Abstract

Purpose- Administrators are an important group of people that provides leadership to any institution. They hold multiple administrative positions in addition to their main responsibilities, which increases their workload. This paper makes an attempt to bring to light the major causes of stress for the administrators and presents a refined integrated conceptual framework in this field.

Design/Methodology/Approach – A review of available literature was summarized to identify the factors contributing more stress so that most studied factors will be taken into consideration for future empirical research.

Findings – The majority of the earlier studies showed that the Work attributes (Work overload and Difficulty of work) and Role conflict/Role ambiguity are the most studied variables and most important variables causing stress followed by High Self expectations and Staff related problems.

Key words: Stress, Administrators, Work, Conflict

Introduction

Stress and tension are part of the everyday lives of administrators in every institution. At times, the stress may be bearable and even thought-provoking, but often administrations experience excessive strains on their mental and physical well-being as they deal with the social and technological changes described by Toffler (1970).

Stress as a concept has become a word not only used in physics, medicine, psychology and management sciences but also in the administration of every institution. This can be attributed to the fact that administrators carry out their day-to-day activities and experience opportunities or threats so critically that they feel they might not be able to handle or deal with them effectively. This situation may create a feeling of physical, psychological, mental, emotional and sometimes spiritual strain that threatens their ability to deal with these challenges, problems or opportunities coupled with the job.

Stress is virtually impossible to avoid. For instance, Yamauchi (1986) expressed the view that stress is a very natural and important part of life and that without stress there would be no life at all. Selye (1981), a
foremost writer in stress, put it expressively when he stated that complete freedom from stress is death and that we all need stress but certainly not too much stress for too long. It is little wonder then that the United Nations Report in 1992 called Stress the 20th Century Epidemic and the World Health Organization referred to job stress as a “World Wide Epidemic”. It is not surprising, therefore when Mirella (1993) described stress as the Big S of the 1990s. This author believes that stress is still a Big S in the beginning of the 21st century. In the developed world, so much work has been done in the area of stress, and organizations have begun to create work environments that will help reduce health risks of work stress. For instance, survey conducted by the families and Work institute in 1998 found that 26 percent of workers in the United States said they were “often or very often” burned out or stressed by their work and this often negatively affected their work performance. In the U.S., the National Institute of Occupation safety and health reported that stress related disorders are fast becoming the most prevalent reason for workers disability and that 40 percent of workers turnover is due to job stress.

**Objectives of the Study and Methodology**

In view of all the above issues, this paper makes an attempt to bring to light the major causes of stress for the administrators and presents a refined integrated conceptual framework in this field. This would help the researchers in further empirical studies to find and confirm the major contributors of stress in their research work. The study is based on extensive review of literature so as to trace out the factors contributing stress among administrators.

**Developments in the Conceptual Framework**

Much has been written about managerial satisfaction in business and public administration, but most studies in higher education have examined the satisfaction levels of faculty rather than administrators (Austin & Gamson, 1983; Gmelch, Lovrich, and Wilke, 1984; Cotton and Tuttle, 1986; Smart, 1990; Olsen, 1993; Smith, Anderson, and Lovrich, 1995). The few studies of administrative satisfaction focus understanding the nature and level of satisfaction, rather than on examining the factors producing satisfaction and the subsequent connections to important outcomes. Following are the various factors contributing stress among administrators identified on the basis of earlier studies.

**Work overload**

Administrative tasks can be classified into 4 categories: Time consuming/tedious tasks; supervisory/conflict potential tasks; tasks related with securing resources; and personal pressure associated with administrative tasks. The time consuming/tedious tasks consists of the tasks associated with completing paperwork, attending meetings and all the work dealing with the bureaucratic processes of institutions. The supervisory/conflict potential tasks are related with evaluation, decision-making which affected the lives of people, handling student conflicts, and supervising and coordinating the tasks of many people. Tasks related with securing resources include preparing budgets, allocating resources, and trying to gain financial support for the department’s programs. Finally, two items narrate to the personal pressures chairs feel from their administrative workloads. The general frustration that chairs experience in their positions can be from too heavy a workload and from trying to make sense from their positions by seeking compatibility among institutional, departmental and personal goals (Gmelch, W. H. et al, 1995). Again Peretomode, O. (2012) found that work overload is a source of moderate stress. The result revealed that of the thirty (30) stressors identified, the stressor of work overload ranked tenth with a percentage of 71. Owusu, G. A., & Tawiah, M. A. (2014) concluded that high rates of mergers, acquisitions, increasing economic interdependence among countries due to globalization, technological development, and restructuring have changed the Organisational work over the last few decades have resulted in excessive work demand is the cause of stress. Brimm, J. L. (1983) also identified top 10 stressors which were identified in the Oregon study as creating significant job-related stress in which excessive work demand / work overload is ranked as tenth stressor. Ngari, S. M., et al (2013) has also considered work overload as a major factor producing high level of occupational stress. Workers whose jobs are too long and too hard, as well as demand too many tasks feel more concerned and face more health risks. Stress is even greater when work overload and pressure involves responsibility for people rather than responsibility for things like products. 59.7 percent of the principals said that they often phase stress due to workload. Jaiyeoba, A.O. & Jibril, M. A. (2008) also ranked workload as the second highest stressor. Boyland, L. (2011) also suggested that on the first open-ended question, which asked principals what they found stressful about their jobs, the majority of principals reported that the difficulty of “task overload” caused them the most job stress. For this study, task overload is explained as having too many tasks to accomplish in a given amount of time. While everyone practices task overload at times, many Indian principals appear to be in a repetitive state of work-related task overload. There were 88 separate written comments from principals that related directly to the premise of ongoing task overload. Hashim, C. N., & Kayode, B. K. (2010) also found that the second factor was named workload, it consisted of 5 items with eigen value greater than 1 and it accounted for more than 10 percent of proportional variance. In the spheres of educational administration, four sources of stress were identified by Koch, Gmelch, Tung, & Swent (1982) task-based stresses
dogged by the everyday activities required by an administrative position, such as phone calls, scheduled meetings, interruptions, unscheduled meetings, reports, memos, grant applications, program evaluations, after-school activities, and a myriad of other tasks dimensions. Long work hours, particularly at the expense of other parts of principals’ lives, help create overload is also suggest by Buckingham, D.A. (2004). Krzemienski, J. (2012) also found the mental and physical effects of work related stress on elementary school principals in an era of increased accountability and the impact stress has on the school climate. In another study it is also argued by Olayiwola, S. (2008) that workload is a big stressor. Shields, M. (2007) also conducted a study in which he found that I have too heavy a workload, one that I cannot possibly finish during the normal working day was considered to be the most severe stressor by the principals with 79 percent & 186 scores in the study. Mbibi, U., & Oluchi, F. (2013) considers the excess work load as the main factor which creates stress. Andreyko, T. A. (2010) again focused on work related stress like Work Addiction. Mudrack and Naughton (2001) considered workaholics to be those employees who work hard to maintain a clear focus on their tasks during work hours, but are unable to forget about it during the hours after work. Unmanageable workloads and time pressure can be a source of stress (Cartwright & Cooper, 2002 & Makhbul, Z. M. 2013). Igharo, K. O. (2012) observed that 48.3 percent of the respondents (secondary school administrators in the Gambia) stated that their workload is heavy; while 39.6 percent agreed that their workload was just okay, only 2.1 percent stated they have light workload, but none indicated too light workload. Notably, 8.6 percent find out that they have too heavy workload. Misfit was significantly positively correlated with perceived work stress. Ability to cope with stress at work was negatively correlated with perceived work stress. The length of time in the current position and the number of years in the CSU system were both significantly associated with the perception of stress at work was proved by Blix, A. G., & Lee, J. W. (1991) and Heston, M. L., et al (1996) also found that teaching load, non-teaching duties, paperwork are also great contributor in creating stress. Wisdom, B. L. (1984) & Fields, L. J. (2005) consider the quantity of work, difficulty of work as a mental stressor.

Role conflict/Role Ambiguity

Role based stress is mainly deal with dual aspect of administrator's role which they perceive while teaching / doing their administrative work. Tyagi, H. K., & Kirmani, M. M. (2012) conducted a research to determine the influence of type of school, gender, age, qualification and experience on Principals/Directors to see role stress among administrators & divide the role stress into two parts – role set conflicts and role space conflicts. Role set conflict has seven components namely -role ambiguity, role expectation conflict, role overload, role erosion, role inadequacy, personal inadequacy, and role isolation. Whereas the role space conflict has three components namely self-role distance, role stagnation and inter role distance. Conflict between academic responsibilities and administrative roles studied by Peretomode, O. (2012) considered it as a moderate stressor and ranked 12th out of 32 stress factors. Although Owusu, G. A., & Tawiah, M. A. (2014) considered meetings, compilation of materials for meetings, time pressures, undefined job schedules, striving to meet deadlines as the main sources of stress for female administrator (senior staff) but role conflict is also a source of stress as again suggested by Hoel and Giga (2003). Andreyko, T. A. (2010) again found role stress as the main stressor which consists of two factor- role conflict & role ambiguity. Role Conflict was defined by Bacharach et al. (1990) as the incompatibility of demands. It includes seven items. Role Ambiguity was also conceptualized by Bacharach et al. (1990), and is defined by a lack of specificity in the job responsibilities. This attribute is measured by five items. In another study done by Gmelch, Walter H. & Gates, & Gordon, S. (1995) consider faculty role stress & role ambiguity stress the two different factors, shows that the stress factor associated with the greatest stress experienced by department chairs, was labeled Faculty Role Stress. The items in this stress factor describe the tasks, time commitments, recognition, and beliefs chairs have about their continuing responsibilities as faculty members. Role Ambiguity Stress as third greatest stressor it was comprised of items which reflect the relative uncertainty chairs have about the tasks they are to perform. the adequacy of the administrative training they have received, and concerns about the authority they have been given. The demands of work have the potential to spill over and interfere with one's personal life (Cartwright & Cooper, 2002) & Makhbul, Z. M., 2013). In another research study Sewell. J. D. (1984) found that the university police officer is often caught in a major conflict among the responsibilities of law enforcement, community or student service, and security of the physical plant. The careful balancing of these multiple roles is a serious stressor to officers, particularly when the officer's perception of the dominant and most appropriate role differs from that of law enforcement peers, supervisors, university administrators, and/or the community. This problem is intensified when administrators, either institutional or police, fail to adequately define the role expected of their officers, reward inconsistent role behavior and otherwise fail to prepare the officer for the unique position in the university community. The stress caused by role conflict is closely associated with three of the other sources of university law enforcement stress: overtraining, negative public image, and "macho" self-image. Role-based stress was defined as role conflict.
and role ambiguity. For example, lack of information to perform satisfactorily, conflicting demands, lack of clarity or understanding of job responsibilities constituted role-based stress concluded by Kresyman, S. (2010). Darmody, M. & Smyth, E. (2011) conducted a research study among primary school principals, and find out that those who have teaching responsibilities report higher stress levels (74 percent compared with 67 percent), indicating challenges in combining the two roles. Interestingly, teachers also reported significantly higher stress levels in schools where the principal has teaching responsibilities (54 percent compared with 43 percent). Fields, L. J. (2005) indicated that first year principals and assistant principals described how difficult it is too manage time when there are overwhelming job responsibilities, and they must juggle multiple tasks at once. When this occurs, most school administrators spend more time at work or bring work home. This in turn had a negative effect on their personal life and resulted in feelings of guilt for lack of time spent with family members and for their own health and well being. At the end Jaiyeoba, A. O. & Jibril, M. A. (2008) also found that conflicting demand & role between family & work is create more stress.

**High Self Expectations**

Perceived high self expectations as it was comprised of items which reflect the commitments and obligations chairs observe as necessary to fulfill the expectations of their roles, their self actualisation needs. The obligations characterized by the items which make up this stress factor include additional social responsibilities and being present as the departmental representative at meetings and functions beyond normal working hours. These professional expectations coupled with high self-expectations and a desire to continue to make a contribution to their profession represent a combination of pressures chairs feel from their perceptions about the requirements and obligations of their position. This factor is considered as forth highest stressor by Gmelch, Walter H. & Gates, & Gordon, S. (1995). Jaiyeoba, A. O. & Jibril, M. A. (2008) also focused on official pressure & high expectations. Shields, M. (2007) indicate in his study that excessively high self expectations is the second highest factor and 73 percent of the respondents consider it as a source of stress with a score of 172.

**Staff Related Problems**

Staff related problems include that staff politics, conflict within the staff & their poor participation in decision making, staff unhappiness with infrastructure etc. In a research study done by Peretomode, O. (2012) indicated that failure of staff to perform their duties & managing staff is the 7th and 8th highest stressor respectively. Sewell. J. D. (1984) conducted a research regarding university law enforcement in which he found that university police departments are vulnerable to stressors stemming from their use as training grounds for new officers who, upon gaining needed experience, move on to other federal, state, and local agencies. The continuous need to fill vacancies created in this way and to train and socialize new officers effectively can impose stress on both agency managers and frontline officers. Brimm, J. L. (1983) identified that evaluating staff members' performance is the 4th greatest factor which create stress. Sometimes subordinates have different desires for the conduct, rules & regulations which create many problems (Wisdom, B. L. 1984). Fields, L. J. (2005) also felt that staff related problems are more stress creator & he mentioned that how difficult is to deal with staff that doesn't follow procedures and how shocking it can be when adults are trivial, mean, and envious. Gmelch, Walter H.; & Gates, & Gordon, S. (1995) also found staff related problems as major contributor to the stress.

**Poor Working Conditions or Inadequate Resources**

It includes poor infrastructure facilities; lack of teaching aids, equipment, poor working conditions etc. and in this type of situation administrator feels stress. Jaiyeoba, A. O. & Jibril, M. A. (2008) and Andreyko, T. A. (2010) found that lack of resources create a situation of stress. Peretomode, O. (2012) identified that 32 percent of the administrators face stress due to lack of adequate infrastructure & tying in the second place with a percentage score of 87.

**Indiscipline**

Students indiscipline includes like strikes, their negative attitudes & behavior towards their work, teachers, chairperson are considered as a stressor by Heston, M. L. & Dedrick, C. and Raschke, D., & Whitehead, J. (1996). Jaiyeoba, A. O. & Jibril, M. A. (2008) again focused on poor & unserious students, their indiscipline & gang starism. While Boyland, L. (2011) & Peretomode, O. (2012) said that students related problems are not so much important & results indicated that 29 percent respondents considered it a very little source of stress, ranked as 19th stressor. Although compilation of student results considered as the highest stressor with 88 percent response & students indiscipline is ranked as 5th stressor. Fields, L. J. (2005) also found that conflicts with students create stress.

**Time pressure**

Brimm, J. L. (1983) found that although trying to complete reports and other paper work on time is not so much important & ranked as 6th greatest stressor. Wisdom, B. L. (1984) & Boyland, L. (2011) identified that time pressure/lack of time is the highest stressor for administrators. While, Peretomode, O. (2012) considered it the second highest stressor with a percentage score of 87. Fields, L. J. (2005) and Owusu, G. A. & Tawiah, M. A.
(2014) also found that uncontrollable demand on their time & the negative impact of the amount of time that the job required on their personal lives is a source of stress.

Meetings

Meetings here mean formal meets of various heads of the departments, dean/chairperson regarding discussion on some issues like making policies, time to time changes in syllabus, to organize workshops & seminars etc. Boyland, L. (2011) also identified that attending too much meetings demands extra time & it is very difficult to manage time and same is favoured by Shields, M. (2007) because the study indicated that out of 235 principals 152 (65 percent) considered meetings a stress factor which create many hurdles. Again 84.9 percent respondents found that to attend various meetings, compiling materials for meetings (83.6 percent), is a big source of stress for female administrator (senior staff) as suggested by Owusu, G. A., & Tawiah, M. A. (2014). Brimm, J. L. (1983) indicated that meetings are the 2\textsuperscript{nd} highest stressful factor. Gmelch, Walter H. and Gates & Gordon, S. (1995) also concluded that meetings are very stressful.

Poor relationship with Colleagues

Most jobs demands working with people. Thus, poor or unsupportive colleagues, clients, subordinates and bosses will be a potential source of stress (Cartwright & Cooper, 2002). Kahn et al., (1964) in his study of poor working relations found that mistrust of colleagues created role ambiguity that leads to psychological strain. Social Integration is the degree to which a person has close friends among colleagues. If this relationship is not good then it create a big source of stress is showed by Andreyko, T. A. (2010) in his research study. Gmelch, Walter H.; & Gates, & Gordon, S. (1995) considered administrative relationship stress as the 2\textsuperscript{nd} highest stressor. The stress factor comprised of items which reflect the chair's responsibility as the primary representative of the department to the administration as well as a channel of information from the administration to the department. Ngari, S. M. et al (2013) found that 41.8 percent principals often face stress due to unsettled conflicts with colleagues, 9.7 percent principals face stress sometimes & 48.5 percent principals never phase a situation of stress due to poor relationship with colleagues. Lack of management supported again a cause of stress which is said by 66 percent respondents in a study conducted by Peretomode, O. (2012). On the contrary, activities which were not highly rated as source of stress included poor relationship with colleagues (17.1 percent), lack of career support from colleagues and superiors (29.7 percent) as found by Owusu, G. A., & Tawiah, M. A. (2014). Darmody, M. & Smyth, E. (2011) also conducted a research study regarding “Job Satisfaction and Occupational Stress among Primary School Teachers and School Principals in Ireland” and concluded that stress levels are highest for those who report 'poor' administrative support (81 percent) and lowest for those with 'good' or 'excellent' support (57-59 percent). Principal stress levels are lower where 'nearly all' teachers are open to new developments and challenges (66 percent compared with 84 percent) and where 'nearly all' teachers are eager to take part in service training (67 percent compared with 76 percent).

Complying with state, federal, organizational rules & regulations

Brimm, J. L. (1983) identified that complying with state, federal, and organizational rules and policies; is the highest stressor. Wisdom, B. L. (1984) also said that board desires for different conduct is a cause of stress. Shields, M. (2007) found that 70 percent respondents face stress due to organizational rules & regulations. 63 percent of the principals said that conflicting procedures is a source of stress in which 4 percent considered it extreme highest stressor, 17 percent said it a source of much stress, 23 percent said it moderate source of stress and 19 percent considered it a little source of stress (Peretomode, O., 2012).

Budget Problems

Preparing and allocating budget resources is the 5\textsuperscript{th} highest stressor for superintendent found by Brimm, J. L. (1983). While Wisdom, B. L. (1984) considered the internal/external boundary spanning & budgets related problems as the 4\textsuperscript{th} highest stressor. Boyland, L. (2011) & Gmelch et al (1995) also suggested that frequent budget cuts are also create many problems. Preparing & allocating budget resources in a situation when resources are limited is a big stress factor and ranked as 12\textsuperscript{th} highest stressor with 62 percent identified by Shields, M. (2007).

Lack of Power

Lack of power means when a person did not get enough authority to complete/fulfil their responsibilities & inadequate influence on subordinates, that situation is a cause of stress as identified by Wisdom, B.L. (1984). Jaiyeoba, A. O., & Jibril, M. A. (2008) found that lack of autonomy in execution of responsibilities & problems in curriculum implementation create more stressful situation. But Peretomode, O. (2012) said that lack of power is not a big source of stress & ranked it as 29\textsuperscript{th} stressor out of 32 factor, only 60 percent respondents considered it stress factor. But Owusu, G. A., & Tawiah, M. A. (2014) identified that only 12.1 percent respondents considered it a source of stress and conclude that lack of security, power and confidence is not a stressor.
Decision Making

An administrator performs various types of duties. As a teacher, as a chairperson, dean & take many decisions regarding their staff, students which is very stressful. Brimm, J. L. (1983) concluded that having power to make decisions that affect the lives of individual people is the most important stressor & ranked as 2nd most stressful factor. Again Wisdom, B. L. (1984) considered decision making the 2nd highest stressor. Making changes/decisions that affect me without my knowledge or involvement is a big problem but Peretomode, O. (2012) ranked it as 11th stressor, said that only 74 percent respondents consider it a source of stress. Shields, M. (2007) also agreed with the above statement & showed that only 64 percent principals considered it as a source of stress. But Owusu, G. A., & Tawiah, M. A. (2014) said that it is not a source of stress because only 27.6 percent respondents consider the decision making a stressor.

Family Pressure


 Interruption from Telephone Calls

Many times telephone calls became hurdle/barriers while performing their duties. Brimm, J. L. (1983) revealed that being interrupted frequently by telephone calls is the 5th highest stressor. While Shields, M. (2007) conducted a research in which he identified 12 highest stressor and 71 percent respondents consider it 4th stressor with a score of 167. Again Gmehel et al (1995) favored that telephone calls disturbance is very stressful.

After having discussion on the factors contributing stress among the administrators, it is very important to analyze that which factor is more studied and most important in earlier studies. The table given below summarizes all the factors taken up by different studies at different times.

| Table: Factors (contributing to stress) extracted from the Review of Literature |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Sr. No. | Authors | F1 | F2 | F3 | F4 | F5 | F6 | F7 | F8 | F9 | F10 | F11 | F12 | F13 | F14 | F15 | F16 |
| 1 | - | - | ✓ | ✓ | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 2 | Audryko, T. A. (2010) | ✓ | ✓ | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 3 | Blix, A. G. & Lee, J. W. (1991) | ✓ | ✓ | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 4 | Boyland, L. (2011) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 5 | Brimm, J. L. (1983) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 6 | Buckingham, D. A. (2004) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 7 | Daramola, M. & Smyth, E (2011) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 8 | Fields, L. J. (2005) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 9 | Gmehel, W. H. & Gates, & Gordon, S. (1995) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 10 | Hashim, C. N. & Kayode, B. K. (2010) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 11 | Huson, M. L. et al (1996) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

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The above table revealed that there are 16 factors which are commonly used in earlier studies and considered as a source of stress. So, it is concluded from the table that Work attributes (Work overload and difficulty of work) and Role conflict/Role ambiguity are the most studied variables and most important variables causing stress followed by High Self expectations and staff related problems.

**Conclusion**

There are numerous factors which produce job tension and administrative stress. Some writers have pointed out that it is not only the particular events which cause stress, but it is one’s assignment of worth to the events that create stress (Giam-matteo & Giammatteo, 1980). The present study identified the various factors that cause high level of stress among the administrators. The results indicated that Work attributes (Work overload and Difficulty of work) and Role conflict/Role ambiguity are the most studied variables and most important variables causing stress followed by High Self expectations and staff related problems. This would help the further empirical studies on the stress and help them to confirm their results with the earlier studies taken up in this paper. Most of the earlier studies mentioned in this paper are related with the field of Education, Medical and hotels etc. So, the stress among the administrations of corporate sector can be further studied as the work culture and environment is totally different in corporate world as compared to these institutions. This would lead to exploration of certain new factors causing stress and pave the way for further research.

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