teachers. Findings by Brown et al. (2002) are also consistent with the finding of the present study. According to Holeyannavar and Itagi (2012), the paper work is more like clerical work and teachers find it burdensome.

No opportunity for professional development is another area of stress for GCET teachers. In an in-depth qualitative study of British teachers, Brown et al. (2002) also found that no training opportunities and limited opportunities for professional advancement can lead to teacher's stress. Sultana et al. (2012) also found 'inadequate training opportunities' as one of the main sources of stress for teachers in Pakistan.

Lack of proficiency in English is another stressor for GCET teachers. This problem can be interpreted in diverse ways. Firstly, there is no denying that the English language currently holds the key to information and knowledge and without a good grip over this language, a teacher can lag behind the latest research and developments in the teaching-learning arena making it, hence, difficult to improve the teaching-learning process. Secondly, the lack of expertise in English language becomes an obstacle for the career development of a teacher and this could lead to anxiety. Thirdly, specific to Pakistan's context, English proficiency is generally perceived as a stamp of intelligence and knowledge and anyone lacking in this area can find that his/ her contribution to teaching-learning paradigm is not really recognized. Fourthly, all the major research work in the field of education and teacher-education is published in English language in Pakistan's research journals. If a teacher wants to publish, he/ she might find it difficult to express his/ her ideas or research work in the English language, resulting in either a poor specimen or in wasting of that work regardless of how valuable it could be not only for the teacher, but more importantly in reaching a wider canvas of education and leaving an impact on readers. Therefore, the lack of proficiency in English language, be it speech, reading/comprehension, and/or writing, the teacher might find it stressful.

Having little or no time for relaxation during the day is the ninth highest ranked stressor for GCET teachers. Brown et al. (2002) affirmed that when teachers do not have time for relaxation, this might lead to stress. In another study, Holeyannavar and Itagi (2012) concluded that one of the factors causing stress for teachers is the "fatigue due to long hours of teaching"(p. 30). Large class size or overcrowded class is another stressor in the list of high-ranked stressors by GCET teachers. Researchers indicated that large class sizes can lead teachers to stress (Olivier & Venter, 2003). Brown et al. (2002) also found class size/overcrowded classes to be a vital factor in teacher stress. The large scale study reported large class size as the third highly ranked stressor out of sixteen (Billehoj, 2007). Holeyannavar and Itagi (2012) reached the same conclusion that overcrowded

classrooms are a serious concern for teachers. The studies conducted in Pakistan to assess work-related stress of teachers repeatedly pointed out this stressor (Hanif & Pervez, 2003; Majeed et al., 2011; Sultana et al., 2012).

Findings also suggest that the work-related stress is independent of demographic variables, that is, gender, age, professional qualification, position, and work experience. In case of age and work experience, it was found that stress diminishes with aging and more experience; however, the differences were not statistically significant. Gender-wise comparison of teacher-educators' work-related stress revealed nonsignificant difference with respect to work-related stress of teacher-educators of GCETs. The research evidence by Spielberger and Reheiser (1994) correspond to this result as with a sample from American university settings, nonsignificant differences were found in the overall stress levels for men and women. However, the finding is in contrast to the study of Sliskovic and Maslic-Sersic (2011) who found that among university teachers, "women on average reported greater exposure to stress at work" (p. 303).

With reference to professional qualifications, there is nonsignificant difference in the perceptions of M.Ed and B.Ed teachers regarding the teacher's work-related stress. This result does not correspond to the findings of Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978), who concluded that higher academic qualifications meant less stress for teachers as compared to teachers with lower academic qualification. This finding is probably due to the fact that since the basic essential qualifications for the Subject Specialist is Master's degree in the relevant subject with at least B.Ed, so the emphasis is more on subject excellence rather than the teacher-training level of these subject specialists. Further, the B.Ed degree, although lower than the masters in Education or M.Ed, equips the teachers with all the essential ingredients and aspects of teaching. This might be the reason for the absence of any significant link of the professional qualification of Masters Education/M.Ed or B.Ed to the teacher's perceptions with regards to work-related stress.

Position-wise, again, there is nonsignificant difference in the perceptions of Subject Specialists and Senior Subject Specialists. At GCETs, Subject Specialists and Senior Subject Specialists differ in their roles, as Senior Subject Specialists are given more representation in administrative committees, while lowering the teaching load. However, in practice, it is found that the workload with regards to teaching work does not change much as being either. In this perspective, Senior Subject Specialists might find the increasing workload and role overload as taxing. The finding that there is

nonsignificant difference between these two groups in work-related stress suggests that Senior Subject Specialists take this extra-role and responsibility rather well (having no change in the teaching load). This finding is in contrast to the study of Sliskovic and Maslic-Sersic (2011) that reported significant positional differences with respect to work-related stress as teachers on senior positions had lower levels of work-related stress than teachers at junior levels.

Further, nonsignificant difference was found among age groups with respect to work-related stress. Chaplain's research (1995) also revealed nonsignificant differences regarding work-related stress for different age groups. A study by Pisanti, Garliardi, Razzino, and Bertini (2003) also found no evidence of any link between the intensity of stress and teacher's age. In the present study, if the mean scores of different age groups for overall stress are compared, it is clear that work-related stress lessens with age; however, the difference is not statistically significant. According to Huberman (1993), older teachers have more capacity to adapt to the changes in the teaching environment and they are better at dealing with stressful situations. A study by Jonas (2001) also indicated that younger educators were having an elevated level of stress as compared to senior educators. Regarding work experience groups, there is also nonsignificant difference with respect to work-related stress. If the mean scores of different work experience groups for overall stress are compared, it shows that work-related stress lessens with more experience; however, the difference is not statistically significant. This could be due to the reason that teachers with increasing experience also have an increasing capacity to better manage their work resulting in a better played role as a teacher. According to Li, Yang, and Shen (2007), teachers' experience can have a significant effect on their efficacy as a teacher.

Limitations and Recommendations

As the research is conducted on a small scale, it is difficult to generalize on a macro level. Therefore, further research, with a wider scope using qualitative and mixed-method paradigms, is recommended to further understand the work-related stress phenomenon among teacher-educators. As far as general recommendations are concerned, better working conditions are essential; especially, the teacher's offices and staff rooms should be fully equipped with necessary facilities. Although, the Government is providing instructional facilities, yet there is need to add more

teaching resources, particularly, the modern instructional technology at the GCETs.

Conclusion

The present study revealed that all teachers in teacher-education colleges have work-related stress of varying intensity (mostly lower or moderate). There is nonsignificant gender difference regarding the intensity of the teacher's work-related stress. Similarly, nonsignificant differences were found with respect to other demographic variables like position, professional qualification, age groups, and work-experience groups. If mean scores of work-related stress are compared for different age groups, or that of work-experience groups, it is clear that stress lessens with age and more work-experience; however, the difference is not statistically significant. The major job stressors included the absence of first-aid medical facilities at the college campus; nonavailability of prescribed books, computer, and internet facilities; students' poor academic background; no adequate office facilities; excessive official paperwork; no opportunities for professional development; lack of proficiency in English; little time to relax during the day; and over-crowded classes.

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