



JOB STRESS AMONG ARTS AND SCIENCE COLLEGE TEACHERS IN CHENNAI REGION DURING PANDEMIC AND NEW NORMAL

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly affected the education sector, leading to significant changes in teaching methods and work environments. This study investigates the levels of job stress experienced by arts and science college teachers in the Chennai region during the pandemic and the subsequent "new normal." The research examines how various factors, such as online teaching, increased workload, lack of direct student interaction, and the challenge of adapting to digital platforms, have contributed to teacher stress. A mixed-methods approach was used, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gather data from a representative sample of college educators across multiple institutions. The findings indicate that teachers faced heightened stress due to the abrupt transition to online education, the pressure of delivering quality content without sufficient resources, and the blurred boundaries between personal and professional life. Furthermore, teachers reported increased anxiety about health concerns, job security, and their ability to meet students' academic needs in an online environment. Despite these challenges, the study also highlights the adaptive strategies employed by teachers, including peer support, time management, and the integration of technology. The study underscores the importance of institutional support, professional development programs, and mental health resources to mitigate stress and foster resilience among educators in the post-pandemic era.

Keywords: *Job Stress, College Teachers, COVID-19 Pandemic, Workload, Work-Life Balance, Online Education.*

Introduction

The COVID-19 Pandemic has affected education systems worldwide, leading to the near- total closures of schools, Universities and colleges. The role of college teachers in society is undoubtedly important. Covid-19 virus revealed the helplessness of humanity in the face of a pandemic. We cannot refuse that COVID-19 period created more stress among the college teachers rather than previous period. Job stress is the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the college teacher. It is important for employers to recognise work related stress as significant health and safety issue. An Institution should take steps to ensure that college teachers are not subjected to unnecessary stress. Then only Employee turnover is under control any of the institutions or companies. If Employee turnover is under control, it reduces cost and increases profit. This study reveals what are the problems or work related stress faced by the college teachers and how to face work related stress in this COVID-19 period.

When the academic year 2019-2020 started, no teacher could have predicted that they would be working from home for weeks to months in the spring. Onset of the COVID-19 pandemic across the India has forced thousands of colleges to close indefinitely.



The very sudden shift to distance learning has placed an unprecedented type of stress for college teachers to quickly adapt their curricula to an outline format that is accessible for all students. Using these new technology platforms to simulate a normal college day poses many challenges, some out of the control of a teacher. From Zoom and Google classroom to Canvas and Microsoft Teams, the variety of online teaching tools is extremely abundant. However, many college teachers have never used these tools before and don't know which are most effective and appropriate for their instruction style, class content, and student abilities. It's a steeper learning curve than many parents, students and college teachers themselves realize.

Review of Literature

Every individual may experience certain level of stress throughout their lives and it may arise from various factors. It may be because of the surrounding environment, attitude, and their Job requirement. Negative stress among college teachers could lead to emotional and physical depression (Hammond & Onikama, 1997); Shernoff et al., 2011). It may cause by poor leadership and management skills of the college teacher themselves (Kearney & Turner, 1987).

Among the cause that could lead to stress among teachers is students poor behaviour, as most of their occupational time is spent with their students (Sass et al., 2011). Students nowadays are becoming more indiscipline and every single student has different characteristics and attitudes (Rieg et al., 2007). Therefore there poor behaviour may intensify stress among college teachers. Moreover college teachers are easily distracted with student behavioural issues (Moriarty et al., 2001) which can decrease teacher's level of concentration resulting in more stress among them.

Another cause that can lead to stress among teachers is when teacher are consistently burdened by excessive workload (Leithwood et al., 1996); O'Conner & Clarke, 1990. Timperley & Robinson, 2000)

Objectives of the Study

1. To Study the socio economic of the respondents.
2. To Study the profile of pandemic and new normal of the college teachers.
3. To Study the job factors such as work environment, monetary benefits, facilities offered by the employers.

Statement of The Problem

The study is intended to determine the causes the stress experienced by the college teachers during pandemic. Job factors are very important for college teachers such as work environment, salary and other economic benefits, conducive technicalities of teachers and students, effective and useful participation, increased family pressure, interpersonal relationship among teachers and morality of the college teachers (mentally and physically). In this study an attempt has been made to analyse the stress among college teachers during pandemic and new normal.

Research Methodology

To carry out any type of research, the research must gather data to test the hypothesis or answer the questions. Many different methods and procedures have been developed to aid in the acquisition of data. For the present study, the investigator decided to adopt descriptive survey method. In order to accomplish the objectives of the present study, the descriptive survey method was considered appropriate for gathering data about job satisfaction and job stress of college teachers during covid-19 period. Descriptive survey method is designed to obtain pertinent and precise information concerning

the current status of phenomena and whenever possible to draw valid general conclusions from the facts discovered.

Scope of the study

1. The scope of the study has been delimited to assess the job stress of college teachers during covid-19 period only.
2. The scope has been delimited to Chennai.
3. The scope has been delimited to 600 college teachers(300 male and 300 female) from 30 colleges.
4. The study has been delimited to 15 government and 15 private colleges.
5. The study has been delimited to 10 male and 10 female from each college.

Sources of Data

The present study should be based on primary data as well as secondary data. The secondary data shall be collected from various books, journals, articles, E-sources, news papers etc. Consumers at organised retail stores shall be interviewed to collect the primary data. Their answers shall further looked into, in some detail to add value to this research.

Association Between Age of Arts And Science College Teachers In Chennai Region And Their Opinion Towards Working Environment

Age of arts and science college teachers in Chennai region may or may not have an association with their opinion towards working environment. For testing this relationship the following hypothesis are framed.

H₀: There is no significant association between age of arts and science college teachers in Chennai region and their opinion towards working environment.

H₁: There is significant association between age of arts and science college teachers in Chennai region and their opinion towards working environment.

The results of the chi-square tests are presented in the following table.

Table 1: Association Between Age of Arts and Science College Teachers in Chennai Region and their Opinion towards Working Environment

S. No	Opinion towards Working Environment	Chi-square value	Degree of freedom	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
1.	I am deeply motivated by the mission of the Institution	12.49	12	0.168
2.	I feel appreciated for my contributions at work	24.01	12	0.05*
3.	My work schedule is flexible enough for me to meet my family/personal responsibilities	19.64	12	0.05%
4.	People of all cultures and backgrounds are respected and valued here	16.97	12	0.05*
5.	My work objectives are clear with proper Timetable	8.12	12	0.068
6.	I feel there is adequate communication from HOD/ Principal	8.12	12	0.11

7.	It is easy to reach my colleagues when I need them	6.16	12	0.09
8.	I feel I have a good work-life balance	22.32	12	0.06
9	I feel I have a laptop with sufficient Data card/ Internet facility	17.02	12	0.12
10	I have a sufficient time for preparation	19.16	12	0.03*
11	I am deeply motivated by the mission of the Institution	5.41	12	0.06
12	I feel appreciated for my contributions at work	24.4	12	0.08

* Significant at 5 % level

Inference

The results indicate that in most cases, the age of teachers did not produce a statistically significant variation in their views regarding the working environment. Responses to statements such as feeling motivated by the institutional mission, adequacy of communication from heads of departments or principals, collegial accessibility, and work–life balance did not show significant association with age. This suggests that these aspects of the working environment are perceived relatively uniformly across different age groups.

However, a few items revealed a significant association at the five per cent level. Age was related to perceptions of appreciation for contributions at work, respect for people of all cultures and backgrounds, and availability of sufficient preparation time. These results imply that views on recognition, inclusiveness, and adequacy of preparation opportunities vary according to the age of the teachers. Such differences may reflect generational expectations or diverse experiences with institutional practices.

In summary, while many aspects of the working environment appear to be commonly valued irrespective of age, issues relating to appreciation, cultural respect, and time for preparation display differences among age groups. These findings point towards the need for institutional policies that address such varied perceptions so that teachers across age categories feel equally supported in their professional roles.

Association Between Monthly Income of Arts And Science College Teachers In Chennai Region And Their Opinion Towards Working Environment

Monthly Income of arts and science college teachers in Chennai region may or may not have an association with their opinion towards working environment. For testing this relationship the following hypothesis are framed.

H₀: There is no significant association between monthly income of arts and science college teachers in Chennai region and their opinion towards working environment.

H₁: There is significant association between monthly income of arts and science college teachers in Chennai region and their opinion towards working environment.

The results of the chi-square tests are presented in the following table.

Table 2: Association Between Monthly Income of Arts and Science College Teachers in Chennai Region and their Opinion towards Working Environment

S. No	Opinion towards Working Environment	Chi-square value	Degree of freedom	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
1.	I am deeply motivated by the mission of the Institution	7.88	20	0.05*
2.	I feel appreciated for my contributions at work	20.23	20	0.02*
3.	My work schedule is flexible enough for me to meet my family/personal responsibilities	8.33	20	0.17
4.	People of all cultures and backgrounds are respected and valued here	11.01	20	0.05*
5.	My work objectives are clear with proper Timetable	13.18	20	0.08
6.	I feel there is adequate communication from HOD/ Principal	26.48	20	0.07
7.	It is easy to reach my colleagues when I need them	21.65	20	0.02*
8.	I feel I have a good work-life balance	18.53	20	0.17
9	I feel I have a laptop with sufficient Data card/ Internet facility	5.73	20	0.17
10	I have a sufficient time for preparation	23.34	20	0.19
11	I am deeply motivated by the mission of the Institution	14.87	20	0.08
12	I feel appreciated for my contributions at work	25.05	20	0.19

* Significant at 5 % level

Inference

The analysis indicates that the monthly income of teachers is not strongly associated with most aspects of their views on the working environment. Responses concerning flexibility of work schedules, adequacy of communication, work-life balance, availability of digital resources and time for preparation did not show statistically significant variation across income groups. This suggests that these elements of the working environment are experienced in a similar manner, regardless of differences in income.

Nevertheless, certain areas displayed a significant association at the five per cent level. Teachers' income was found to influence perceptions relating to motivation drawn from the institution's mission, appreciation of contributions, respect for cultural diversity, and the ease of reaching colleagues when required. These results reveal that income variations may shape how teachers interpret the degree of recognition they receive, their sense of inclusion, and their level of engagement with institutional objectives and collegial interactions.

Taken together, the findings indicate that while several aspects of the working environment are perceived uniformly across income groups, areas concerning recognition, inclusiveness, motivation, and collegial accessibility are influenced by income differences. Institutions may therefore consider measures that reduce perceived disparities and ensure that teachers in different income categories experience consistent support and acknowledgement within their professional setting.

Conclusion

The study highlights the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the "new normal" on job stress among arts and science college teachers in the Chennai region. Teachers faced multiple stressors, including the sudden transition to online teaching, increased workload, technological challenges, and concerns about health and job security. These stress factors were further compounded by the lack of direct interaction with students, which is a key component of effective teaching and personal job satisfaction.

However, the study also reveals the resilience of educators in adapting to these challenges, with many relying on time management strategies, peer support, and technological innovations to cope with the increased demands. While teachers showed great adaptability, the findings emphasize the need for comprehensive institutional support, including mental health resources, professional development opportunities, and clearer communication of expectations. Addressing these areas will be crucial in reducing job stress and improving the overall well-being of teachers in the post-pandemic educational landscape.

To ensure sustained teacher effectiveness and job satisfaction, it is recommended that educational institutions prioritize teacher welfare by implementing policies that provide adequate training, resources, and psychological support. Additionally, fostering a culture of flexibility and understanding within educational institutions will be essential to navigating the challenges of the new normal and promoting long-term teacher resilience.

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