

DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS' STRESS INVENTORY

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to develop an indigenous inventory, for the measurement of occupational role stress among the university teachers as at present no appropriate test is available which measures role stress among university teachers in the Pakistani cultural context. University teachers stress inventory (UTSI) was developed in this research in four interrelated stages including: items generation, items evaluations for determining the qualitative properties of items, tryout of the first draft to determine the quantitative properties of the items, and final tryout to determine the psychometric properties of the scale. Data was collected from twenty private and public sector universities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Finalized UTSI consisted of 54 items with five point rating scale pertaining to six subscales, such as, Work strain Scale (WSS), Student Related Stress Scale (SRSS), Colleagues Related Stress Scale (CRSS), Administration Related Stress Scale (ARSS), Personal Factor Leads to Stress Scale (PFSS) and Manifestations of Stress Scale (MSS). The scores assigned to these categories ranged from one to five. The cutoff score was determined on the basis of percentiles rank. Score of 125 was considered as mild stress and above 162 was considered as high stress. The scores between 144 and 162 were considered as indicating moderate stress. The higher score on UTSI indicates higher occupational role stress in the respondents. The psychometric properties yielded that it is a reliable and valid tool to measures occupational role stress, among the university teachers.

Keywords: University teachers stress inventory, Work strain Scale, Student Related Stress Scale, Colleagues Related Stress Scale, Administration Related Stress Scale, Personal Factor Leads to Stress Scale, Manifestations of Stress Scale (MSS).

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Introduction

Occupational stress is “a condition of mental and physical exertion brought about as a result of harassing events or dissatisfying elements or general features of the working environment.” It is a feeling experience, when we lose confidence in our capability to cope with a situation. (Okebukola and Jegede, as cited in Luthans, 1995). Levi (1996) believed that “Stress is caused by a multitude of demands (Stressors) such as inadequate fit between what we need and what we are capable of.

National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH, 2000) described occupational stress as harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. The concept of occupational stress is often confused with challenge, but these concepts are not the same. Challenge energizes us psychologically and physically, and it motivates us to learn new skills and master our occupations. When a challenge is met, the employee feels relaxed and satisfied. On the contrary, the inability to meet the challenge leads to increased stress and lower job satisfaction and commitment. Thus, occupational stressors may hinder employee’s work performance and organizational development. Occupational stress is a well-known feature of low motivation and self-respect, lessening in performance, high turnover and sick leave, low job satisfaction, low organizational commitment, low quality products, poor internal communication and conflicts etc. (Schabracq and Cooper, 2000).

Teachers are considered the builder of nation as they play a significant role in capacity building of nation in facing challenges and tough environment. They are the ones who translate educational theories and policies into practice by implementing them in practical situations. The role of teachers in any society is vital and no other profession has earned as much respect as teaching profession (Mohanty, 2000).

According to Keirse, (2005) teachers are abstract in their thought and speech, cooperative in their style of achieving goals, directive and extravert in their interpersonal relations. Teachers are especially capable of bringing out the hidden talent or potential of each learner. Teachers expect the very best of those around them, and this expectation, usually expressed as enthusiasm and encouragement, motivates action in others and desire to live up to their expectations. They bear a powerful influence on the situation and person around them. In order to impress a healthy far-reaching effect, teachers need to be healthy, understanding

and having good habits along with need to be careful about their personality, language, reading, writing, speaking competence, professional dignity and attitude towards students. Society has delegated great responsibility to teachers in the formation of socially acceptable patterns of behavior in youth from an early age. Teachers have become increasingly aware of the importance of emotional growth and development of their pupils. Teachers effectively deal with each learner. In fact, teachers occupy a special place in pupil's life. The example set by them has long-term effects on their personalities (Wadhwa, 2000).

University faculty plays a vital role in the improvement and development of knowledge and innovation, in addition to education and training. Fast changing educational process in present century affecting educational process and teacher has to respond to both the demands of knowledge as well as the needs of the society meaningfully, understanding and coping with the new trends in the educational system. Moreover, the increase in the body of knowledge in each discipline poses an important challenge on how to encapsulate such enhanced knowledge in a meaningful manner. A teacher has to find the right type of knowledge mix to cater the needs of the students. The pressures related to human life are cropping up day by day, society is changing abruptly the life styles, modes, ways, relationship, and other psychological variables that have increasing effects on teaching profession at university level consequently teaching becomes a profession with complex work environment that leads to occupational role stress (Verma, 1998). A teacher has to live the same society in which people belonging to other profession are living. Like other, he/she too lives in modern age, facing pressures, stress, strain, anxiety, burnouts and low commitment because of the working environment and individual difference. In fact, due to advancements in the field of science and technology and ever-increasing pressure to perform different roles in different situations, the present day teacher finds himself or herself more worried and tense. Facets of performance, such as creativity, classroom management and implementation of educational techniques may suffer when teachers experience high level of stress (Parsad, 1990).

Trendall (as cited in Verma, 1998) defines teachers stress as a multi-factorial concept composed of factors within the individual, the organization nature of work place and society that leads to the lowering of feelings of personal self worth, achievement, effectiveness and coping within one's professional role.

In the past university, teaching was regarded as a low stress occupation. Although not highly paid in comparison to other professionals in the commercial sector. People in the other professions have envied them for their tenure, light workloads, flexibility, benefits such as overseas trips for study or for the conference purposes and freedom to pursue their own research interests etc. However, during recent years workload on teachers has increased. Unproductive level of stress might be harmful to teachers and can affect their teaching, personal lives and most importantly their students (Fisher, as cited in Verma 1998).

As human beings are complex and diverse in nature and awareness of human resource is very useful for perfect management, best place to start it is by knowing employee's needs, working conditions, and the factors causing stress to employee. The knowledge of human resource gives a vision upon which a plan for professional or personal development can be created. In order to become more aware of human resource, an understanding is required in many psychological areas.

At present, no appropriate test is available which can measure the phenomena of occupational role stress among university teachers in socio cultural context of Pakistan. In the area of occupational role stress, most of the researches were carried out in the western context, where work environment, facilities, interpersonal relationships, teaching methodologies, academic issues, curricula, budget and socio cultural environment are different from our context. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to develop an indigenous research instrument relevant to cultural context of Pakistan.

Method

The main objective of the study was to develop an indigenous university teacher's stress inventory and establish its psychometric properties. This goal was attained in four interrelated stages namely; items generation, items evaluations for determining the qualitative properties of items, tryout of the first draft to determine the quantitative properties of the items, and final tryout to determine the psychometric properties of the scale.

Items Generation

For the purpose of item generation, a sample of 20 teachers was collected from International Islamic University, Fast National University,

