

A Study on Sources and Management of High School Principals and Their Views About Anxiety

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Abstract *The research was conducted to examine impact of stress and anxiety on the high school principals and to explore their ways of stress management. The population of the study was all the High School principals District Kohat (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). Five female and five male schools were taken as sample of the study. An instrument (questionnaire) containing 35 items was developed for the collection of data. Researcher collected the data personally. The collected data was analyzed in terms of percentage. Results of the study show that majority of the principals of high schools are under anxiety due to overload, long working hours, non co-operative attitude of teachers, concern about education and marriage of their daughters. Some respondents responded that prayers and adhering to religious principles are the factors that bring comfort and relaxation.*

Keywords: *anxiety, stress management, attitude*

1. Introduction

There has been considerable debate on anxiety among experts as to how to adequately define stress. If we say that stress is the level of anxiety produced by the individual we are left with the question of whether or not someone is under anxiety without being consciously aware of it. On the other hand, if we talk

about anxiety, we are confronted with the fact that not everyone reacts to the same situation in a stressful manner. Stress is with us all the time. It comes from mental or emotional activity, as well as physical activity. It is unique and personal to each of us. Without stress, life would be dull and unexciting. Stress adds flavor, challenge and activity to life. But too much stress, however, can seriously affect your physical and mental well-being. In the present era life is so complex and hard that its existence without stress is unthinkable. Stress can come from any situation or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, nervous, or over-anxious.

According to Webster's International Encyclopedia the meaning of stress is "in medicine, physical chemical or emotional factor that causes tension, whether physical or mental and may result in disease or malfunction."

According to Palmer (1989) "stress is the psychological, physiological and behavioral response by an Individual when they perceive a lack of equilibrium between the demands placed upon them and their ability to meet those demands which, over a period of time, lead to ill health.

According to Cambridge International Dictionary of English "management is the control and organization of something".

There is no generally accepted definition of management as an activity, although the classic definition is still held to be that of Henri Fayol. His general statement about management in many ways still remains valid after eighty years, and has only been adapted by more recent writers, as shown below: 'To manage is to forecast and plan, to organize, to command, to coordinate and to control (Fayol, 1916).

Management is a social process ...the process consists ...planning, control, coordination and motivation (Brech, 1957).

The researcher considers that the principals are the key persons of the school; if they are stressful then the entire school management schedule will be disturbed. This study will be significant for those principals who are under high stress and they might benefit from the remedies how to reduce the stress for the effective environment of the school.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Concept of Stress

We can define stress as "body's non-specific response to any demand made on it". Stress is not by definition synonymous with nervous tension or anxiety. On one side stress provides the means to express talents and energies and pursue happiness. On the other side it can also cause exhaustion and illness, either physical or psychological.

2.2 Importance of Studying Stress

There are several sound reasons for studying stress.

1. Stress can have damaging psychological effects on employees, health and on their contributions to organizational effectiveness .it can cause heart disease, and it can prevent employees from concentrating or making decisions.
2. Stress is a major cause of employee absenteeism and low turnover. Certainly, such factors severely limit the potential success of an organization.
3. A Stressed employee can affect the safety of other workers or even the public.

2.3 Sources of Stress

Landy (1994) defines various factors of stress are:

1. Work factors (job factors).
2. Non-work factors (non-job factors).
3. Personal factors.
4. Organizational stresses.

2.3.1 Extra Organizational Factors

These factors include External Environment, Economic situation, Development of new technology and Political changes etc.

2.3.2 Organizational Factors

Organizational factors are Organization structure, Communications, Organization culture, Management style and Career development etc

2.3.3 Domestic Situations

- a) **Home life**-upheavals at home due to family illness, care of elders, parents, unhappy marriage, debt problem etc are problems that can overflow into the workplace and adversely affect an individual's performance and attitude
- b) **Outside social life**- individuals with a rich social life may find that work and leisure clash, especially if their work requires unsocial hours or availability at short notice.

2.3.4 Personal Factors

Individual's perception of job, Ability to adapt to change, Motivation and Tolerance for ambiguity etc can be considered as Personal factors.

2.4 Some Problems That Stress Principals

Being a principal is a very stressful job. Principals put in long days, including evenings and weekend hours. They are responsible for the well being of hundreds of students, each of who has special abilities and needs. They lead what amounts to small corporations that are rated on their output (test scores). New mandates are frequently imposed on already high expectations. Add to that a mountain of paperwork and meetings, inquiries and complaints from parents, playground and lunchtime duties, and you have the potential for a huge amount of stress. But since stress comes with the territory, principals are also masters of dealing with it. They get pretty creative when it comes to finding ways to battle the stress that is "just part of the job."

- Political interference
- Parents' interference
- Unscheduled transfer
- Unhealthy Environment
- Teachers' personal jealousy
- Teachers' irregularity
- Lack of in-service training
- Insufficient funds
- Domestic problems
- Teachers' non-cooperative attitude

2.5 Techniques to Reduce Stress

All people feel stress sometimes but people react to stress in different ways. For example, some people might feel a lot of stress when driving, while others might find driving relaxing

- Take a Walk
- Plant a Garden
- Time Management
- Listen To Music
- Eat a Balanced Diet
- Take exercise
- Eating right—limit foods with fat, sugar and salt
- Learn Assertive Communication Skills
- Drink Green Tea
- Take a deep breath
- Close your eyes and resting
- Think of relaxing things
- Autogenic
- Journeying

- Talking to a friend about your troubles
- Change the things that cause you to stress
- Focus on the good things in your life!
- Meditation
- Play Games
- Self-Hypnosis

2.6 Islam and Stress Management

2.6.1 Ask Him. He listens: dua (Prayer)

Turn each anxiety, each fear and each concern into a Dua (supplication). Look at it as another reason to submit to God and be in Sajdah (prostration), during which you are closest to Allah. God listens and already knows what is in your heart, but He wants you to ask Him for what you want. The Prophet said: "Allah" is angry with those who do not ask Him for anything "(Tirmidhi)".

The Prophet recommended reading this verse, known as Ayat al Kursi, after each prayer, Allah's peace and blessings are upon him. Once Ali, (May Allah be pleased with him), approached the Prophet during a difficult time and he found the Prophet in Sajda, where he kept repeating "Ya Hayyo Ya Qayyum", words which are part of this verse.

2.6.2 Remember That Human Responsibility Is Limited

While we need to carry out our duty to the best of our abilities, always remember that you don't control the outcome of events. Once you have done your duty, leave the results to Allah. Regardless of the results of your efforts, you will be rewarded for the part you have played. However, never underestimate your abilities.

2.6.3 Leave The World Behind You Five Times A Day

Use the five daily prayers as a means to become more hereafter oriented and less attached to this temporary world. Start distancing yourself as soon as you hear Adhan, the call to prayer. When you stand ready to pray, mentally prepare yourself to leave this world and all of its worries and stresses behind you.

2.6.4 Seek Help Through Sabr

Seek help through Sabr and Salat (Quran 2:45). This instruction from Allah provides us with two critical tools that can ease our worries and pain. Patience and prayer are two oft-neglected stress busters.

2.6.5 Birds Don't Carry Their Food

Allah is al Razzaq (the Provider). "How many are the creatures that carry not their own sustenance? It is Allah who feeds them and you, for He hears and knows all things (Quran 29:60)." By reminding yourself that He is the Provider, you will remember that getting a job or providing for your family in these economically and politically challenging times, when Muslims are often the last to be hired and the first to be fired, all is in God's hands, not yours. As Allah says in the Quran, "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine. And if anyone puts his trust in Allah, sufficient is Allah for him. For Allah will surely accomplish His purpose. Verily, for all things has Allah appointed a due proportion (Quran 65:3).

2.6.6 God Controls Life and Death

If you fear for your physical safety and security, remember that only Allah gives life and takes it back and, that He has appointed the time for it. No one can harm you except if Allah wills. As He says in the Quran: "Wherever you are, death will find you out, even if you are in towers built up strong and high!" (Quran 4:78)

2.6.7 Remember That Life Is Short

It's easy to get caught up in our own stress and anxiety. However, if we remember that our life is short and temporary, and that the everlasting life is in the Hereafter, this will put our worries in perspective. This belief in the transitory nature of the life of this world reminds us that whatever difficulties, trials, anxieties, and grief we suffer in this world are, Insha Allah, something we will only experience for a short period of time. And more importantly, if we handle these tests with patience, Allah will reward us for it.

2.6.8 Do zikr, Allah, Allah!

"... Without doubt in the remembrance (Zikr) of Allah do hearts find tranquility"(Quran13:28)

2.6.9 Relying On Allah: Tawakkul

Once you have established a plan you intend to follow through on to deal with a specific issue or problem in your life, put your trust in the most Wise and the

All-Knowing. "When you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah" (Quran 3: 159). Rely on Allah by constantly remembering Him throughout your day.

2.6.10 Connect With Other Human Beings

You are not alone. Muslims are not alone. We are not suffering in silence. There are millions of good people who are not Muslim with beautiful hearts and minds. These are people who have supported us, individually and collectively. These are individuals and organizations who have spoken up in defense of Muslims as we endured harassment and discrimination. We must think of them, talk to them, connect with them, and pray for them. Through our connections, we will break the chain of isolation that leads to depression and anxiety.

2.6.11 Begin the Day on a Positive Note

Get up early. Get up thanking God that He has given you another day.

2.6.12 Avoid Media Overexposure: Switch from News to Books

Don't spend too much time checking out the news on the radio, television or Internet. Spend more time reading good books and journals. When you listen to the persistent barrage of bad news, especially relating to Muslims nowadays, you feel not only depressed, but also powerless. Cut down media time to reduce your stress and anxiety. It's important to know what's going on but not to an extent that it ruins your day or your mood.

2.6.13 Pray for Others to Heal You

The Prophet was always concerned about other people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, and would regularly pray for them. Praying for others connects you with them and helps you understand their suffering. This in itself has a healing component to it. The Prophet has said that praying for someone who is not present increases love.

2.6.14 Make the Holy Quran Your Partner

Reading and listening to the Quran will help refresh our hearts and our minds. Recite it out loud or in a low voice. Listen to it in the car. When you are praying Nafl or extra prayers, pick it up and use it to recite portions of the

Quran you are not as familiar with. Connecting to the Quran means connecting to God. Let it be a means to heal your heart of stress and worries. Invest in different recordings of the Quran and their translations.

2.6.15 Be Thankful to Allah

"If you are grateful, I will give you more" (Quran 14:7). Counting our blessings helps us not only be grateful for what we have, but it also reminds us that we are so much better off than millions of others, whether that is in terms of our health, family, financial situation, or other aspects of our life. And being grateful for all we have helps we maintain a positive attitude in the face of worries and challenges we are facing almost daily.

2.6.16 Ideals: one Step at a Time

Ideals are wonderful things to pursue. But do that gradually. Think, prioritize, plan, and move forward. One step at a time.

2.6.17 Efforts not Results Count in the Eyes of Allah

Our success depends on our sincere efforts to the best of our abilities. It is the mercy of Allah that He does not demand results, Alhamdulillah. He is happy if He finds us making our best sincere effort. Thank you Allah!

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Population

All the High schools of Kohat District comprised the population of the study.

3.2 Sample

Ten High schools (5 Male, & 5 Female) of District Kohat were randomly selected as sample of the study.

3.3 Research Instrument:

An instrument (questionnaire) containing 35 items was developed for the collection of data. The specific objectives are an appropriate and useful data-collecting device in a particular research work.

4. Results and Discussion

Data collected from principals of high schools was interpreted and results were drawn. After the results the researchers agreed that most of the principals were under stress. According to the data collection:

1. **50%** of the principals under stress due to political pressure for enrollment of students and also due to their transfer to a remote area.
2. **40%** of the principals were disturbed due to their low income.
3. **50%** of the principals were worried about the better education of their children and were also stressful for not having their own house.
4. **70%** of the principals were disturbed because of teachers' irregularity and their non-cooperative attitude.
5. **50%** of the principals were stressful due to parents' interference in their work (due to the pressure of parents they pass weak students), overwork and responsibilities of the institution.
6. Due to stress **50%** of the principals feel indigestion, high blood pressure and headache.
7. **80%** of the principals feel relaxation after discussing stressful situation with their friends and **60%** relaxation when they spend time with their family.
8. **70%** of the principals feel less stress when they offer their prayers and **50%** of the principals feel relaxation when they go on tour.

On the whole, the response of the principals remained unsatisfactory, but it is evident from the study that prayers give relaxation to them.

5. Recommendations

In the light of results and discussion the following recommendations were made.

1. Pay package should be increased so that the principals are able to maintain their social status.
2. The government should provide incentives for the principals and their children also. It has been observed that political people's involvement is not only the cause of stress but it is a great hurdle in teaching learning process. So, the involvement of political people should be finished by using the government rules strictly.
3. Job safety, security and surety should be provided according to policy provisions.
4. The government should also support them the facility of cheap education and special grant for higher education in the abroad countries.
5. Parents' undue interference in school affairs should be reduced.

6. The burden of over work should be mitigating.
7. Proper facilities regarding, staff, teaching, facilities, school environment etc should be duly provided.

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