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**Perceived Stress, Stress Coping Strategies and Resilience among
Primary School Teachers
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Abstract:

The academic and general progression and success of a student directly and proportionately depends on the level of commitment and passion of a teacher to his/her profession. A mind and heart which is stress-free will be able to give that commitment in his or her profession. The objectives of the study are, (i) to find the relation of stress and resilience among The Primary School Teacher (PST), (ii) to find the relation between various coping strategies and resilience among the PST, (iii) to elicit level of resilience in various areas of PST and (iv) Finally, to determine the influence of Stress and coping strategies on resilience among PST. Expost facto research design will be used. The sample will consist of 100 PST of English Medium *samacheer kalvi* schools in Chennai using convenient sampling technique. The following tools that will be used for data collection includes, The Resilience Assessment Questionnaire by Govier, (2009), Stress coping strategies by Matheny and McCarthy, (2000) and Cohen's Perceived Stress Scale, (1994). The Sample will be tested for the normality of distribution. Pearson Product moment Correlation analysis and regression will be used for analysis of data. The implications of the study would discuss on the need for resilience training programme, stress management programme and development of positive work attitudes which will provide means to cope with professional hazards, enhance the teacher-Student relation for the better interaction and to improve the quality of life of teacher.

Key Words: Resilience, Stress and Coping Strategies.

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Today's generation are facing a very vast change in the culture of education, in the life style of the family and in the socio-economic status of one's life. It is in this scenario our kids are admitted in the schools. The parents take extreme level of an elite happiness in sending their children to private schools at the very early stages of their life. On the other hand the school management has very high responsibility towards the parents in bringing up their children to their expectations. The problem here is faced by the primary teachers who are put into pressure of how to handle the children on one side and how to bring credit to the management by achieving success. Under this pressure stress would be a common factor that would affect the performance of the primary school teachers. Kyriacou (2001) had stated from the available literature on teacher stress and found that about one quarter of teachers conceded that teaching was 'very or extremely stressful', it remains the case that the precise figure was dependent on the framing of the question, on the age/gender of the teachers and on the stage of their careers. Teaching as a profession is progressively becoming a stressful occupation. Therefore, becoming aware of possible causes of stress for primary school teachers and the coping behaviors they utilize is significant for many reasons (Hepburn & Brown, 2001). In this research the researcher try to identify the level of perceived stress, stress coping strategies and resilience of the primary school teachers.

Review of the literature.

Hasan, (2014) revealed that the primary school teachers were highly stressed. Moreover, the private primary school teachers have also found to be highly stressed in comparison to their government primary school teachers counterparts. Sapna & Gabha, (2013) reported many factors of occupational stress in engineering colleges i.e. academic problem, fear, uncertainty, life causes, frustrations, pressures, environment, fatigue and overwork. Teacher stress is caused by environmental factors as well as individual characteristics. Major environmental factors include poor working conditions, scarcity of resources, heavy workloads, and student behavior. Individual characteristics can include gender, age, personality, and the ability to cope (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998).

The definition of coping has various important aspects. At first, the relationship between coping and a stressful event represents a dynamic process. Coping is a series of transactions between a person who has a set of resources, values and commitments and a particular environment with its own resources, demands and constraints. Thus coping is a set of reciprocal responses, occurring overtime, by which the environment and the person influence each other. Second, the definition encompasses a great many actions and reactions to stressful circumstances. Generally coping resources are divided into five categories namely emotional, spiritual, physical, cognitive and social. People adopt various strategies

to cope with stress such as problem solving, cognitive reconstruction, social support, express emotions, problem avoidance, wishful thinking, and self-criticism and social withdrawal. Most interventions target intentional ways of coping, but the ability to cope well depends on coordinating all of these systems under conditions of threat, challenge, or loss (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984)

The idea of resilience came to limelight in the field of developmental psychology in an effort to understand high-risk populations, especially at risk children and youth who managed to thrive despite adverse conditions (Goldstein & Brooks, 2006). In the recent past the research had focused on teacher resilience in order to understand teachers' job satisfaction and motivation (Kitching, Morgan, & O'Leary, 2009) and researches also been done on teacher burnout and stress (Howard & Johnson, 2004). Teacher resilience were originally conceived as relying on personal attributes only, which reflected an ability 'to bounce back' from an adverse situation. However, current research pointed to the dynamic nature of resilience (Day et al., 2007) and suggested that resilience itself results from the interaction between psychological, behavioural and cognitive aspects of functioning as well as emotional regulation.

Methodology

The need for the study

Kyriacou defined Stress as "the experience by a teacher of unpleasant

emotions, such as tension, frustration, anxiety, anger, and depression, resulting from aspects of work as a teacher" (Brown & Uehara, 1999). In recent years, steadily increasing costs and consequences of teacher stress had received growing concern. Identifying possible stressors - positive coping strategies rather than negative strategies. Coping and being resilient with stress is important for teachers (Primary) so that their stress does not interfere with the achievement of their educational goals and they have better quality of life; both personally and professionally (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998). Resilience was originally conceived as relying on personal attributes - an ability 'to bounce back' from an adverse situation. It is agreed that the processes involved in resilience are far more complex than specific internal traits or assets (Day et al., 2007).

Problem

Whether there is relation between Perceived Stress, Stress Coping Strategies and Resilience among the Primary School Teachers?

Whether there is a influence of Perceived Stress and Stress Coping Strategies on Resilience and on the dimensions of Resilience among the Primary School Teachers?

Objective

- (i) To find the relationship between Perceived Stress and Resilience among the Primary School Teachers.
- (ii) To find the relationship between Stress Coping Strategies and Resilience among the Primary School Teachers.

(iii) To find the relationship among Perceived Stress, Stress Coping Strategies and Dimensions of Resilience.

(iii) Finally, to determine the influence of Perceived Stress and Stress Coping Strategies on the Dimensions of Resilience among the Primary School Teachers.

Hypotheses

1. There would be significant negative relationship between Perceived Stress and Resilience among the Primary School Teachers.

2. There would be Significant positive relationship between Stress Coping strategies and Resilience among the Primary School Teachers.

3. There would be negative relationship between Perceived Stress and the dimensions of Resilience among the Primary School Teachers.

4. There would be positive relationship between Stress Coping Strategies and the dimensions of Resilience among the Primary School Teachers.

5. There would be Significant influence of Stress and Stress Coping Strategies on Dimensions of Resilience among the Primary School Teachers.

Method of Investigation

Research Design : Ex – Post Facto Research.

Sample : 100 primary school teachers (Female)

Sampling Technique : Convenience Sampling

Psychological tests : 1. Cohen’s Perceived Stress Scale, (1994).

2. Stress Coping Strategies (Matheney & McCarthy, 2000)

3. The Resilience Assessment Questionnaire (Govier, 2009)

The Stress Coping Strategies has the following dimensions. They are

1. **Vision**
2. **Determination**
3. **Interaction**
4. **Relationship**
5. **Problem Solving**
6. **Organization**
7. **Self-Confidence**

Results

Table 1
1. Relationship among Perceived Stress, Stress Coping Strategies and Resilience

Variables	Perceived Stress	Stress Coping Strategies	Resilience
Perceived Stress	X	-.183	-.203*
Stress Coping Strategies		X	.510**
Resilience			X

* p<.05

**p<.01

Table 2
2. Relationship among Perceived Stress, Stress Coping Strategies and Dimensions of Resilience

Variable	P	S	V	D	I	R	P	O	S
	S	C							
	X	S							
Perceived Stress		-.203*	-.095	-.029	-.267*	-.049	-.254*	-.192	-.144
Stress Coping Strategies	-.183	X	.298*	.303*	.213*	.241*	.453*	.612*	.402*

* p<.05

**p<.01

3. Predictors of Dimensions of Resilience among the Primary School Teachers

Table 3

3.1 Summary of Multiple linear Regression on the Resilience's dimension of Vision

Predictors	Un-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		't' value
	β	Standard error	β	β	
Constant	10.517	3.328			2.348**
Stress Coping Strategies	.104	.034	.298	.298	3.092**
R ²	.089				
Adjusted R ²	.080				

**p<.01

Table 4
3.2 Summary of Multiple linear Regression on the Resilience's dimension of Determination

Predictors	Un-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		't' value
	β	Standard error	β	β	
Constant	11.589	2.515			4.609**
Stress Coping Strategies	.082	.026	.303	.303	3.144**
R ²	.092				
Adjusted R ²	.082				

**p<.01

Table 5
3.3 Summary of Multiple linear Regression on the Resilience's dimension of Interaction

Predictors	Un-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		't' value
	β	Standard error	β	β	
Constant	17.557	3.047			5.736**
Perceived Stress	-.134	.056	-.236	-.236	-2.408*
Stress Coping Strategies	.048	.028	.170	.170	1.730 NS
R ²	.099				
Adjusted R ²	.081				

* p<.05

**p<.01

NS = Not Significant

Table 6
3.4 Summary of Multiple linear Regression on the Resilience's dimension of Relationship

Predictors	Un-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		't' value
	β	Standard error	βI		
Constant	13.702	2.533			5.409**
Stress Coping Strategies	.065	.026	.241		2.457**
R ²	.058				
Adjusted R ²	.048				

* p<.05

**p<.01

NS = Not Significant

Table 7
3.5 Summary of Multiple linear Regression on the Resilience's dimension of Problem Solving

Predictors	Un-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		't' value
	β	Standard error	βI		
Constant	12.174	2.437			4.996**
Perceived Stress	-.088	.045	-.180		-1.974*
Stress Coping Strategies	.098	.022	.402		4.411**
R ²	.221				
Adjusted R ²	.205				

* p<.05

**p<.01

Table 8
3.6 Summary of Multiple linear Regression on the Resilience's dimension of Organization

Predictors	Un-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		't' value
	β	Standard error	βI		
Constant	-5.355	2.991			-1.790
Stress Coping Strategies	.328	.031	.612		7.652**
R ²	.374				
Adjusted R ²	.368				

**p<.01

Table 8
3.7 Summary of Multiple linear Regression on the Resilience's dimension of Self Confidence

Predictors	Un-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		't' value
	β	Standard error	βI		
Constant	5.101	3.013			1.693
Stress Coping Strategies	.136	.031	.402		4.350**
R ²	.162				
Adjusted R ²	.153				

**p<.01

Findings of the present study

1. Perceived Stress is negatively related to Resilience among the Primary School Teachers.

2. Stress Coping strategies is Positively related to Resilience and the Dimensions of Resilience such as Vision, Determination, Interaction, Relationships, Problem Solving, Organization, Self-Confidence among the Primary School Teachers.

3. There is a significant influence of Stress and Stress Coping Strategies on Dimensions of Resilience among the Primary School Teachers.

3.1 Perceived Stress is Significant predictor of the following dimensions of Resilience among the Primary School Teachers,

- ⊙ **Interaction at .01 Sig. (p<.018)**
- ⊙ **Problem Solving at .05 Sig. (p<.051)**

3.2 Stress Coping Strategies is Significant predictor of the following dimensions of Resilience among the Primary School Teachers,

- ⊙ **Vision at .01 Sig. (p<.003)**
- ⊙ **Determination at .01 Sig. (p<.002)**
- ⊙ **Relationship at .01 Sig. (p<.002)**
- ⊙ **Problem Solving at .01 Sig. (p<.001)**
- ⊙ **Organization at .01 Sig. (p<.001)**
- ⊙ **Self Confidence at .01 Sig. (p<.001)**

Discussion

In the present study it was found that the stress levels of the primary school teachers were above average with 18.75.

On the other hand the total score of resilience showed 134. According to author it was considered that they have built a substantial amount of resilience in their life so far. Some of the elements of resilience require specific attention, however. These can be addressed by undertaking a resilience training programme, and some cognitive coaching. On the whole, however, the primary school teachers were able to cope with most events that happen to you, but they remain unsure about some aspects of their life. This was being confirmed in the table 2 which is clearly shown that there was a significant negative correlation between perceived stress and Stress coping strategies among the primary school teachers. Probably the stress was due to the dimension of Interaction and Problem solving. When there is very less sharing of problems, worries, anxieties and tensions to other people. There may very less room of interaction among them because of which the level of stress increased. In the same way there is very low capacity of problem solving then the stress level increased among them. It has to be noticed that the sample was collected from the renowned and esteem schools of Chennai. Therefore, there could have been a sense of ego and don't want to share their problems to their colleagues. Darmody & Smyth (2011) reported that teachers stress was correlated negatively with interpersonal relationship of co-staff members. Good and healthy interpersonal relationships reduce/eliminate job stress among teachers.

In the regression analysis again it was found that the Interaction and Problem solving were the two predictors of perceived stress (Table 5 and 7) among the

primary school teachers. On the other hand expect interaction all the other dimensions such as Vision, Determination, Relationship, Problem Solving, Organization and Self Confidence were the predictor of Stress coping Strategies Table . It may due to very low emotional Intelligence they may show more hesitant to ventilate their emotions to others. Chand and Monga (2007) found that higher educational qualification helps to fight against the stress and burnout issues among university teachers. Elementary school teachers rate the effectiveness of behavioral change as a coping strategy higher than middle school teachers. Fadia (2014) viewed that elementary teacher seeking help as a more effective strategy than secondary school teachers. Also middle school teachers attribute more effectiveness to seeking help as a coping strategy, compared to their high school counterparts.

Conclusion

The Primary Teachers had built a substantial amount of resilience in their teaching so far. Some of the elements of resilience require specific attention, however. These can be addressed by undertaking a resilience training programme, and some cognitive coaching. On the whole, they were able to cope with most events that happen to them, but they can remain unsure about some aspects of life. Training should be given for the Primary school teachers how to manage and cope up their Stress. The Primary School teachers should be taught the importance of Positive and healthy interaction among their colleagues, parents and kids. Stress management techniques to be targeted at primary school teachers. In

addition it is important to include follow up, long term evaluation so that the impact can be maintained over an extended period of time.

Implications of the study

1. Based on the findings from the present study, there is **an opportunity to increase** the existing literature on primary school teachers Perceived Stress, Stress Coping Strategies and Resilience.
2. The study is quantitative in nature, researchers may consider using qualitative methods to study the major causes of stress and stressors among primary school teachers and different coping styles used by teachers.

Limitations of the study

- By using a convenience, non-random sample of primary school teachers, specific generalizations cannot be made about the total population because this sample is not representative of all primary school teachers.
- In the future study the dimensions of the stress coping strategies can also be studied in details to find out the particular successful coping strategies.

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