

## LEVELS AND SOURCES OF WORK STRESS AMONG WOMEN SCHOOL TEACHERS<sup>#</sup>

**Seema Pervez & Rubina Hanif**

National Institute of Psychology  
Centre of Excellence, Quaid-i-Azam University  
Islamabad, Pakistan

*The purpose of this study was to find out and compare levels and sources of work stress in women school teachers. The sample consisted of 100 women school teachers from primary and secondary schools of Islamabad. Levels and sources of work stress were measured by Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI-Urdu, Hanif, & Pervez, 2003). The analysis of data reveals that women teachers of secondary schools displayed high levels of stress as compared to primary school teachers. The significant difference was also found on sources of stress between secondary and primary school teachers. It was found that secondary school teachers show more stress. The difference was also significant between government and private school teachers. It was found that government school teachers show more stress. The comparison was also made on some demographic variables and it was found that teachers with more job experience, more number of students in a class show more stress.*

There has been increasing professional and public interest in issues related to occupational stress and health during the last 25 years. This interest began to focus on those employed within the service sector, particularly on those involved in education, health, and welfare. Teachers have been a popular target for such research, and from the late 1970s onward there have been many studies concerned with teachers stress (e.g., Borg & Riding, 1993; Dunham, 1984; Fimian, 1984; Travers & Cooper, 1996). Generally it was agreed that job related stress in teachers is a growing problem and that more teachers are now experiencing stress than ever before.

The definitions of teachers' stress reveal that the issue of teacher stress is one of the complex 'interaction of factors, whose results may be the negative feelings that are associated with stress. A vital assumption inherent in teacher stress definitions is that an important contributory factor in the experience of stress in teachers is not only the aspects of the job but also elements of the individual teacher -

---

<sup>#</sup> Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Rubina Hanif, National Institute of Psychology, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan. <rubinahanif@hotmail.com>

emphasizing the individual subjective perception of work experience (Laughlin, 1984).

Responses to stress can vary, both between individuals and over time. Some people may primarily experience physical symptoms, whereas others may experience psychological disturbance. At a general level, stress in teachers has been found to have a variety of manifestations. These manifestations can be at emotional, physical, and behavioral levels.

Studies dealing with stress in academic began in the early 1970's. They focused mainly on the identification of sources of stress common in the domain. Brener and Bartell (1984) built on the conceptual model of teacher stress proposed by Kyricou and Sutcliffe (1978). They maintain that teacher stress results from the combined effects of the teacher and school characteristics, potential stressors in the school environment, actual stressors, overall perceived work-related stressors, stress reactions or symptoms and health status, personality characteristics and coping mechanisms as well as, non-work related (life events) stressors.

Some studies have identified numerous sources of stress intrinsic to the task and role overload, associated demands on time, and disruptive pupils (Dewe, 1986), inadequate administrative support, lack of social recognition of value of teaching as vocation and inadequate resourcing for teaching (Galloway, Manthei, & Solman, as cited in Tuck & Hawe, 1999).

In this era, the problem of teacher stress has been recognized even in civilized and developed countries. It is the need of time to identify dimensions of this serious problem in our country, where teachers are deprived community. Our teachers have to face problems like low social status, unsatisfactory environmental conditions, inadequate facilities, etc. The school teacher has to face many pressures at personal and work related levels. These pressures may exert stress among teachers. The teachers under stress may not fulfill their duties and responsibilities according to demands and expectations. So the need was felt to conduct a research on stress among teachers.

The purpose of the present study is to identify levels and sources of stress among women school teachers. Some studies have been conducted on teachers job satisfaction (Imam, 1990), and teachers' perception of work environment (Haq & Sheikh, 1993). But not a single study has explored the dimensions of teacher stress at school

level. This study is an attempt to find out levels and sources of stress that teachers experience at their workplaces.

This study is designed to test the levels and sources of teacher's work stress. It also aims to find out the relationship of stress with various demographic variables.

## **Objectives**

The specific objectives of this study are:

1. To identify levels of stress among women school teachers.
2. To find out factors of stress at workplace among women school teachers.
3. To identify the relationship of personal and demographic variables with stress.
4. To find out difference between stress levels of government and private school teachers.
5. To find out difference between stress levels of secondary and primary school teachers.

## **Hypothesis**

1. Teachers from secondary schools will show more stress as compare to teachers from primary schools.
2. Secondary school teachers will show significant difference on sources and manifestations of stress as compared to primary school teachers.
3. Teachers from government schools will show more stress as compare to teachers from private schools.
4. Government school teachers will show significant difference on sources and manifestations of stress as compared to private school teachers.
5. Married teachers will show more stress as compare to unmarried teachers.
6. Teachers from nuclear families will show more stress as compare to teachers from joint family system.

7. Teachers with more age will show more stress as compare to teachers with less age.
8. Teachers with more job experience will show more stress as compare to teachers with less job experience.
9. Teachers with more number of students in class will show more stress as compare to teachers with less number of students.

## **METHOD**

### **Sample**

A sample of 100 women school teachers from secondary and primary schools of Islamabad was selected. The 50% teachers were selected from primary schools and 50% from secondary schools. It comprised of both Government and Private schools.

### **Instruments**

- I. The Teacher Stress Inventory, TSI-Urdu: This Inventory developed by Hanif, & Pervez (2003). This scale comprised of ten sub scales, five of them measure the sources of stress i.e., time management, work related stressors, professional distress, discipline and motivation, professional investment, and other five measure the manifestations of stress i.e., emotional manifestations, fatigued manifestations, cardiovascular manifestations, gastronomical manifestations, and behavioral manifestations. The respondents were asked to rate all the items on 5-point scale i.e., "Always", "Mostly", "Often", "Sometimes", and "Never".
- II. A demographic and personal information sheet.

### **Procedure**

The Urdu translated Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI) was given to the sample. They were approached at their schools. They were asked to rate the statements honestly. The data was collected from the sample of both government and private schools of Islamabad. The teachers were assured about the confidentiality of their responses. The information was also collected about some personal and demographic variables.

## RESULTS

In order to know the levels of stress in women teachers, the mean scores on total and subscales of TSI was computed. Cut off scores were determined through the percentile analysis, the frequency distribution of scores and the scores corresponding to these percentiles. Three categories of stress levels i-e., mild stress, moderate stress, and high stress were determined. A mean score of below 2.25 was determined as mild stress. Scores ranging from 2.26 to 2.87 was taken as indicator of moderate stress, whereas a score above 2.87 was determined for high stress level. ANOVA and *t*-test were computed to compare the variables.

**Table 1**

*Means and Standard Deviations and t-value of Secondary and Primary School teachers for their scores on TSI*

Subscales	Secondary (N = 50)		Primary (N = 50)		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Time Management	22.44	5.40	14.80	3.60	8.368	.023
Work Stressors	13.96	3.40	8.04	2.40	10.087	.015
Professional Distress	18.30	3.95	12.32	1.81	9.649	.000
Discipline and Motivation	21.86	3.21	12.84	1.68	17.583	.000
Professional Investment	11.96	2.78	8.70	1.55	7.228	.004
Emotional Manifestations	14.56	3.95	11.80	1.97	4.408	.000
Fatigue Manifestations	16.62	3.20	12.80	1.80	7.453	.000
Cardio- Manifestations	8.44	3.50	6.10	1.34	4.501	.000
Gastro-Manifestations	6.60	3.11	5.40	1.50	2.458	.000
Behavioral Manifestations	6.32	1.81	5.02	1.15	4.282	.002
Total	141.00	17.60	97.74	6.91	16.171	.000

The results in Table 1 indicate significant difference among secondary and primary school teachers ( $t = 16.17$ ,  $df = 98$ ,  $p < .000$ ). The results further indicate that secondary school teachers scored significantly high on all the subscales.

**Table 2***Means and Standard Deviation of Levels of Stress for the scores on TSI*

Levels of Stress	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Mild	34	94.73	5.90
Moderate	32	112.81	11.09
High	34	150.17	12.40
Total	100	119.37	25.49

Table 2 shows mean scores and standard deviations of three categories of levels of stress among women school teachers. Almost equal number of teachers fall in mild, moderate, and high stress categories. It shows that teachers have mild to high levels of stress.

**Table 3***Means and Standard Deviations and t-value of Government and Private teachers for their scores on total and subscales of TSI*

Subscales	Government ( <i>N</i> =50)		Private ( <i>N</i> =50)		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Time Management	19.52	4.97	17.72	6.71	1.523	.001
Work Stressors	11.84	3.62	10.16	4.53	2.048	.002
Professional Distress	15.34	4.23	15.24	4.36	.116	.353
Discipline and Motivation	17.18	5.12	17.52	5.32	.325	.230
Professional Investment	10.50	3.01	10.20	2.54	.610	.086
Emotional Manifestations	12.46	3.18	13.90	3.50	2.150	.403
Fatigue Manifestations	14.14	3.10	15.30	3.25	1.764	.402
Cardio-Manifestations	6.80	2.50	7.74	3.21	1.712	.012
Gastro-Manifestations	5.80	2.10	6.20	2.90	.718	.013
Behavioral Manifestations	5.30	1.50	6.10	1.71	2.560	.183
Total	118.80	20.10	119.94	30.14	.223	.000

Table 3 show significant difference in government and private school teachers on their total scores on TSI. Means of two groups indicate that private school teachers have scored higher on total scores of TSI. The table also indicates that government and private teachers have significant difference on some subscales i.e., means of time management and work stressors show high scores of government school teachers as compare to private school teachers and private school teachers show high mean scores on cardiovascular manifestations and gastronomical manifestations.

**Table 4**

*Means, Standard Deviations, and t-value of Married and Unmarried teachers for their scores on TSI*

Marital Status	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	SD	<i>d.f</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Married	44	119.66	27.11			
				98	.100	.195
Un-married	56	119.14	24.40			

Table 4 indicates non significant difference for teachers stress scores according to marital status.

**Table 5**

*Means and Standard Deviations and t-value of teachers from Joint and Nuclear family system for their scores on TSI*

Family System	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	SD	<i>d.f</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Joint	54	120.25	28.05			
				98	.376	.019
Nuclear	46	118.33	22.37			

The Table 5 shows significant difference for teachers from joint and nuclear family system. It indicates that teachers from joint families show high scores on TSI as compared to teachers from nuclear families.

**Table 6**

*Means and Standard Deviations on TSI of teachers with different age groups*

Age Groups	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Up to 29 Years	36	113.50	23.83
30 to 35 Years	34	116.56	28.74
Above 35 Years	30	129.60	20.80

The results in Table 6 indicate the means scores on TSI are increasing with the increase of age. To find the significance of these difference ANOVA has been carried out.

**Table 7**

*One way ANOVA for teacher's scores for TSI by age*

	<i>SS</i>	<i>DF</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Between groups	4648.728	2	2324.364	3.778	.026
Within groups	59670.582	97	615.161		
Total	64319.310	99			

Table 7 show that there is significant difference between groups on their scores on TSI.

**Table 8**

*Means and Standard Deviations on TSI of teachers with different job experiences*

Job Experience	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Up to 2 Years	40	113.10	24.57
3 to 7 Years	38	117.02	26.38
Above 8 Years	22	134.81	19.50

The results in Table 8 show highest mean scores on TSI for teachers with more job experience. It indicates that with the increase of job experience the stress levels increase in teachers.



**Table 9***One way ANOVA for teacher's scores on TSI by job experience*

	<i>SS</i>	<i>DF</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Between groups	7031.464	2	3515.732	5.953	.004
Within groups	57287.846	97	590.596		
Total	64319.310	99			

The results in Table 9 indicate significant difference on teachers' job experience for their scores on TSI.

**Table 10***Means and Standard Deviations on TSI of teachers having different number of students*

No. of students	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Up to 70	34	100.00	18.10
71 to 110	33	121.30	23.32
Above 110	33	137.40	19.81

The results in Table 10 indicate that with the increase of number of students the levels of stress increase in teachers. The means scores are highest for the teachers with highest number of students.

**Table 11***One way ANOVA for teachers' scores on TSI by number of student*

	<i>SS</i>	<i>DF</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Between groups	23600.462	2	11800.231	28.110	.000
Within groups	40718.848	97	419.782		
Total	64319.310	99			

The results in Table 11 indicate that teachers have significantly difference on their scores on TSI for the number of students they teach.

## DISCUSSION

The present study was undertaken to explore the general nature of teacher stress as prevailing in the society and to identify levels of stress the teachers experience at their workplaces. The study focused on identifying levels and sources of stress among school teachers. It was also focused on comparing secondary and primary, and government and private school teachers on their levels and sources of stress. The phenomenon of teacher stress was also investigated with reference to some demographic variables, such as teacher's age, job experience, marital status, family living system, and number of students in class. The study was carried out with the help of Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI-Urdu), translated and adapted by Hanif (2003). This scale measures teachers' stress with ten subscales comprised of sources and manifestations of stress on five point rating scale.

The basic assumption of this study was that women teachers will display high levels of stress. It was based on previous studies as Freudenberg (1992) explored those women who have to combine a professional role with that of family, experience more stress. For this purpose, teachers were compared on three levels of stress i.e., low, moderate and high. The results in Table 1 indicate that there is mild to high levels of stress among women school teachers. These results does not completely confirms the previous studies. It may be due to the limitations of sample size. Another hypothesis was that secondary teachers experience more stress as compare to primary teachers. The results significantly support this hypothesis. The data was further analyzed with reference to subscales of TSI. These subscales indicate sources and manifestations of stress. The results show that secondary teachers scored high on all the subscales as compare to primary school teachers.

In Pakistan, there are generally two type of school systems i.e., government and private schools. Both have their own problems and crises. It was hypothesized that government school teachers have more stress as compare to private school teachers. The results indicate that government school teachers display high scores on TSI. The analysis was done to compare the both groups of teachers on subscales also. Government school teachers scored high on two sources of stress they are time management and work stressors, and private school teachers scored high on two manifestations of stress, cardiovascular and gastronomical manifestations.

The hypothesis related to job experience and age of teachers are also supported by results. The results show that teachers with more

age and more job experience show high stress. As it was studied earlier that young people were happier than older at their jobs. It implies that younger people are usually free of worries of retirement and decreased chances of promotion (Gurin, Veroff, & Feld, 1960; Bradburn & Caplovitz, 1965). The hypothesis related to marital status has not been supported by data. It was assumed that married teachers show high levels of stress but the results indicate that there is no difference between married and unmarried teachers on their scores on TSI.

Another hypothesis was about the family system. It was assumed that teachers from nuclear families display more stress due to lack of support in family responsibilities. The results show the opposite situation that teachers from joint families have more stress. One hypothesis was about the number of students in a class. It was assumed that teachers who teach more number of students display high level of stress. As it was studied earlier that class size has direct relationship with teachers' stress (Travers & Cooper, 1996). The results of present study support the hypothesis that level of stress is high among teachers who have to teach more number of students.

## REFERENCES

- Borg, M. J., & Riding, R. J. (1993). Teacher stress and coping style. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 63, 271-286.
- Bradburn, N. M., & Caplovitz, D. (1965). *Reports on Happiness*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Brener, S. O., & Bartell, R. (1984). The teacher stress process: A cross cultural analysis. *Journal of Occupational Behavior*, 5, 183-195.
- Dewe, P. J. (1986). An investigation into the causes and consequences of teacher stress. *Journal of Educational Studies*, 21, 145-157.
- Dunham, J. (1984). *Stress in teaching*. Sydney: Croom Helm.
- Fimian, M. J. (1984). The development of an instrument to measure occupational stress in teachers: The Teacher Stress Inventory. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 57, 277-293.
- Freudenberger, H. J. (1992). Understanding the caregiver. *Psychotherapy in Private Practice*, 11, 75-79.
- Gurin, G., & Veroff, J., & Feld, S. (1960). *American view their mental health*. New York: Basic Books.

- Hanif, R., & Pervez, S. (2003). Translation and adaptation of Teacher Stress Inventory. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research*, 18(1-2), 45-58.
- Haq, A., & Sheikh, H. (1993). Employees perception of work environment in certain settings of Hyderabad city. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research*, 7(3-4), 53-59.
- Imam, S. S. (1990). Job satisfaction among secondary school teachers. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research*, 5(1-2), 17-31.
- Kyriacou, C., & Sutcliffe, J. (1978). A model of teacher stress. *Educational Studies*, 4, 1-6.
- Laughlin, A. (1984). Teacher stress in an Australian setting: The role of biographical mediators. *Educational Studies*, 10(1), 7-22.
- Travers, C. J., & Cooper, C. L. (1996). *Teachers under pressures: stress in the teaching profession*. New York: Roulledge.
- Tuck, B., & Hawe, E. (1999). *Sources of occupational stress in New Zealand primary teachers*. AARE-NZARE conference, Melbourne, Australia. Retrieved July, 2002, from <http://www.aare.edu.au/99pp/tuc99119.htm>.

**Received: August 01, 2003.**