

COPING STYLES OF SCHOOL TEACHERS IN RELATION TO THEIR PERCEIVED STRESS

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ABSTRACT

The present study reveals coping styles of school teachers in relation to their perceived stress of Ludhiana district. For this study 150 school teachers were taken. Coping styles questionnaire prepared by the investigator and Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) - by Cohen (1994) were used to collect the data. No Significant relationship was found between coping styles and perceived stress among school teachers of Ludhiana district as well as male, female and below five years of teaching experiences but significant relation between coping styles and perceived stress among school teachers above five years of teaching experiences. Further no significant difference in the mean scores of coping styles was found among male and female school teachers of Ludhiana district as well as on the basis of teaching experiences of the school teachers.

Keywords: Coping styles, Perceived stress, School Teachers.

Everybody has stressed both good stress and bad stress. Some stress can be motivating, but too much stress can wreak havoc on one's physical, mental, and emotional health. In the educational process, the teacher occupies a very important place. A teacher is the medium through which objectives and plans can be actualized. For this, the teacher must have sound mental and physical health. Teaching is a profession where every day radical changes occur in the educational system. These changes are likely to increase rather than reduce the level of stress in teachers. School teachers experience higher level of stress due to demanding situation, while dealing with adolescent students. Overcrowded classes, heavy syllabus and inadequate facilities make teachers' work more complex. Thus, teaching is behaviour, an organized set of cognitive acts or operations of teaching both overt and covert, organized logically and meaningfully. It has a configuration, which can be analyzed, reasoned out, described explained and changed for improvement.

Perceived stress is the feelings or thoughts that an individual has about how much stress they are

under at a given point in time or over a given time period. Perceived stress incorporates feelings about the uncontrollability and unpredictability of one's life, how often one has to deal with irritating hassles, how much change is occurring in one's life, and confidence in one's ability to deal with problems or difficulties. It is not measuring the types or frequencies of stressful events which have happened to a person, but rather how an individual feels about the general stressfulness of their life and their ability to handle such stress. Individuals may suffer similar negative life events but appraise the impact or severity of these to different extents as a result of factors such as personality, coping resources, and support. In this way, perceived stress reflects the interaction between an individual and their environment which they appraise.

Various studies found positive relationship between perceived stress and coping styles that like Zedan (2012); Singhai (2014); Ashkzari and Piryaiei (2015) and Bharathi (2016). These studies found the mediatory role of coping in relation of teacher

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perceived stress and teacher-student relationship. In fact, these study sought to investigate the process by which the factor of job stress is linked with teacher-student relationship, by including coping mechanism as a potential mediator.

For a long time majority of the researchers preferred some specific areas only and their focus of attention were on job satisfaction, leadership quality, perception, motivation and child behaviour, etc. They ignored the important areas like teachers behaviour, behavioural problems, teachers attitude towards teaching, teachers adjustment, teacher stress, teaching competence and so on. Due to many unknown reasons today, the quality of education has gone down. Everyone knows that teaching is one of the most stressful jobs. In fact, according to a *lot of* researched and studies it's actually the single most stressful job 80% of teachers report being severely stressed at work and we are constantly hearing about teachers who get so stressed that they end up having to quit their jobs or that they end up having mental breakdowns.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the coping styles of school teachers.
- To study the Perceived Stress of school teachers.
- To study the relationship between Coping Styles & Perceived Stress of school teachers.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There exists no significant relationship between Coping Styles and Perceived Stress among school teachers.
 - a) with respect to gender.
 - b) with respect to teaching experience (below 5 years and above 5 years).
2. There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Coping Styles among school teachers.
 - a) with respect to gender.
 - b) with respect to teaching experience (below 5 years and above 5 years).
3. There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Perceived Stress among school teachers

- a) With respect to gender.
- b) With respect to teaching experience (below 5 years and above 5 years).

Method

Research Method

The present study was a descriptive research survey which was conducted on teachers of schools of Ludhiana district. The investigator classified the sample into male and female school teachers.

Sample

For the present study 150 school teachers were taken randomly from schools of Ludhiana district. The sample includes 75 male teachers and 75 female teachers. 75 teachers had above 5 years' experience and 75 teachers had below years experience.

Measures

The tools used to collect data were:

Coping styles questionnaire to be developed by the investigator - Coping strategies Questionnaire was prepared by investigator. It consists of 40 items which are easy to understand (even by low literates) in English language. Initial draft of questionnaire consisted of 60 items which are easy to understand (even by low literates) in English language. The questionnaire was given for expert opinion to 2 educators. There are 5 responses alternative-strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree is to be scored 1 for strongly disagree, 2 for agree, 3 for undecided, 4 for disagree and 5 for strongly disagree. This draft was sent to experts for their monitoring. The experts gave various views which were considered a final draft was prepared. The final draft was considered 40 items. Each item is rated on a four-point Likert scale according to the degree to which a person uses a particular coping strategy. Scores range from "never used" to "used frequently," with the higher score representing increased use of that particular coping strategy. The questionnaire was scored by giving them 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 to the responses of strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree.

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) - by Cohen (1994) - The *Perceived Stress Scale* (PSS) is the

most widely used psychological instrument for measuring the perception of stress. It is a measure of the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as stressful. Items were designed to tap how unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded respondents find their lives. The scale also includes a number of direct queries about current levels of experienced stress. The PSS was designed for use in community samples with at least a junior high school education. The items are easy to understand, and the response alternatives are simple to grasp. Moreover, the questions are of a general nature and hence are relatively free of content specific to any subpopulation group. The questions in the PSS ask about feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, respondents are asked how often they felt a certain way. PSS scores are obtained by giving 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 (Never, Almost never, Sometimes, fairly often and very often) to the four positively stated items and 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 to negatively stated items.

Results and Discussions

Table 1: Co-efficient of correlation between Coping Styles and Perceived Stress among school teachers

Group	N	r
Total	150	0.136123 ^{NS}
Male	75	0.162191 ^{NS}
Female	75	0.122547
Above 5 years teaching experience	75	0.341543 ^{**}
Below 5 years teaching experience	75	-0.06233

*-Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 level of confidence

NS- Non significant at 0.01 and 0.05 level

Table 1 represents co-efficient of correlation of Coping Styles and Perceived Stress among school teachers. The co-efficient of correlation is 0.136123 which is not significant at both levels of confidence i.e. 0.05 and 0.01. This indicates that there is no significant relationship between Coping Styles and Perceived Stress among school teachers. Hence, hypothesis 1 stating, "There exists no significant relationship between Coping Styles and Perceived Stress among school teachers", stands supported. Our results go against the study conducted by Higgine and Endler (1995) and Srivastava (2003).

This basically may be due to differences in the scenario of schools and teaching process now and then.

Table 1 represents co-efficient of correlation of Coping Styles and Perceived Stress among male school teachers. The co-efficient of correlation is 0.162191 which is not significant at both levels of confidence i.e. 0.05 and 0.01. This indicates that there is no significant relationship between Coping Styles and Perceived Stress among male school teachers. Hence, hypothesis 1(a) stating, "There exists no significant relationship between Coping Styles and Perceived Stress among male school teachers", stands supported. Our study is in concert with study conducted by Wang and Dai (2011) which quotes that male teachers score higher than female teachers in their correlation between perceived stress and coping styles.

Table 1 represents co-efficient of correlation of Coping Styles and Perceived Stress among female teachers. The co-efficient of correlation is 0.122547 which is not significant at both levels of confidence i.e. 0.05 and 0.01. This indicates that there is no significant relationship between Coping Styles and Perceived Stress among female teachers. Hence, hypothesis 1(a) stating, "There exists no significant relationship between Coping Styles and Perceived Stress among female teachers", stands supported.

Table 1 represents co-efficient of correlation of Coping Styles and Perceived Stress among school teachers with respect to above 5 years or more teaching experience. The co-efficient of correlation is 0.341543 which is significant at both levels of confidence i.e. 0.05 and 0.01. This indicates that there is significant relationship between Coping Styles and Perceived Stress among school teachers with 5 years or more teaching experience. Since, these teachers have spent more years in their jobs as such they have become used to with their duties and are less stressed in their profession. Hence, hypothesis 1(b) stating, "There exists no significant relationship between Coping Styles and Perceived Stress among school teachers with respect to above 5 years teaching experience", stands unsupported.

This table 1 represent co-efficient of correlation of a Coping Styles and Perceived Stress among

school teachers with respect to below 5 years teaching experience. The co-efficient of correlation is -0.06233 which is not significant at both levels of confidence i.e. 0.05 and 0.01. This indicates that there is no significant relationship between Coping Styles and Perceived Stress among school teachers with respect to below 5 years teaching experience, because they are new entrants in their profession and hence are unable to cope. Hence, hypothesis 2(b) stating, “There exists no significant relationship between Coping Styles and Perceived Stress among school teachers with respect to below 5 yrs. teaching experience”, stands supported. The negative sign of ‘r’ indicates that as Perceived Stress increases the Coping Styles decrease for teachers with experience less than 5 years as they are too immature to handle stress. Our study is in concert with the research conducted by Memeon (2008) which shows negative correlation between Coping Styles and Perceived Stress.

Table 2: Mean score of Coping Styles among school teachers in regard to gender

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	S. Ed.	t-ratio	Significant
Male	75	121.7	14.37	78.12	0.065	Not significant
Female	75	126.8	19.48			

Table 2 shows the mean scores of Coping Styles of school teachers in regard to gender. The mean scores of Coping Styles of male teachers is 121.7 and of female teachers is 126.8. S.D. of Coping Styles of male teachers is 14.37 and of female teachers is 19.48. The t-ratio is 0.065 which shows no significant difference exists in the mean scores of Coping Styles among school teachers in regard to gender at the both 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Hence, hypothesis 2(a) stating, “There exists no significant differences in the mean scores of Coping Styles among school teachers with respect to gender”, stands accepted. Females can easily cope with the situations as compared to males. This may be due to the fact that they perform multiple duties i.e. at organization or institution as well as home. So, they are more capable of coping up with each and every situation of life.

Table 3: Mean scores of Coping Styles among school teachers with respect to teaching experience

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	S. Ed.	t-ratio	Significant
Above 5 years	75	124.24	19.04	29.8	0.028	Not significant
Below 5 years	75	123.4	17.45			

Table 3 shows the mean scores of Coping Styles of school teachers in regard to teaching experience. The mean scores of Coping Styles of above 5 years teaching experience is 124.24 and of below 5 years teaching experience is 123.4. S.D. of Coping Styles of teachers above 5 years teaching experience is 19.04 and of teaching experience below 5 years is 17.45. The t-ratio is 0.028 which shows no significant difference exists in the mean scores of Coping Styles among school teachers in regard to teaching experience at the both 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Hence, hypothesis 2(b) stating, “There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Coping Styles among school teachers with respect to teaching experience”, stands accepted. The mean scores of Coping Styles above 5 years teaching experience is higher than in the comparison to below 5 years teaching experience. They have more experience in their profession. They are familiar with their duties and responsibilities as compared to the new entrants in profession (less than 5 years experience) as such teachers with more than 5 years experience are well acquainted with strategies of Coping Styles for proper adjustment.

Table 4: Mean score of Perceived Stress among school teachers in regard to gender

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	S. Ed.	t-ratio	Significant
Male	75	19.133	4.51	0.8117	0.246	Not significant
Female	75	18.933	5.395			

Table 4 shows mean scores of Perceived Stress of school teachers in regard to gender. The mean scores of Perceived Stress of male teachers is 19.133 and of female teachers is 18.933. S.D. of Perceived Stress of male teachers is 4.51 and of female teachers is 5.395. The t-ratio is 0.246 which is not significant of both the levels of confidence. Hence, hypothesis 3 (a) stating, “There exists no significant differences in the mean scores of Perceived Stress among school teachers with respect to gender”,

stands supported. It is further observed that mean scores of Perceived Stress among male school teachers are more favorable than female teachers. This may be due to the fact that male teachers may not seem satisfied with various consequences of their job status, salary, lack of availability of time to family etc. may increase their Perceived Stress.

Table 5: Mean scores of Perceived Stress among school teachers with respect to teaching experience

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	S. Ed.	t-ratio	Significant
Above 5 yrs	75	18.8	5.035	4.055	0.098	Not significant
Below 5 yrs.	75	19.2	4.9			

This table shows the mean scores of Perceived Stress of school teachers in regard to teaching experience. The mean scores of Perceived Stress of teachers above 5 years teaching experience is 18.8 and of below 5 years teaching experience is 19.2. S.D. of Perceived Stress of teachers above 5 years teaching experience is 5.035 and of teaching experience below 5 years is 4.9. The t-ratio is 0.098 which is not significant of both the levels of confidence. Hence, hypothesis 3(b) stating, "There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Perceived Stress among school teachers with respect to teaching experience." Stands supported. This may be due to the that teachers with less than 5 years of experience face more difficulties in their profession because they are in initial stage and hence, may be in dilemma.

Conclusions

On the basis of statistical analysis of data the following conclusions were drawn.

- There exists no significant relationship between Coping Styles and Perceived Stress among school teachers. There exists no significant relationship between Coping Styles and Perceived Stress among male school teachers. Male teachers score higher than female teachers in their correlation between perceived stress and coping styles. There exists no significant relationship between Coping Styles and Perceived Stress among female school teachers. Female teachers score lower than male teachers in their correlation between perceived stress and coping styles. There exists no significant relationship between Coping Styles and Perceived Stress among school teachers with respect to above 5 years teaching experience. This indicates that these teachers who have spent time more than 5 years in their profession they become used to with their duties and better in their coping styles. There exists no significant relationship between Coping Styles and Perceived Stress among school teachers with respect to below 5 years teaching experience. This indicates that they are new entrants in their profession and hence are unable to cope.
- There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Coping Styles among school teachers with respect to gender. Female teachers score higher than male teachers. They can easily cope with the situations as compared to males. There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Coping Styles among school teachers with respect to teaching experience. The mean scores of coping styles above 5 years teaching experience is higher than in the comparison to below 5 years teaching experience. They have more experience in their profession. They are well acquainted with strategies of coping styles for proper adjustment. The mean scores of Coping Styles of female teachers are higher in comparison to male teachers. The mean scores of Coping Styles of above 5 years teaching experience are higher in comparison to below 5 years teaching experience. The mean scores of Coping Styles of school teachers lie in average range and show average coping styles.
- There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Perceived Stress among school teachers with respect to gender. The mean scores of perceived stress among school teachers are more favorable than female teachers. There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of Perceived Stress among school teachers with respect to teaching

experience. The mean scores of perceived stress below 5 years teaching experience is higher than in the comparison to above 5 years teaching experience. Teachers with less than 5 years of experience face more difficulties in their profession because they are in initial stage and hence, may be in dilemma. The mean scores of Perceived Stress of male teachers are higher in comparison to female teachers. The mean scores of Perceived Stress of below 5 years teaching experience are higher in comparison to above 5 years teaching experience. The mean scores of Perceived Stress of school teachers reveals that teachers have an average perceived stress.

Educational Implications

This study may be helpful for teachers to know their Coping Styles in relation to their perceived stress. It may help the administrators to know about whether male teachers are more stressed or female teachers are more stressed and hence let them know about their coping capacities. The administrators may provide opportunities for coping mechanism and perceived less stress. It may help the teachers to decide and implement strategies to cope their stress. This study may be helpful for the counselor and guidance worker, how can they cope up with teachers towards their perceived stress. The present study has multiple implications in the field of psychology and education. The findings of this study can become a source of information and guidance to teachers to overcome their perceived stress.

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