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## A study on dimensions of faculty stress: A factor analytical approach

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### Abstract

Recent research suggests that faculty members experience high levels of stress and burnout similar to those of other demanding service professions. Research also indicates that faculty stress is multidimensional and influenced by institutional and faculty characteristics. The present study was carried out to study the level of stress experienced by the faculty members and to examine the different factors that contributing to the faculty stress. A sample of 673 faculty members was drawn randomly from the Krishna & Guntur Districts, AP. The Faculty Stress Index (FSI) developed by Walter Gmelch was used to measure the faculty stress. It was observed that the faculty members have a moderate stress and the major findings were faculty members having insufficient reward for institutional / Departmental Service, attending meetings which take up too much time, having insufficient time to keep abreast with current developments in their field were stress causing.

**Keywords:** Occupational Stress, Job Stress, Professional Identity.

### 1. Introduction

For many people, stress is so common place that it has become a way of life. The problem of stress in any profession is very common in present day world. In many job situations, high levels of stress are in integral and largely unavoidable component of the work. The need to cope with complexity, ambiguity, conflict and competing demands is a part of professional life among individuals occupying different positions. Organizations are often unnecessarily stressful and have a negative impact on individual's physical and mental health. Stress is an occurrence that must be recognised and addressed in various professions- the teaching profession is no exception (Oliver & Venter, 2003). In recent years, education has risen to prominence, which changed the traditional roles of teachers, from using a "talk and chalk" method, to being more pupil-centred. Teaching profession was once viewed as a 'low stress occupation' and they have been envied for tenure, light workloads, flexibility and other perks such as foreign trips for study and conference. However, some recent studies suggest that teaching is also one among the most stressed occupational group.

### 2. Factors of Faculty Stress

Glemch, Lovrich, & Wilke (1986) identified five major sources of stress of frustration that trouble faculty.

#### 1) Reward and recognition

The majority of stress emanates from faculty rewards and recognition. Inadequate rewards, insufficient recognition, unclear expectations in all the three areas of responsibility-teaching, research, and service.

#### 2) Time constraints

This reflects faculty member's feelings of insufficient time to keep abreast of current developments, inadequate time for class preparation, interruptions from telephone and drop in visitors, writing memos and letters, attending meetings, too heavy a work load, and Job demands interfering with the personal activities.

#### 3) Departmental influence

The third area deals with the attempts to influence chairs decisions, resolving differences with chairs, understanding how chair evaluate faculty performance, and the overall lack of Impact on departmental and institutional decision making.

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#### 4) Professional identity

It is not surprising that the professional identity factor emerges since faculty reputation is built on scholarship, publications, and presentations to conferences, grants, and research.

#### 5) Student interaction

The final factor relates to the interaction between students and colleagues. Faculty members find themselves in conflict with students over evaluation, advising and teaching.

### 3. Review of literature

**Carolyn McCracken (2001)** studied stress levels at community colleges in Tennessee using the FSI. She found that Caucasian "and tenured faculty reported significantly more stress in student interaction, but those in position less than three years measured significantly less stress. Tenured faculty and associate professors were significantly more pressured by time constraints than non tenured or other-ranked faculty."

#### **Janine Paulse (2005)**

The results of the study highlighted that since its inception, inclusive education has made additional demands on teachers. The three most stress areas identified from this study related to the behaviours of pupils, the classroom and support. Apart from the systematic factors that are a significant source of stress for teachers, lack of adequate knowledge or skills to address diversity amongst learners was also highlighted.

#### **Lizhen Jing (2008)**

Explored the characteristics of faculty's job stress and performance in the undergraduate education and their relationships by distinguishing their levels and nature. The findings include (1) academics were working under moderate levels of stress from their job specificity and organizational practice and higher levels of stress from their self-expectations; (2) the U-shaped relation between stress and performance is a product of faculty's compensatory control and (3) work-context stress significantly affects teaching effectiveness, but not research productivity.

#### **Aqsa Akbar, Waheed Akhter (2011)**

Identified the causes of faculty stress at Higher Education in Pakistan. Workload, Student Related issues and Role Conflicts are the major sources contributing significantly towards producing stress. The study also revealed that Private sector faculty members experienced more stress as compared to faculty in Public sector Business Schools. Moreover, females, younger ages, lower designation & low qualification faculty members experience more stress as compared to males, older ages, higher designation and high qualification.

#### 4. Objectives of the Study

1. To study the level of stress experienced by the faculty members belonging to Krishna & Guntur Districts, AP.
2. To determine the various dimensions of faculty stress.

### 5. Methodology

The population for the present study consists of all the faculty members of Intermediate, Degree and Post Graduate courses belonging to Krishna and Guntur Districts of Andhra Pradesh. The total population was first stratified on the basis of different courses i.e; Intermediate, Degree and PostGraduation and then sub divided on the basis of different disciplines. Out of various disciplines three disciplines were chosen. These disciplines were Commerce, Mathematics, & Sciences (Physics, Chemistry, Botany, and Zoology). A sample of 673 faculty members (Intermediate-210, Degree-239, Post Graduation-224) belonging to Krishna & Guntur Districts were chosen randomly. The Faculty Stress Index (FSI) developed by Gmelch, Wilke, and Lovrich (1986) was used to collect the primary data. The resulting 45-item FSI examines five dimensions.

### 6. Results and Discussions

1. On the basis of scoring given in the FSI the respondents whose score is below 75 points have low stress; Score between 75-150 points have moderate stress and score above 150 points have high stress. It can be observed from Table 1 that the job stress experienced by the faculty members is moderate as the score of Job stress fall in the moderate range.
2. Factor analysis is used for defining the factors affecting job stress of faculty members. (Table 2). The factors of faculty stress have been identified as five which are as follows
  - Reward and Recognition
  - Time Constraint
  - Departmental Influence
  - Professional Identity
  - Student Interaction

The results are as follows

3. Factor 1 is the important factor accounting for 6.277% of variance. Item loadings ranged from 0.610 to 0.298. There were 8 statements in this factor. Mean scores of factor indicated that faculty responded to moderately to the statements related to Reward & Recognition (mean=2.86). (Table 3)
4. Factor 2 is the important factor accounting for 26.824% of variance. Item loadings ranged from 0.752 to 0.2395. There were 14 statements in this factor. Mean scores of factor indicated that Faculty responded moderately to the statements related to Time Constraint (mean=2.76). (Table 4)
5. Factor 3 is the important factor accounting for 4.945% of variance. Item loadings ranged from 0.687 to 0.439. There were 9 statements in this factor. Mean scores of factor indicated that faculty responded moderately to the statements related to Department Influence (mean=2.81). (Table 5)
6. Factor 4 is the important factor accounting for 4.372% of variance. Item loadings ranged from 0.645 to 0.284. There were 11 statements in this factor. Mean scores of factor indicated that faculty responded moderately to the statements related to Professional Identity (mean=3.13). (Table 6)

7. Factor 5 is the important factor accounting for 3.917% of variance. Item loadings ranged from 0.552 to 0.424. There were 2 statements in this factor. Mean scores of factor indicated that faculty responded moderately to the statements related to Student Interaction (mean=3.20). (Table 7)
8. Results showed that inadequate salary, insufficient time to make classroom presentations and to keep abreast with the latest developments, pressure to compete and differences with the fellow faculty members, unclear as to scope and responsibilities, repetitious job assignments, students evaluating teaching performance, inadequate reward & recognition for community and institutional service are found to produce more stress to the present sample. In different other studies also it was found that stress emanate from role demands, instructional problems, and interpersonal relationships Sutton (1984), student apathy, student disruption or discipline, irresponsible colleagues, low salary Blasé (1986). Heavy workloads, and student behavior Guglielmi & Tatrow, (1998) many deadlines to meet, accountability for student performance, (NUT, (1999). Heavier workloads and time demands, non-academic employment expectations, demands of research, workload pressure, role ambiguity, and performance pressure Muhammad Umair Manzoor, *et al.* (2011).

**7. Conclusion**

The faculty members under study were found to have a moderate job stress and job satisfaction. In present times it has been strongly felt that teaching has become a very stressful profession. The presence of moderate job stress is an indicator of future threat if stress continues to persist. This information could be an alarm sign that could enable them to explore the stress causing factors and appropriate ways to handle them better.

**Table 1:** Distribution of Total Sample on Job Stress Scale.

Sample Size	Job Stress Score
673	125

**Table 2:** Factor analysis results of Job Stress

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.886
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	14292.600
	Df	990
	Sig.	.000

**Table 3:** Factor 1: Reward & Recognition

FSI Questions	Factor Loadings	Mean Scores	Standard Deviation
Receiving inadequate university recognition for community service	.298	3.04	1.407
Believing that the progress in my career is not what it should or could be	.540	2.44	1.205
Securing financial support for my research	.500	2.72	1.384
Having insufficient reward for institutional / Departmental Service.	.610	3.07	1.333
Receiving insufficient recognition for teaching performance	.403	2.68	1.264
Receiving insufficient institutional recognition for research performance.	.540	2.96	1.311
Not knowing how my chair evaluates my performance.	.547	2.99	1.326
Receiving inadequate salary to meet financial needs	.534	3.04	1.324

**Eigen Value = 2.824, Percentage of Variance = 6.277**

**Table 4:** Factor 2: Time Constraint

<b>FSI Questions</b>	<b>Factor Loadings</b>	<b>Mean Scores</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Lack of Sufficient Time to participate in the work of departmental or university committee	.717	2.53	1.284
Having inadequate time to participate in work Related activities outside regular working hours.	.751	2.70	1.351
Inadequate time to meet social obligations (clubs, parties, and volunteer work) expected of me because of my position	.752	2.77	1.422
Inadequate time to make presentations at professional conferences and meetings.	.538	2.76	1.371
Having insufficient time to keep abreast with current developments in my field.	.395	2.92	1.229
In sufficient time to teach / advise inadequately prepared students	.585	2.74	1.283
Lack of sufficient time to Prepare manuscript for publication	.504	2.87	1.275
Having inadequate time for teaching preparation	.564	2.81	1.354
Most part of my job involves writing letters and memos and responding to other paper work	.621	2.83	1.340
Lack of time to resolve differences with students	.677	2.73	1.287
Having insufficient time for performing the service function.	.633	2.83	1.282
Feeling that I have too heavy a work load, one that I cannot possibly finish during the normal work day.	.552	2.72	1.283
Attending meetings which take up too much time	.549	2.92	1.300
Lack of sufficient time to make class presentations.	.434	2.63	1.314
Having inadequate time to resolve differences with my chair	.607	2.87	1.367

**Eigen Value = 12.071****Percentage of Variance = 26.824****Table 5:** Factor 3: Departmental Influence

<b>FSI Questions</b>	<b>Factor Loadings</b>	<b>Mean Scores</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Most part of my job involves complying with Departmental and University rules and regulations.	.687	2.88	1.364
Being interrupted frequently by telephone calls and dropping visitors.	.616	2.49	1.274
Frequently being requested to provide community services	.564	2.88	1.290
Dealing with program changes or reduced enrollment impact my job	.439	2.98	1.339
Trying to influence my chair's actions and decisions	.486	2.75	1.372
Not having clear criteria for evaluating service activities	.460	2.85	1.327
Lacking congruency in institutional, departmental and personal goals	.686	2.87	1.298
Having to teach subject matter for which I am not sufficiently prepared	.653	2.74	1.318
Lacking personal impact on departmental or institutional decision making	.449	2.89	1.322

**Eigen Value = 2.225****Percentage of Variance = 4.945****Table 6:** Factor 4: Professional Identity

<b>FSI Questions</b>	<b>Factor Loadings</b>	<b>Mean Scores</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Having inadequate facilities (office, library, laboratories, class rooms)	.555	2.71	1.386
Imposing excessively high self-expectations	.444	2.52	1.323
Resolving differences with fellow faculty members	.284	3.06	1.257
Having insufficient authority to perform my responsibilities	.413	2.87	1.332
Assignment of duties which takes me away from my office	.583	2.56	1.176
Being unclear as to the scope and responsibilities of my job.	.559	3.04	1.366
Feeling pressure to compete with my colleagues.	.425	3.01	1.388
Having repetitious teaching and job assignments	.364	3.04	1.387
Not having clear criteria for evaluation of research and publication activities	.645	2.94	1.287
Having job demands which interfere with other personal activity (recreation, family and other interests)	.577	2.86	1.261
Being drawn into conflict between colleagues.	.562	2.81	1.269

**Eigen Value = 1.967****Percentage of Variance = 4.372**

**Table 7:** Factor 5: Student Interaction

<b>FSI Questions</b>	<b>Factor Loadings</b>	<b>Mean Scores</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Not having clear criteria how to evaluate the performance of the student.	.552	2.83	1.406
Do you think / agree that students should evaluate your teaching performance	.424	3.58	1.238

**Eigen Value = 1.762**

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