

Evaluating Factors Affecting Job Stress of Teachers in Selected Areas of Qom Education Office and Analyzing the Ways of Coping with Teachers' Stress

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ABSTRACT

This study survey six factors that affect job stress of teachers including students, colleague, performance appraisal, lack of participation in decision making, salary, benefits and training facilities. These six factors are independent variables and job stress is dependent variable. In this study, the Delphi technique was used in order to selecting the six independent variables. Statistical sample was 231 teachers (110 male and 121 female) of Qom. This is a descriptive survey and from the view of purpose is a practical research. In order to analyzing hypothesis Factor analysis was used. The results of this analysis proved that there is a significant and positive relationship among the six factors and job stress. Some strategies were obtained from the results to reduce teacher stress.

KEYWORDS: Job stress, factor analysis, technologies, students, colleague, salaries and benefits, performance appraisal, participation in decision making, coping strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

When Hawthorne Studies criticized the human-machine view of Taylor, the mental aspect and environment impact on the human were considered. So in order to achieving goals and encouraging employees, particular attention is given to the psychological aspects of them.

Also in today's world there are some stressors which sometime are the resulting of work environment. Despite mental pressure (stress) varies from a job to another job; certain occupations have been identified as stressful job. However, some job factors such as having responsibility, doing a job in a given time and continuous decisions are stressful in all jobs (Fairbrother, 2002, p.8). After that Hans Selye (1995) defined stress as new concept and widely discussed, and defined it as body responds to the demands of the environment (Ross and Altimer, 1998), the topics related to stress were organized into organizational studies and negative consequences of stress becoming a new topic in the field of human resources and organizational behavior.

Severe stress which has inappropriate effect on the individual and organization, can affect behavior physiologically (biologically) and cause to adverse reactions such as excessive use of tobacco, drugs, bitterness. The adverse reactions mostly are manifested by people as a temporary solution (Seyed Javadin, 2006, p.632). In occupations such as teaching in addition to these effects, a large group of students influenced by these factors which its negative results appear in the future.

Employees who are experiencing stress often have higher rates of delays, absenteeism and desertion, their performance reduce in terms of both quantitative and qualitative and increase number of incidents and complaints. Obviously, these kind of staff have low spirit, low motivation and also job satisfaction is very low (Guing, 2007, p.624). Perhaps the greatest cost which is most difficult to calculate caused by stress is damages which occur by the employees who engaged in the critical work (Foruzesh, 2006, p.24). It has been estimated that the costs of stress is between 100 million to 300 million dollars annually in America. These costs include absence in work, accidents, medical costs and reduced productivity (Nesordinet al, 2006, 115). The average of medical and hospital costs for these diseases is up to 15 thousand dollar for each person which is twofold of accident costs (Robins, 2005, p.950).

Stress can create positive or negative effects. As a positive effect, stress can induce us to do a special work or make some new knowledge and also stimulate us to create new landscapes. Studies show low or moderate levels of stress, as an energize factor, can improve performance. In this level, stress can increase efforts, stimulate creativity and encourage perseverance (Shermerhorn, 2001, p.411).

Researchers mainly involved in how stress is made and also the way by which people react to stress physiologically (biologically) and psychologically in stressful situations. When these factors were identified, organizations must be able to manage these stressors because they cause to anxious and worry, and finally becoming

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an obstacle to achieving organizational goals. In this regard the Occupational Health and Safety law 1970 and the other state laws of US have implied that employers are responsible for all work-related illnesses (Ghalebandi, 2006, p.3).

But the opposition resources help to constructing a shield against unwanted effects caused by severe stress (Ross and Altimer, 1998, p.205). Thus, managers should not simply ignore mental pressure or stress in organization. So in order to achieving organizational goals, the harmful stress should be restrained and thereupon the organization was managed more efficiently.

In this regard, the aim of this study is to investigate some of the teachers' job stressors and if possible suggest strategies for dealing with them.

It seems that stress has become an inevitable phenomenon of community and organizations. Stress can lead to consequences such as pain in the back, neck, head, heart attacks and stomach ulcers. Natural consequence of stress for organization is reduction of efficiency. In the U.S. and other Western countries, billions of dollars are spent annually for stress disorders (Abtahi, 2006, p.349; Robbins, 2005, p.950; Karami and Godarzi, 2003, p.34) which these expenses are differ from hidden and incalculable costs.

Since the job burnout is mainly caused by stress, employees who experienced burnout and amortization lost their earlier excitement for work and in many cases leave their jobs (Jazani, 2001, p.392).

Perhaps the best way to deal with stress is eliminating factors that can cause stress, but in most cases this is not possible and must somehow adjust ourselves with the stress and bear it and also and reduce its severity (Alvani, 2005, p.298). About the stress, in some cases, stress is integrated and linked with the job and cannot be solved but we can reduce it until we can bear it.

Teachers as a basis for the development of communities who deal with training of students for the future of community, are the people who their physical and mental health have a direct impact on students. There is no doubt that the existence of health teachers both mentally and physically result in better education and training, respect to talents and consequently development of the society (Sattari et al, 2005, 168).

Job stress varies from a job to another job (SeyedJavadein, 2006, p.627) and people react to it and use specific coping strategies based on their personality and their assessment of those factors. In this regard, studies related to stressors and the strategies for coping them are needed in all jobs especially in teaching. Mental pressure caused by work is one of the most critical issues of work life and health in today industrial complex world. In comparison with the factors which threaten human resources, stress is the most destructive, eliminates many sources and would impose a heavy cost on managers (Grayson, 2008, p.1350). Only a few numbers of employees have the ability to avoid or deal with it. There is plenty of evidence which stress has negative and destructive effects on physical and mental health and efficiency of employees (Alfdilet al, 2008, p.1104). Job stress of teachers which has been linked to the difficulties of recruiting, retaining and health of them, isconsider in recent years. For example, in Hong Kong, suicide due to job stress among teachers has become a common problem (Jain, 2008, p.357).

Teachers in addition to the role of education office employees have the great role of training students which are future capital of community. This implies the importance of studying the coping strategy of stress.

Regarding to my two years' experience in education, I observed that some of the teachers who have a good experience, expertise and ability, gradually over the next few years after their entry into the education organization, their performance will be diminished and a variety of physical and mental disorders were appeared for them which affected both students and their colleagues. When they were asked about the reasons, any of them spoke about a particular reason such as voice pollution, noise, lack of satisfaction with the environment, lack of job security, low salaries, conflicting objectives, colleagues, etc. For this reason, I have looked for an opportunity to study the occupational stressors and ways of coping with it. Therefore based on the main research question, "What are the causes of occupational stress among teachers of Qom?" the aim of this study is to identify these factors and provide the ways and strategies to cope with those.

Research objectives

The main objective

The main objective of this research is identifying the important factors affecting the job stress of teachers in education office of Qom and providing strategies to coping with these factors.

Secondary objectives

Secondary objectives of this study are:

1. interest of learning in student
2. assessing teachers-students interactions
3. assessing quality of work life of teachers
4. assessing academic quality of education office
5. assessing knowledge of those who involved in education

6. prioritization of stressors

Research hypotheses

There are six hypotheses in this study include:

H₁: There is a significant relationship among lack of student interest in learning and job stress of teachers.

H₂: There is a significant relationship among the lack of educational facilities and job stress of teachers.

H₃: There is a significant relationship among salaries and benefits received by teachers and job stress of teachers.

H₄: There is a significant relationship among poor performance appraisal of teachers and job stress of teachers.

H₅: There is a significant relationship among lack of teachers' participation in administrative decisionmaking and job stress of teachers.

H₆: There is a significant relationship among the lack of sincere cooperation between teachers and job stress of teachers.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, in order to achieve desired goals and given the nature of research, the descriptive-survey study has been used. The aim of these kinds of studies is providing a real, objective and systematic description of the documentation of a situation or an issue. And also the focus is on clearing of reality and providing appropriate solutions. Due to circumstances and the parameters of the statistical population they should be studied. This is an applicable research from the view of objective.

Statistical population

The statistical population of this research includes all teachers of education office of Qom in region 4. The statistical population is limited and its total population is 736 which 369 of them are female and 367 of them are male.

Sampling

A sample is selecting a percentage of statistical population which represents the whole of it. To ensure that the selected sample represents the real population, random sampling must be run. In this study stratified sampling method was used.

Due to these properties, the size of sample is estimated based on the bellow formula:

$$n \geq \frac{736 \times (1/96)^2 \times (0/4)^2}{735 \times (0/05)^2 + (1/96)^2 \times (0/4)^2} = \frac{452}{2.4} \cong 189$$

Data collection methods:

Data collection methods in this study are library and field research. In the first method, we use the Persian and English books and papers by referring to library and information centers. In the second method the questionnaire was designed according to hypotheses. Then it was distributed among some teachers of Qom. After receiving the questionnaire, regarding to statistical techniques, data analysis was performed. The researcher used interview and observation in order to collecting data. The questionnaire consists of 31 questions that the questions 1 to 6 are related to the first factor means "lack of student interest in learning", questions 7 to 12 are related to the second factor means "lack of educational facilities", questions 13 to 17 are related to the "lack of sincere cooperation between teachers", questions 18 to 22 are related to the "lack of teachers' participation in administrative decision making", questions 23 to 27 are related to "poor performance appraisal of teachers", and questions 28 to 31 are related to the "salaries and benefits received by teachers".

Data analysis method

In this study, in order to data analysis the inferential statistical techniques were used. The main way to test hypotheses is factor analysis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job stress

The stress means interaction between working conditions and employee' characteristics in such a way that the demands of the workplace is more than that one can handle or deal with them. Generally the job stress is "The

accumulation of stressors and job-related situations which most people agree that they are stressors” (Ross and Altimer, 1998, p.36).

Lack of student interest in learning

Indifference of students to learning refers to a set of symptoms and behaviors that indicate students are indifferent to lessons and teacher and also are not interested in learning.

Lack of teachers' participation in administrative decision making

Decision making is choosing an alternative among a large number of them. The main task of the decision maker is to get the solutions and the results of them and selecting the best (Alvani, 2005, p.178). The teachers' participation is a collaborative process which its goal is encouraging staffs and members of organization and getting commitment to more contribution in the further success of the organization (Robbins, 2007, p.213).

Performance appraisal

Performance evaluation is a process in which supervisors assess and report about performance, achievements, abilities, readiness for future success and other characteristics of the employees. This assessment is usually annually. Conversely, performance management is a managerial, continuous, comprehensive, holistic and natural process which clarifies mutual expectations and emphasis on the supportive (Armstrong, 2007, p.327).

Employee relations

Employee relations include all aspects of personnel management which are related to all staffs. Its major objectives is making policies and procedures in order to improve collaboration, minimizing unnecessary conflict, enabling employees to decide on the proper role and keeping them informed of the matters which are related to them (SeyedJavadein, 2006, p.548).

Educational facilities

Educational facilities include technology, physical resources, financial resources and human resources which are needed in education (Moorhead and Griffin, 1995, pp.368-360)

Salaries and benefits

Salaries are the cash and any other benefits which an employee will receive from employer for compensation (Abtahi, 2006, p.175). Benefits are additional remuneration except basic salary like redeem and health insurance. Non-financial rewards are non-monetary benefits such as the satisfaction caused by playing a role in an organization and enjoy a pleasant workplace (Jazani, 1999, p.35).

The ways of coping with stress

According to Felekman and Lazarus (1991) the "coping" is cognitive and behavioral efforts of a person to cope with stress and tolerate, reduce or minimize its impact. This action is a complex combination of things that people can do for coping with stress. Lazarus model especially emphasizes this aspect of the coping action because this model implies that cope with stress includes all behavioral and cognitive efforts which a person does in order to remove stressor demands (Ross and Altimer, 1998, p.33).

Research variables

In order to doing any scientific research the variables must be determined. A variable is a quantity which its amount will vary from person to person.

Independent variable: It is a variable which is measured, manipulated or selected in order to measuring its impact on another variable

Dependent variable: This variable is observed and measured in order to determining the effect of independent variables (Delavar, 2001, p.56)

According to these definitions, the independent variables in this study are: performance appraisal, salary and benefits, colleague, students, educational facilities, participation in decision making and the dependent variable is job stress.

Data analyses

In order to analyzing data, factor analysis through the SPSS was used. In order to understanding of the main factors of a special phenomenon or summarizing a set of data, factor analysis is a good method. Factor analysis can be confirmatory or exploratory. The exploratory factor analysis the researcher sought to find a domain of unknown dimensions but in confirmatory factor analysis, confirming the extent and factors related to them is considered.

In this study, confirmatory factor analysis was used to test the research hypotheses. The six factors (lack of students' interest in learning, lack of educational facilities, salaries and benefits received by teachers, poor performance appraisal, lack of participation in decision-making and lack of cooperation) in the form of 31 questions is set. Because the aim of this study is assessing the relationship between stress and the above six factors, the

variable stress is placed between these 31 designed questions. In fact above six factors are independent variables and stress is the dependent variable. The rotation which is used is Varimax Rotation.

To testing the hypotheses, first we examine the adequacy of sampling.

- The adequacy of sampling and admissibility of factor analysis.

Table1) the results of Bartlett and Kaiser-Meyer test

sig	χ^2	KMO
0.000	2405.128	0.714

Given to KMO (which is more than 0.7) and the sig which is less than 0.05, we can conclude that data are appropriate for factor analysis. In the data table, the questions which their correlation coefficient is less than 0.5 are eliminated. After deleting these questions, we test the hypotheses by the remaining questions.

Table2) the questions and their correlation coefficients

condition	Correlation coefficient	factor	questions	rows
deleted	.421	1	How much does it bother you if the scores of your lessen was less than other lessons?	Q1
	.516	1	How much does it bother you if students are absent or come late into the class?	Q2
deleted	.433	1	To what extent do you prefer the high participated class by students to low participated one?	Q3
deleted	.251	1	How much does it bother you if while teaching, students to discuss topics which is not related to class?	Q4
deleted	.290	1	How much does it bother you if while teaching, students do miscellaneous activities?	Q5
	.565	1	How much do you get stress if students do not their homework?	Q6
deleted	.440	2	How much are you bothered by the lack of tools needed for teaching?	Q7
	.636	2	To what extent are you anxious when you work with an expensive educational tool?	Q8
deleted	.438	2	To what extent has an inappropriate educational environment a negative impact on teaching?	Q9
	.521	2	How much are you bothered when you have to work with an advanced information technology?	Q10
	.578	2	How much are you bothered when you have to work with a new educational tool?	Q11
	.577	2	How much does it bother you if your teaching method was no longer useful?	Q12
	.622	3	How much does it bother you if there were mistrust and suspicion among your colleague?	Q13
deleted	.437	3	How much does it bother you if your colleague does nottolerate criticism?	Q14
	.642	3	To what extent do you feel discomfort by companion with bad colleague?	Q15
	.593	3	How much do you get stress if you faced with a problem with the lack of support from your colleagues?	Q16
	.517	3	To what extent are you anxious when your colleagues are conservative in releasing information?	Q17

	.547	4	To what extent do you get stress by unprofessional decisions of top managers?	Q18
deleted	.464	4	To what extent are you anxious when planning for classes performed without consultation with you?	Q19
	.542	4	To what extent are you concerned that you have no representative in huge decisions of organization?	Q20
	.710	4	How much are you bothered that your suggestions or your colleagues' suggestions are not accurately assessed?	Q21
	.633	4	To what extent are you concerned that the approved proposals were not implemented?	Q22
	.546	5	How much are you bothered that in performance appraisal of teachers, justice is not respected?	Q23
	.717	5	How much are you bothered that the appraiserinterfere his personal comments?	Q24
deleted	.380	5	How much are you bothered that the appraiserdoesn't have any information about your duties and the way of doing works?	Q25
deleted	.262	5	How much do you get stress when the factors used in performance appraisal are not acceptable for you?	Q26
deleted	.470	5	How much do you get stress when in theperformance appraisal, the liaison and negative relationship is considered?	Q27
deleted	.456	6	How much do you get stress if you were not affording for traveling and entertainment?	Q28
	.708	6	How much do you get stress ifyou do not have enough savings for the future?	Q29
	.507	6	How much do you get stress because of your low salary?	Q30
	.633	6	How much are you bothered if the other employees receive higher salaries and benefits?	Q31

Now the new table with the questions which their correlation coefficient is more than 0.5 is obtained and provided in table 3.

Table3) the questions with the correlation coefficient more than 0.5

Correlation	Factor	Question
0.516	1	Q2
0.565	1	Q6
0.636	2	Q8
0.521	2	Q10
0.576	2	Q11
0.577	2	Q12
0.622	3	Q13
0.642	3	Q15
0.593	3	Q16
0.517	3	Q17
0.547	4	Q18
0.542	4	Q20
0.710	4	Q21
0.633	4	Q22
0.546	5	Q23
0.717	5	Q24
0.708	6	Q29
0.507	6	Q30
0.633	6	Q31

The next step each hypothesis is tested separately by selected questions. Total variance is 785.51 percent and in hypotheses analyses the variance of each factor will express.

Table4) the variances of six factors

Aggregate variance	Percent of variance	Factors
8.725	8.725	Lack of student interest in learning
17.756	9.031	Educational facilities defect
26.849	9.093	Salary and benefit
34.477	7.628	Poor performance appraisal
43.159	8.682	Lacking of participation in decision making
51.785	8.626	Lacking of cooperation among teachers

Analyzing hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis was "there is a significant relationship among lack of student interest in learning and job stress of teachers". The designed questions related to hypothesis 1, before factor analysis and after it, are shown in table5.

Table5) the questions related to hypothesis 1

Correlation coefficient	After factor analysis	Before factor analysis	lack of student interest in learning
	-	Q1	
+0.561	Q2	Q2	
	-	Q3	
	-	Q4	
	-	Q5	
+0.565	Q6	Q6	

The questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 were designed for hypothesis 1 but after factor analysis the questions 1, 3, 4 and 5 were eliminated because their correlation coefficients were less than 0.5. And therefore the two questions 2 and 6 were set into one group. Regarding to grouping before factor analysis and after it, which is equal for these questions and also because of their positive correlation, we can claim (with 95% confidence in Bartlett test) that there is a positive and significant relationship among lack of student interest in learning and job stress of teachers. The variance of this variable is 8.725.

Analyzing hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis was "there is a significant relationship among the lack of educational facilities and job stress of teachers". The designed questions related to hypothesis 2, before factor analysis and after it, are shown in table6.

Table6) the questions related to hypothesis 2

Correlation coefficient	After factor analysis	Before factor analysis	lack of educational facilities
	-	Q7	
+0.636	Q8	Q8	
	-	Q9	
+0.521	Q10	Q10	
+0.576	Q11	Q11	
+0.577	Q12	Q12	

The questions 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 were designed for hypothesis 2 but after factor analysis the questions 7 and 9 were eliminated because their correlation coefficients were less than 0.5. And therefore the questions 8, 10, 11 and 12 were set into one group. Regarding to grouping before factor analysis and after it, which is equal for these questions and also because of their positive correlation, we can claim (with 95% confidence in Bartlett test) that there is a significant relationship among the lack of educational facilities and job stress of teachers. 9.031 of total variance are assigned to this variable.

Analyzing hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis was "there is a significant relationship among salaries and benefits received by teachers and job stress of teachers". The designed questions related to hypothesis 3, before factor analysis and after it, are shown in table7.

Table7) the questions related to hypothesis 3

Correlation coefficient	After factor analysis	Before factor analysis	salaries and benefits received by teachers
	-	Q28	
+0.708	Q29	Q29	
+0.507	Q30	Q30	
+0.633	Q31	Q31	

The questions 28, 29, 30 and 31 were designed for hypothesis 3 but after factor analysis the question 28 was eliminated because its correlation coefficient was less than 0.5. And therefore the questions 29, 30 and 31 were set into one group. Regarding to grouping before factor analysis and after it, which is equal for these questions and also because of their positive correlation, we can claim (with 95% confidence in Bartlett test) that there is a significant relationship among salaries and benefits received by teachers and job stress of teachers. 9.093 of total variance are assigned to this variable.

Analyzing hypothesis 4

The fourth hypothesis was "there is a significant relationship among poor performance appraisal of teachers and job stress of teachers". The designed questions related to hypothesis 4, before factor analysis and after it, are shown in table 8.

Table 8) the questions related to hypothesis 4

Correlation coefficient	After factor analysis	Before factor analysis	poor performance appraisal
+0.546	Q23	Q23	
+0.717	Q24	Q24	
	-	Q25	
	-	Q26	
	-	Q27	
	-		

The questions 23, 24, 25, 26 and 27 were designed for hypothesis 4 but after factor analysis the questions 25, 26 and 27 were eliminated because their correlation coefficients were less than 0.5. And therefore the questions 23 and 24 were set into one group. Regarding to grouping before factor analysis and after it, which is equal for these questions and also because of their positive correlation, we can claim (with 95% confidence in Bartlett test) that there is a significant relationship among poor performance appraisal of teachers and job stress of teachers. 8.628 of total variance are assigned to this variable.

Analyzing hypothesis 5

The fifth hypothesis was "there is a significant relationship among lack of teachers' participation in administrative decision making and job stress of teachers". The designed questions related to hypothesis 5, before factor analysis and after it, are shown in table 9.

Table 9) the questions related to hypothesis 5

Correlation coefficient	After factor analysis	Before factor analysis	lack of teachers' participation in administrative decision making
	-	Q18	
	-	Q19	
+0.542	Q20	Q20	
+0.710	Q21	Q21	
+0.633	Q22	Q22	
	-	Q23	

The questions 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23 were designed for hypothesis 5 but after factor analysis the questions 18, 19 and 23 were eliminated because their correlation coefficients were less than 0.5. And therefore the questions 20, 21 and 22 were set into one group. Regarding to grouping before factor analysis and after it, which is equal for these questions and also because of their positive correlation, we can claim (with 95% confidence in Bartlett test) that there is a significant relationship among lack of teachers' participation in administrative decision making and job stress of teachers. 8.682 of total variance are assigned to this variable.

Analyzing hypothesis 6

The sixth hypothesis was "there is a significant relationship among the lack of sincere cooperation between teachers and job stress of teachers". The designed questions related to hypothesis 6, before factor analysis and after it, are shown in table 10.

Table 10) the questions related to hypothesis 6

Correlation coefficient	After factor analysis	Before factor analysis	lack of sincere cooperation between teachers
+0.622	Q13	Q13	
	-	Q14	
+0.642	Q15	Q15	
+0.593	Q16	Q16	
+0.517	Q17	Q17	

The questions 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 were designed for hypothesis 6 but after factor analysis the question 14 was eliminated because its correlation coefficient was less than 0.5. And therefore the questions 13, 15, 16 and 17 were

set into one group. Regarding to grouping before factor analysis and after it, which is equal for these questions and also because of their positive correlation, we can claim (with 95% confidence in Bartlett test) that there is a significant relationship among lack of sincere cooperation between teachers and job stress of teachers. 8.625 of total variance are assigned to this variable.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this research the main question was "which factors cause to teachers' job stress in education office of Qom in region 4?" The results of factor analyses show that the six factors (lack of students' interest in learning, lack of educational facilities, salaries and benefits received by teachers, poor performance appraisal, lack of participation in decision-making, and lack of cooperation among teachers) represent 51.785% of the stressors of teachers' job stress in education office of Qom in region 4. So the above six factors which represent more than 51% of the stressors of teachers' job stress are very important and prominent among 54 factors.

The factors are prioritized by their importance as follows:

1. salaries and benefits received by teachers
2. lack of educational facilities
3. lack of students' interest in learning
4. lack of participation in decision-making
5. lack of sincere cooperation among teachers
6. poor performance appraisal

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