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Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow

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A Study on Understanding the Factors Contributing To Teachers' Professional Stress in the Private Schools of Gilgit-Baltistan

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the factors that contribute to the professional stress of the private school teachers in Gilgit -Baltistan. The researchers have tried to study the factors contributing to professional stress of the teachers who participated in this study. The study highlights useful insights on the various sources of teachers stress, including those related to teachers personal and professional aspects of life. Likewise, the findings also illustrate the “inside-school” and the “outside-school” factors causing teachers stress. Although the researchers have tried to put their best to achieve the research goals, however, the research has its limitation because of the restricted time available to complete the study. The researchers hope that the results of the study would prove helpful in understanding teaching as demanding profession from teachers’ point of view by bringing forward the perceptions that teachers hold about their profession in Gilgit- Baltistan. Subsequently, some recommendations have been offered for the future researchers interested in this area of study.

INTRODUCTION

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Teachers have very important roles and responsibilities in teaching and learning processes and in achieving the overall goals of education. As it is impossible to think that an inefficient teacher will be able to fulfill the purpose of education, even the best teacher fails to do well under inconvenient conditions. However, the teacher has duties with vital effects over students like motivating students, planning class activities, providing knowledge and skills to students, maintaining discipline in the class and keeping parents informed on their children's progress. Hence, teachers need to be aware of enacting the multiplicity of their roles. The multiplicity of roles confronts teachers with numerous challenges including insufficient resources, overcrowded classes, lack of professional development opportunities, lack of parents cooperation, and low financial packages and status, to name a few. By its nature, teaching is one of the noblest professions as usually it is the teacher who shapes the future of a child. As a result, teaching is a very fulfilling and rewarding profession. Students' success in their lives can become tremendous sources of dignity and satisfaction for teachers. However, because of huge responsibilities and the deep-rooted sense of accountability, teaching is also a very stressful and demanding profession. It is challenging in both its intellectual and physical dimensions: intellectually, because the profession requires teachers to constantly enhance their knowledge; and physically, because it requires them to be always dynamic, proactive and smart. Professional life forms the most important part of daily life of human beings and the effects of the professional life, therefore, have important implications for their social lives. So, human are affected from stress in their personal and professional life in various ways. Teachers, too, are affected from stress due to delicacy of their job.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Elaborating his view of stress Kalat (1990) argues that almost everyone shows different reactions to different stress factors (such as being bitten by a snake). He adds that the common everyday situations are at times more stressful to some people than to others. He explains that the amount of stress someone experiences in fact depends on how the person views and understands the stress factor rather than on the event itself (Lararus cited in Kalat, 1990).

Easthope, Maclean and Easthope (1990) suggest that when god hates a man, he drives him into the profession of a school teacher. Muir (1984), however, views teaching profession in contrast to the above statement: "You should take up teaching: it is a nice easy job and good holidays" (p. 04). There are numerous teaching which endorse what Mari (1984) says about teaching. Islamic teaching, in fact, teaching is a noble and sacred profession

Black-Branch and Lamont (cited in Murray-Harvey, 1999 p.1) state that teaching profession is considered to be among the professions in which employees are subject to high levels of stress. Brownell (1997) agreed with his fact saying that teaching profession is comparatively recognized

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

12 : 2 February 2012

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as a demanding profession but student related issues and their behavior have made it challenging and stressful.

Day (2000) argues the last two to three decades have been years of struggle rather than growth and development for many teachers. Because of the social and economic changes, society has p The researches have been supporting the fact that teachers are stressed in most cases. The factors induce professional or occupational stress as Lunenburg and Ornstein (1991) assert that extremely high and low job demands, role conflicts and ambiguities, poor interpersonal relationships exert a remarkable influence on the teachers' stress.

Naylor (2001) conducted a qualitative research study on 'Workload and Stress'. He asked 1500 teachers of British Columbia through random sampling to identify and explain the most significant aspects of workload in teachers' professional life. The respondents identified the manifold causes of stress in their work as a teacher. Following are the factors that were reported as being stressful for teachers in the research.

The effects of stress on teachers' health are really upsetting. Teachers' are suffering from different health problems like body aches to acute problems like ulcers. It is because these health problems and increasing demands from teachers, that many teacher are planning to get an early retirement and some in extreme cases are planning to quit their job altogether (Naylor, 2001).

Stress is considered as a human response to dangerous situation. When we face situation which our brain is incapable of handling, it puts the body on alert by producing hormones which are required in fight or flight situation, which are:

- Increase Blood Pressure.
- Repaid Heartbeat.
- Reduce blood supply to skin
- Cessation of digestive activities.
- Increase perspiration.

Additional release of sugar and fast into the system to coup up with the additional energy requirement.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

12 : 2 February 2012

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- All these actions which are mentioned above have a very long lasting negative effect if these stressful situations are to become frequently occurring feature. They may lead to the following serious and even fatal conditions:
- Depression and anxiety.
- Drug Dependency.
- Congenital heart diseases.
- Stress related Diabetes.

METHODOLOGY

Research Question:

What are the factors contributing to teachers' professional stress in the private schools of Gilgit-Baltistan?

Research Design:

In order to gain a deeper understanding on professional stress of teachers in private schools of Gilgit-Baltistan, the qualitative research methodology was used for data collection. The qualitative research involves collecting data on the processes of participants acting, speaking, and showing non-verbal behaviors in an actual setting. Therefore, it helps in developing a complete and context-specific view of what is being studied

Sample:

We should have worked with all private schools to know the factors contributing to teachers stress in these schools. However, in view of the time and resource constraints, we worked with four schools. The sample of our research comprised of four high schools. . One of the sample schools belongs to one of the well established education providing system called the Aga Khan Education Service Pakistan (AKESP) whereas the other three of the sample schools belong to individuals or groups of people managing these schools mostly on commercial basis. We selected four teachers, one from each of the four sample schools. Of the four participants, we intend to include two female and two male participants.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

12 : 2 February 2012

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A Study on Understanding the Factors Contributing To Teachers' Professional Stress in the Private Schools of Gilgit-Baltistan

Instrument of the study:

The present research study planned to on professional stress of teachers in private schools of Gilgit-Baltistan; as such the data was collected from four teachers through field work, semi-structured interviews and classroom observation of all participants.

Data analysis:

Data analysis started right from the stage of data collection. Data organization and analysis included reading and re-reading of the data and organizing the data under similar themes. During the interview process as well as at the stage of transcribing the data, we tried to make meaning of the data. The major cross-cutting themes were selected as findings of the research. According to Bass way (1999) data analysis is basically an “Intellectual struggle” for producing a meaning and reliable conclusion out of huge amount of raw data.

We also noted the recurring important points and these points made the different important categories. The major themes emerged from the various categories.

FINDINGS:

This study explored the factors contributing to teachers’ professional stress in the private schools of Gilgit-Baltistan. In particular, the study investigated to determine teachers stress caused by their jobs in schools as well as their coping behaviors against these factors. With the passage of time, teachers’ duties and responsibilities are increasing and so do the expectations from students. Parents, in particular, are anxious and are ready to sacrifice everything for their children’s success. Teachers have to fulfill parents’ increasing expectations, and address the everyday school challenges, be aware of time constraints, and perform family responsibilities at same the time. Furthermore, as we come to know every day from the published articles on the education in the newspaper and magazines that in Pakistan there is a wave of progressivisms in educational field. As a result, some private schools all over the country adopting foreign textbooks and want teachers to teach according to the modern teaching methods with the emphasis on increasing demands of head teachers and growing expectations of the community without much support to teachers in schools.

Consequently, there is increasing pressure on teachers to meet the numerous demands emanating from various directions. Furthermore, teaching is a very complex and challenging job requiring teachers to deliver their best to achieve the teaching and learning goals. Therefore, teachers feel stressed and frustrated, particularly, when they have to work in less supportive and unfavorable environments.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

12 : 2 February 2012

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A Study on Understanding the Factors Contributing To Teachers’ Professional Stress in the Private Schools of Gilgit-Baltistan

CONCLUSIONS:

This study contributed to the existing knowledge base on teachers stress in the private schools of Gilgit-Baltistan. The insights gained by this study are not only useful for teachers, they are also significant for the management and the policy makers. We understand that the efforts and initiatives for school improvement must pay attention to the teachers stress factors. The rapid

Science and technology changes are bringing fast changes in our world and these rapid changes have the potential to add to teachers stress. Therefore, it is essential for the head teachers and school management to understand the sources of teachers stress and take necessary measures before it becomes too late to address teachers' issues. Studying the factors that contribute to the stress of teachers in the private schools of Gilgit-Baltistan proved to be both a very revealing and challenging experience. The topic was significant with regard to gaining insights on the factors that either add to or hinder the morale and motivation of teachers and therefore their performance is not often up to the mark.

Analysis of data reflected that the numerous factors related to teachers stress could fall under the "personal" and "professional" aspects of teachers' lives. Likewise, we found a variety of sources of teachers stress factors: they emanated from the unfriendly working conditions in schools, from inadequate salary packages and lack of resources in schools.

We are thankful to the administration and the staff of Karakorum International University, specially the department of education who gave us a chance to study such an important topic which, we understand, has significant implications for the well-being of teachers working in the private schools of Gilgit-Baltistan. The insights we gained from this revealing journey will always guide us during the months and years to come. We thank you all enabled us to embark on this journey and gain new knowledge from the study findings!

RECOMMENDATIONS:

We recommend that the school management attends to the salary related needs of school teachers. The current financial crisis in the country has threatened the survival of low salaried staff. Parents extend their cooperation to teachers. They need to visit to school regularly to keep an eye on their children's progress.

Parents also need to appreciate teachers' efforts which will release their stress.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

12 : 2 February 2012

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A Study on Understanding the Factors Contributing To Teachers' Professional Stress in the Private Schools of Gilgit-Baltistan

Schools should be equipped with the essential instructional resources to help teachers achieve their goals. This will of course reduce teachers stress and improve their work environment in schools.

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Language in India www.languageinindia.com

12 : 2 February 2012

Muhammad Ramzan, Ph.D, Yasmin Bano, M.A., Bibi Sultana, M.A., Fozia Bano M.A., Aijaz Ahmed Gujjar, Ph.D. Candidate, Javed Iqbal, Ph.D.

A Study on Understanding the Factors Contributing To Teachers' Professional Stress in the Private Schools of Gilgit-Baltistan

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Language in India www.languageinindia.com

12 : 2 February 2012

Muhammad Ramzan, Ph.D, Yasmin Bano, M.A., Bibi Sultana, M.A., Fozia Bano M.A., Aijaz Ahmed Gujjar, Ph.D. Candidate, Javed Iqbal, Ph.D.

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Language in India www.languageinindia.com

12 : 2 February 2012

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Language in India www.languageinindia.com

12 : 2 February 2012

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