

DEPRESSION AMONG MALE & FEMALE TEACHERS OF
UNIVERSITY OF SINDH, JAMSHORO

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to investigate depression among male & female teachers of the University of Sindh, Jamshoro. The sample composed of 100 respondents (i-e 50 male teachers and 50 female teachers). The Siddique-Shah Depression Scale (SSDS) was used to collect data for this research. Statistical analysis revealed the mean of male teachers score on SSDS at 21.88 and the mean of female teachers score on SSDS at 18.9. The standard deviation of male teachers score was 9.993. The standard deviation of female teachers' score was 8.539. The scores among the male & female teachers were found to be at below average range of depression. There was non-significant difference (t-value 0.137, $P > 0.10$) of the depression scores of male and female teachers.

Teachers are essential for improvement of education system and quality of learning in present and future generations. Teachers are part of those great people who built and furnish the personality of students to develop them into prominent figures in any society. Teaching is a demanding, as well as, a challenging job. In teaching profession, teachers face multiple challenges and complex demands from their authority. Teachers experience depression and stress due to working excessive works, supervising students in their projects, lesson planning, course work development and checking students' assignments, such pressures from work environment leads to health problems for teachers.

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It is a fact that depression is spread all over the world & almost 121 million people are suffering from depression (WHO, 2011). Depression occurs in all ages of men, women & even in children. Feeling unhappy from time to time is a normal part of life. People go through ups & downs in their lives & frequent changes in their moods. Sadness and disappointment are common experiences in people's lives; however; depression is much more different from such feelings of sadness and grief.

The World Health Organization (2011) defines depression as a common mental disorder that presents with depressed mood, loss of interest and pleasure, feelings of guilt, low self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite, low energy & poor concentration. It is also stated as a psychological condition with feelings of sadness, sleep disturbances, fatigue, & inability to concentrate. Feeling hopeless, helpless worthless, guilty, irritable, sad, anxious, empty, unhappy, or restless are mostly experienced by depressed teachers, beside these they may also experience loss of interest, loss / increase of appetite, loss of concentration, difficulty in remembering and decision-making, & finally attempting suicide.

It was reported in the Telegraph news that almost 9,774 days were taken off by 190 teachers due to depression, anxiety or psychiatric stress, further data revealed in 2008 gave a total of 6,996, due to 215 different incidents mostly causes related to stress, while in the year 2009 teachers took more than 10,500 days off from their work, more than 200 teachers stated the cause of stress, anxiety and depression (Suffolk County Council, 2010). In comparison to different professions having highest depression, teaching is at number six (see). Teachers sometimes leave their teaching profession due to depression, since stress and burnout occurs in most cases (Steinhardt, Smith Jaggars, Faulk, & Gloria, 2011). Depression may be manifested due to the results of teachers' personal problems as well as work related issues, up to 25% of all cases results from depression due to the work related stress among teachers (Hughes, 2011). The Department of Health (2010) published similar facts related to depression among the unemployed, in the article the Health Secretary of UK, Alan Johnson stated that: 'In the current economic downturn, the potential exists for more people to become anxious or depressed & experience lower level of mental well-being'. If someone feels down after losing their job, then the best solution is a new job & we're helping people to find them. Wherever possible, but in some cases, depression & anxiety can be a barrier to getting another job." When one considers the situation in Pakistan, in comparison to UK, the statistics could deteriorate threefold.

It is important here to differentiate between normal feelings of depression & diagnosed depressive state, i.e., clinical depression. It must be noted here that feelings of sadness can occur almost daily and people can find cures for it, after a short period of depressive state a person can perform well although the sadness lingers on, it can be considered as having a normal state of depression. Depression is considered as Clinical Depression or a diagnosed Mood Disorder when it disturbs the person's every day normal functioning & when a person cannot find better ways of coping from it, consequently becoming ill day by day. In this modern era, where life is becoming easier due to technology, it is becoming loaded with problems as well, keeping up with a fast tracked world is a part of everyday living and develops resilience in people yet there are many who cannot cope well and become depressed. If this condition remains for a long time and is persistent, disturbing the functioning of an individual it is diagnosable as a Mood disorder and specifically Major Depression. The level and intensity of depression may vary from person to person.

Moods generally change according to situations. Feelings of elation or sadness are common in daily life events and it changes people's lives. When considering mood disorders mood tends to last longer & affect normal functioning interaction of people with the world.

The depressed persons have lack of spontaneity & lack of work / activity. They have suicidal desire / ideas. They move very slowly with lack of energy. They possess negative views of themselves, i-e inferior, inadequate even unattractive. They blame themselves for each & every event / action. They mostly feel guilt & are self-criticism. They have negative views about their future. They may become hopeless & may attempt suicide. They are confused, unable to remember things. Depressed persons also have physical complains such as headache, indigestion, constipation, & unpleasant sensation in their chest and overall pain in body. They have disturbances in their appetite & sleep (Comer, 1992).

A study by Ahmadzadeh, Ghasemi & Karami in 2003 shows that depression runs among Primary School Teachers in Esfahan city, suggesting that almost 89% teachers were depressed; among which 33% had their scores in the mild level of depression. Whereas 28.3% had their scores at moderate level & 27.2% scores fell in the severe level of depressions.

According to the report by the National Survey on Drug Use & Health (NSDUH), USA in 2007; depression affected the performance and productivity of employees in employment sector in different occupational categories reported depression. Almost 4.4% of the Life, Physical, and Social Science categories of workers had Major Depression, 10.8% among the Personal Care and Service

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workers had Major Depression, and 8.7% among the Education, Training and Library had Major Depression. It was also stated in the NSDUH data from 2004 to 2006 that 7% of workers of aged 18 to 64 suffered from Major Depression annually.

To summarize work from these resources (Hughes, 2010) & (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2008) the most common factors responsible for developing depression & stress among teachers includes the following: unacceptable /disruptive attitudes of students towards teachers, psychological problems of students, psychologically immaturity of students, political issues among students, heavy workload, long hour duties, poor availabilities of necessary equipment in offices of teachers or laboratory / class, lack of proper support / cooperation from authority, lack of proper management in environmental setup among facilities / departments, bullying / harassment of students towards teachers and among students, interpersonal problems / conflicts among facilities members, lack of rewards/ reinforcement from head/ authority.

The main purpose of present study was to investigate & analyze the level of depression among Male & Female teachers of University of Sindh, Jamshoro.

On the basis of literature review following hypotheses have been formulated.

There would be no significant difference in Depression among Male teachers & Female teachers of University of Sindh, Jamshoro.

There would be below average level of Depression on the SSDS among both Male & Female teachers of University of Sindh Jamshoro.

Method

Sample

The sample composed of 100 respondents (50 male teachers and 50 female teachers). All the respondents were educated and employed by the University of Sindh, Jamshoro. The simple random sampling technique was used to collect data. The age range for the respondents was between 26 to 56 years. All respondents had either a Masters, M. Phil or Ph. D. degrees. The data was composed according to their job designations at Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, Lecturers, or Research Associates as shown in table1.

Table 1

Distribution of the sample according to job designations

Designation	Male Teachers	Female Teachers
Professors	10	10
Associate Professors	10	10
Assistant Professors	10	10
Lecturers	10	10
Research Associates	10	10
	Total = 50	Total = 50

Measures

For the purpose of present study the Siddique-Shah Depression Scale (SSDS) was used. Its reliability was checked through split half reliability method which shows that the scale is highly reliable ($r = 0.9$). The SSDS was developed by Salma Siddique (1990) at the National Institute of Psychology (NIP), Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad. The Questionnaire has 36 items having four response categories are “Always”, “Often”, “Sometimes”, “Never”. The level of depression is measured as the average range of depression is at 40, a below 40 score on SSDS indicates below average range of depression and an above 40 score on SSDS indicates high level, i.e., above average range of depression.

Procedure

For the purpose of present research the sample was taken from Sindh University Jamshoro. The sample included faculty members from the different departments of the university, such as, faculty of Natural Science, faculty of Social Science, faculty of Arts, faculty of Pharmacy. The teachers were randomly selected from these departments / institutions/ centers. The consent for research was then taken from the faculty members and then the research questionnaires were distributed among teachers. The questionnaire was individually administered. The data was then analyzed by statistically methods of Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value.

Results

The results were analyzed statistically giving the mean, variance; standard deviation & t-value as shown in table 2 & table 3.

Table 2

Variance & Standard Deviation of male and female teachers' scores on SSDS

Gender	Number of Teachers	Variance	S.D
Male	50	20370	108.5
Female	50	3206	

Table 3

Mean and Standard Deviation of Teacher's Scores on SSDS

Gender	Number of Teachers	Mean	S.D	t-value
Male	50	21.28	9.993	*0.137
Female	50	18.9	8.539	

Note: * Non-significant, $p < 0.10$, it means there is no difference in Depression among Male & Female Teachers of University of Sindh, Jamshoro.

The tables show non-significant difference in the scores on the SSDS scale of depression among male & female teachers of University of Sindh, Jamshoro. The overall scores on the SSDS suggest below average range of depression among the male and female teachers at the university.

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to evaluate the difference in the scores on the Siddique-Shah Depression Scale (SSDS) among male & female teachers at the University of Sindh, Jamshoro and the study confirmed the hypotheses.

Depression is a mood disorder it can affect any person at any time, it depends on how people react to it by either changing their own lifestyle or changing the situation that causes sadness. People can generally utilize various techniques to reduce the effect of factors causing stress in their lives; it would be ultimately possible to reduce the impact of depression. Most reported stressors or causes of depression by teachers are workload, role overload, increase in number of students, uncomfortable classrooms, disruptive behavior of students with teachers, lack of cooperation / support from management and authority (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2007).

It is reported by the National Centre for Education Statistics that 50% of teachers leave their profession of teaching due to depression and stress at their workplace (Hughes, 2010). According to Statistics reported from British Columbia Teachers Federation (BCTF) in 2008 teachers from English secondary schools worked more than 53 hours per week, which suggested that workload was a major cause of stress and depression among teachers. Further it was found that young female teachers experienced more stress and depression than old teachers or male teachers.

Another research conducted on 33 teachers from one institutional school and 59 teachers from three North Central Schools on the basis of grade and high school teaching level reported no gender difference in burnout, stress and depression (Beer, 1992). Depression and stress level changes in order of hierarchy, employees at different levels, such as low level, middle level and upper level experience stress and depression in different ways and situations and the same is the case among the genders. A study conducted on the education sector on work related stress showed that 37% teachers had health problems. McManaman in 2004 suggested that causes of increase in depression can be attributed to the changes in education and some of the changes in education may be due to changes in Government, or in new curriculum and the workload on teachers. Most of the studies show that women possess high rate of depression than men, in some cases there is no difference of depression in men & women.

The present study shows that male & female teachers had low levels of depression. Teachers have huge responsibilities such as regularity, maintaining discipline in class, entrusted with wellbeing of students, dealing with students & administrative staff, their workload, maintaining and completing course schedule to students, maintaining their own academic record/ annual reports, conducting examinations, checking of examination papers, preparing results of students, so when these responsibilities increase and overload the teachers then depression as well as stress may follow. If employment sector or work environment is not suitable for an employee they may experience depression; so it is clear that work

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environment plays a major role in developing depression among people. Teachers reported in this survey that they have worries & tension all the time and these are part of every person's life, so they felt it was a normal phenomenon and they are able to handle their depressed conditions & are happy with their professional life.

It is concluded that heavy workload, lack of necessary equipment, & facilities, disruptive students, political issues, over demands of administrations and poor management of administrations, lack of funding / budget or low salaries are all the various facts found from this research, due to these facts teachers experience depression & it may be a reason for turnover and absenteeism from employment, but controlling & handling difficult situation depends on teachers' manner of handling situations.

Recommendations

It is recommended that future research should be conducted on variables such as age, years of experience and seniority.

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