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Academic stress and teaching competency of school teachers: A comparative study

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Abstract

Teaching is not a very simple job as been usually understood in normal educational settings. The teaching profession is a highly responsible and requires an ultimate commitment towards the job. A teacher has to be abreast with the changing needs and requirements of the society. The teacher has a pivotal role to play while performing the duty of teaching. The finding of the study exposed that academic stress and teaching competency negatively correlated each other. But, the level of academic stress were moderate level so, the policy makers, government and stakeholders give more attention to reduces academic stress of the teachers.

Keywords: Stress, anxiety, competency, effectiveness and organization

Introductions

The 21st century has been branded an age of 'stress and anxiety.' Stressful circumstances are encountered daily and at every stage of human development. The daily academic environment and many academic tasks pose serious threats to students' personal wellbeing. Academic stress is essential for mobilizing the potential of individuals to work more efficiently. However, an increased amount over a prolonged period will have deleterious effects on the psycho-physical health and academic activity of teachers. Stress is an interesting phenomenon. Most people have no difficulty saying when they are under stress and attributing all their problems to stress. Stress is a concept linked to various aspects and operations. For some, it is a stimulus, sometimes more, sometimes less complex; for others, it is an inferred inner state, and for others, it is an observable response to a stimulus or situation. Thus, the role of the term is unclear and requires a clear definition. However, Educationalists and Psychologists have considerable difficulty defining stress and have tended to avoid this concept, as it is too global. Stress is inevitable in our lives. It serves a useful purpose in life by stimulating effort, inventiveness, and high standards; however, when it increases beyond the optimum level, it adversely affects coping mechanisms and hampers growth.

Stress is a condition stream of emotions, thought processes, and physical conditions. When excessive, it can pretend to cope with the environment. Stress is a general term applied to the pressure. Stress is a many-faceted process that occurs in response to events that disrupts or threatens to disrupt physical or psychological functioning. Although stress is not an unknown or a rare phenomenon for students, academic stress is a relatively new area of empirical research, while a large number of studies on student burnout have been initially directed towards educational institutions, government, and private institutions.

Academic stress is the adjustive demand caused by academic factors placed on an organism. "It is a mental distress with respect to some anticipated frustration associated with academic failure, anticipation of such failure, or even an awareness of the possibility of such failure" (Gupta and Khan, 1987) ^[10]. The influence of environmental factors, such as home, school, and peers on individual development is evident. Stress has been a long-researched issue in academic circles, but this topic requires more attention (Agolla, 2009) ^[2].

As we all know, teachers play the most crucial role in student learning and achievement as they are the ones who make students learn effectively and efficiently. Teachers can perform various activities inside and outside the classroom, such as planning properly, providing instructions, and evaluating learning using appropriate teaching competencies and techniques. The effectiveness and ineffectiveness of a teacher depend closely on the

teacher's teaching competencies. Indeed, we have experienced teachers' transformational power in our lives. Some scholars see "competence" as a combination of knowledge, skills, and behavior used to improve performance, or as the state or quality of being adequately qualified and capable of performing a given role. The Occupational Competency movement initiated by David McClelland in the 1960s sought to move away from traditional attempts to describe competency in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and to focus instead on those specific values, traits, and motivations (i.e., relatively enduring characteristics of people) that are found to consistently distinguish outstanding from typical performance in a given job or role. The term "competence" first appeared in an article authored by Craig C. Lundberg in 1970 titled "Planning the Executive Development Program", and then in David McClelland's seminal 1973 treatise entitled, "Testing for Competence Rather than for Intelligence". The term has since been popularized by Boyatzis and many others.

Need and Significance of the study

The main aim of teachers is to help students learn effectively and efficiently. To do so, a teacher has to perform several activities, such as planning properly, providing effective instruction and evaluating learning, and using appropriate methods and techniques. In other words, teachers must perform many activities both inside and outside the classroom. The effectiveness and ineffectiveness of teaching are closely linked to teacher's teaching competencies. Teaching competence refers to a teacher's characteristics. He is the one who not only imparts the entire educational curricula allotted to him in the best possible manner, but also improves academic performance and brings all the round development of students.

Psychologists and educationists have focused on stress research proposals. New demands are imposed by rapid changes in the education system, which in turn cause stress. Previous studies have suggested that the degree of stress experienced by students is affected by the characteristics of education, teachers, and students themselves. Research is regularly performed to realize something novel or restate object and reassess the past findings regarding the variables, the researchers like Khan (2017); Rana (2017) ^[15]; Thoker (2017); Mudasir and Ganie (2014); Shukla (2014) ^[17] studied teaching competency in relation to the teaching aptitude, emotional intelligence, adjustment and comparative study with interaction analysis and classroom behaviour. The present study is an effort to understand the level of teaching competency and academic stress among government and private schoolteachers. The present study has brought out promising findings that can be used by educational administrators, curriculum designers, and policy makers to make teacher education a top priority. Therefore, the investigator had made a humble beginning to fill this research gap, and the researcher was motivated to investigate the problem with the aim of highlighting the effectiveness of teaching competency and academic stress of schoolteachers.

Statement of the problem

The problem of the present study entitled 'Academic Stress and Teaching Competency of School Teachers: A Comparative Study'

Operational Definitions

1. Teaching Competency

Teaching competency is defined as the overall capacity of an individual in terms of awareness of the local populace of the institution, knowledge of the subject's efficacy in the organization of the content, delivery of the content, and the quantum of use of information and communication technology in the process of teaching.

In this study, teaching competency refers to the scores achieved by the respondents (sample subjects) on the Teaching Competency Scale constructed and standardized by the researcher.

2. Academic stress

It is a physiological and psychological imbalance that arises due to the demands of a person and their inability to meet these demands.

Objectives

1. To examine the level of academic stress and teaching competency of school teachers.
2. To examine whether there is any statistical difference in academic stress and teaching competency of schoolteachers with regard to gender, family type, age, and experience.
3. To examine whether there is any statistical difference in academic stress and teaching competency among schoolteachers working in elementary, high, and higher secondary schools.
4. To examine the relationship between academic stress and teaching competency of school teachers.

Hypotheses

1. There was no statistical difference in academic stress and teaching competency among schoolteachers with regard to gender, family type, age, and experience.
2. There was no statistical difference in academic stress and teaching competency among schoolteachers working in elementary, high, and higher secondary schools.
3. There is no significant relationship between academic stress and teaching competency of school teachers.

Research Methods

The Investigator has adopted the survey method of research to study the academic stress and teaching competency of school teachers.

Area and Population for the study

The study area was the Dindigul district of Tamil Nadu State, India. The population of the present study consisted of primary, secondary, and higher secondary school teachers.

Sample of the Study

The Investigator used a stratified random sampling technique to select a sample from the population. The sample consists of 520 teachers from elementary, middle, high, and higher secondary schools in the Dindigul District of Tamil Nadu State, India.

Tools Used for the Study

The following tools were used for data collection

- a) Academic Stress Scale developed by Rajendran and Kaliappan (1990).

- b) Teaching Competency Scale developed by B. K. Passi and M.S. Lalitha.

Statistical Techniques Used for the Study

For the present study, the Investigator used the following statistical techniques.

1. Level
2. ‘t’ Test
3. ANOVA
4. Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

Analysis

Level of academic stress and teaching competency of school teachers are as follows;

Table 1: Level of Academic Stress and Teaching Competency

Variables	Level					
	Low		Moderate		High	
Academic Stress	132	25.4%	318	61.1%	70	13.5%
Teaching Competency	86	16.6%	358	68.8%	76	14.6%

With reference to Table 1, 61.1% of schoolteachers showed moderate levels of academic stress, and 68.8% of them showed moderate levels of teaching competency. This indicates that both the independent variables equally explored the dependent variable of schoolteachers. The results indicate that academic stress and teaching competency of schoolteachers do not overlap with each other.

Null Hypothesis 1

There was no significant difference between male and female schoolteachers with respect to academic stress and teaching competency.

Table 2: Mean Score Difference between Men and Women School Teachers with respect to Academic Stress and Teaching Competency

Variable	Gender	Mean	SD	‘t’ Value	‘p’ Value
Academic Stress	Men	184.313	23.4225	2.005	.046
	Women	180.112	24.3052		
Teaching Competency	Men	201.947	33.1527	1.113	.266
	Women	198.646	34.3628		

Table 4: Alpha Score Difference among the Age Groups of School Teachers with respect to Academic Stress and Teaching Competency

Variables	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	Post Hoc ‘α’ Value	‘F’ Value	‘p’ Value
Academic Stress	7986.054	3993.027	178.309 (below 30 years)	7.116	.001
	290108.021	561.137	182.112 (31 to 40 years)		
	298094.075		188.127 (41 years and above)		
Teaching Competency	29943.694	14971.847	192.562 (below 30 years)	13.740	.000
	563349.837	1089.652	200.994 (31 to 40 years)		
	593293.531		211.522 (41 years and above)		

With reference to Table 4, schoolteachers’ age groups exhibited a significant difference among those below 30 years, 31-40 years and 41 years and above in their academic stress and teaching competency, as the calculated ‘F’ values (7.116) and (13.740), respectively. Moreover, the above table indicates that teachers aged 41 years and above possessed higher academic stress and teaching competency compared to other age groups. Hence, the null hypothesis

As shown in Table 2, academic stress of male and female schoolteachers exhibited a significant statistical difference in their mean score (Men: 184.313 & Women: 180.112) and calculated ‘t’ value (2.005). The teaching competency of male and female schoolteachers did not differ significantly in their calculated ‘t’ value (1.113), but they differed in mean scores (Men; 201.947 & Women, 198.646). Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between male and female schoolteachers in their academic stress was rejected, but the teaching competency of male and female schoolteachers was accepted.

Null Hypothesis 2

There was no significant difference between joint and nuclear family schoolteachers with respect to academic stress and teaching competency.

Table 3: Mean Score Difference between Joint and Nuclear Family School Teachers with respect to Academic Stress and Teaching Competency

Variable	Family Type	Mean	SD	‘t’ Value	‘p’ Value
Academic Stress	Joint	182.745	26.0440	0.634	.526
	Nuclear	181.410	21.7382		
Teaching Competency	Joint	204.386	35.6317	2.838	.005
	Nuclear	196.023	31.4178		

With shown in Table 3, academic stress of joint and nuclear family school teachers did not differ significantly in their calculated ‘t’ value (0.634) but differed in their mean score (Joint Family: 182.745 & Nuclear family: 181.410). However, the teaching competency of joint and nuclear family schoolteachers exhibits a significant difference in their mean scores (Joint Family: 204.386 & Nuclear Family: 196.023) and calculated ‘t’ value (2.838). Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between joint and nuclear family schoolteachers in their academic stress was accepted, but the teaching competency of joint and nuclear family schoolteachers was rejected.

Null Hypothesis 3

There was no significant difference among the age groups of schoolteachers with respect to academic stress and teaching competency.

that there is no significant difference among the different age groups of schoolteachers with respect to academic stress and teaching competency was rejected.

Null Hypothesis 4

There was no significant difference between the experiences of schoolteachers with respect to academic stress and teaching competency.

Table 5: Alpha score difference among the Experiences of School Teachers with respect to Academic Stress and Teaching Competency

Variables	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	Post Hoc 'α' Value	'F' Value	'β' Value
Academic Stress	21812.502	10906.251	178.880 (below 5 years)	9.867	.000
	571481.029	1105.379	182.715 (6 to 10 years)		
	593293.531		186.792 (11 years and above)		
Teaching Competency	5257.311	2628.655	193.467 (below 5 years)	4.641	.010
	292836.764	566.415	202.091 (6 to 10 years)		
	298094.075		209.408 (11 years and above)		

With reference to Table 5, the experiences of schoolteachers exhibit a significant difference among those below 5 years, 6-10 years and 11 years and above in their academic stress and teaching competency, as the calculated 'F' values (9.867) and (4.641), respectively. Moreover, the above table indicates that teachers with 11 years and above experience possessed high academic stress and teaching competency compared to others. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is

no significant difference among the experiences of schoolteachers with respect to academic stress and teaching competency was rejected.

Null Hypothesis 5

There was no significant difference among the grade levels of schoolteachers with respect to academic stress and teaching competency.

Table 6: Alpha score difference among the Grade Level of School Teachers with respect to Academic Stress and Teaching Competency

Variables	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	Post Hoc 'α' Value	'F' Value	'β' Value
Academic Stress	5806.670	2903.335	181.952 (elementary school level)	5.135	.006
	292287.405	565.353	178.161 (high school level)		
	298094.075		186.532 (higher secondary level)		
Teaching Competency	6083.353	3041.677	201.080 (elementary school level)	3.678	.020
	587210.178	1135.803	195.684 (high school level)		
	593293.531		204.089 (higher secondary level)		

With reference to Table 6, the grade level of schoolteachers exhibits a significant difference among elementary, high school, and higher secondary grades in their academic stress and teaching competency, as the calculated 'F' values (5.135) and (3.678), respectively. Moreover, the above table indicates that higher secondary grade teacher's possessed higher academic stress and teaching competency compared to their counterparts. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference among the grade level of schoolteachers with respect to academic stress and teaching competency was rejected.

Null Hypothesis 6

There is no significant relationship between academic stress and teaching competency of school teachers.

Table 7: Relationship between Academic Stress and Teaching Competency of School Teachers

Variable	Academic Stress	'γ' Value
Teaching Competency	-0.830	.000

With shown in Table 7, schoolteachers exhibit a significant relationship between academic stress and teaching competency, as the calculated 'γ' value of .0830 is significant, with a high negative correlation. This indicates that if academic stress increases, teachers' teaching competency will decrease; otherwise, academic stress will decrease the teaching competency of teachers. Hence, the null hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between academic stress and the teaching competency of schoolteachers.

Findings

The following findings drawn from the above analysis;

1. The level of academic stress and teaching competency moderate level for school teachers.

2. The academic stress of male and female schoolteachers differs significantly, but the teaching competency of schoolteachers differs significantly with regard to gender.
3. The academic stress of joint and nuclear family school teachers did not differ significantly, but the teaching competency of joint and nuclear family school teachers differed significantly.
4. The different age groups of schoolteachers differ significantly in their academic stress and teaching competency. In addition, the older age groups possessed a high level of academic stress and teaching competency.
5. The experiences of schoolteachers differ significantly in their academic stress and teaching competency. In addition, highly experienced teachers had high levels of academic stress and teaching competency.
6. The academic stress and teaching competency of school teachers showed significant negative relationship.

Result Interpretation and Discussion

The results of this study revealed moderate levels of academic stress and teaching competency. The differential analysis showed that the academic stress of schoolteachers differed significantly with respect to gender, age, experience, and grade level of teachers, but the nature of family did not differ significantly. However, the teaching competency of schoolteachers showed that the nature of family, age, experience, and grade level of teachers differed significantly, but the gender of schoolteachers did not differ significantly. The present results, once proved by the following studies, such as Sambasivarao Rachumallu (2020), male and female category teachers differed significantly, and male category teachers expressed high perceptions of teaching competency in high schools.

Teachers' perceptions of different age groups differed significantly, and teachers in the 35–45 years age group expressed high perceptions of teaching competency in high schools. Another study conducted by Harleen Kaur, reported that male teachers faced less stress than female teachers. In addition, the study by Ginish Gopal (2020) ^[8], conveyed that there is no significant difference between the ability of male and female student teachers to cope with academic stress at the secondary school level. Likewise, the study conducted by Hoovinbhavi (2021) ^[11], stated that there is a significant difference between teaching competency of male and female teachers group. Further, a study conducted by Savita Mishra (2017) ^[16], found that there was a significant difference in teaching competencies among secondary school teachers in relation to gender and teaching experience.

Conclusion

There is an urgent need to address the national crisis. Teachers play a critical role in children's lives, and teaching has become one of the most stressful occupations with alarmingly high rates of job dissatisfaction and turnover. This escalating crisis affects students' educational outcomes, thereby impacting their health. The present study provides comprehensive information about stress among schoolteachers. From the results of the study, it is clear that the schoolteachers were moderately stressed and competent. The findings of this study revealed that aged and experienced schoolteachers possessed the same level of academic stress and teaching competency. Similarly, higher secondary school teachers possessed a high level of academic stress and teaching competency. The results indicate that teachers' stress does not affect the competency level, but the government and stakeholders pay more attention to reducing the stress level of senior teachers to conduct refresher programs, seminars, and yoga training programs.

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