Stress levels of Teachers and Software Professionals Working from Home

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ABSTRACT

During covid-19 pandemic all the schools, companies, colleges and organizations were closed and shifted to work from home which created increased stress among employees, which in turn effected their mental health. The current study attempts to study stress levels of teachers and software professionals working from home. The sample consisted of 120 respondents with 60 teachers and 60 software professionals. The age group of the respondents was 25-35 years. Equal number of male and female respondents were selected for the study. Personal interviews were conducted for data collection. The results of the study concluded that teachers were experiencing high levels of stress compared to software professionals. Interestingly nearly 50% of the respondents irrespective of gender were found to have average to low levels of stress while working from home. However, no significant differences were found in the stress levels of teachers and software professionals.

Key words: *Stress, Teachers, Software professionals, work from home and covid-19*

Stress is defined as an unpleasant emotional experienced with specific environmental triggers and associated with feelings of anxiety, frustration, tension, and anger. Due to pandemic that affected the people, the government decided to take strict measures, such as closing government and private businesses, all public spaces, including schools, to slow down the spread of the virus. The employees started working from home, the home environment has become an office for parents, a school for children. Most of the employees experienced difficulties due to overtime for dealing with household chores, childcare and many distractions such as increased workloads, overtime, and irregular working hours was led to the daily routines of employees (Senturk *et al.,* 2021). Software Professionals and teachers were struggling very hard to manage both the work and home roles with the challenge of resource constraints as well. These effected their personal and professional lives.

In this context, the present study was aimed to study the stress levels of teachers and software professionals working from home during covid-19 lockdown period.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study analysed the stress levels of teachers and software professionals working from home. This study was conducted in the West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh with a sample of 120 respondents with 60 teachers and 60 software professionals. Exploratory and retrospective research design was adopted for the study. Purposive and snowball technique was used select the respondents. Stress scale developed by Surbhi Sharma and Sharma

Table 1. Stress levels of teachers based on demographic variables (n=60)

S.no	Demographic variables	Extremely high	High	Average	Low	Extremely low
1	Age					
	25-30	-	8 (25.00%)	11 (34.00%)	13 (41.00%)	-
	31-35	-	6 (21.00%)	9 (32.00%)	13 (42.00%)	-
2	Gender					
	Male	-	6 (20.00%)	10 (33.00%)	14 (47.00%)	-
	Female	-	8 (27.00%)	10 (33.00%)	12 (40.00%)	-
3	Education					
	Degree	-	1 (14.00%)	3 (43.00%)	3 (43.00%)	-
	PG and above	-	13 (25.00%)	17 (32.00%)	23 (43.00%)	-
4	Marital status					
	Unmarried	-	2 (25.00%)	3 (25.00%)	3 (38.00%)	-
	Married	-	12 (23.00%)	17 (33.00%)	23 (44.00%)	-

(2019) was used to collect the data through personal interviews and emails. The data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results and Discussion

Age

Forty-one per cent of the teachers who belonged to 25-30 years of age group were found to have low level of stress followed by average (34.00%) and high (25.00%). However, the respondents in age group of 31-35 years had low level of stress (46.00%), followed by average (32.00%) to high (21.00%).

Gender

The data revealed that nearly forty seven per cent of male respondents had low level of stress, followed by average (33.00%) and high (20.00%). Whereas forty per cent of female teachers had low level of stress, followed by average (33.00%) to high (27.00%). The reasons could be that the female respondents take the classes and as well do the house hold works and male teachers only take the classes and do the college related works.

Education

It is interesting to note that the respondents who were qualified post-graduates had low level of stress (43.00%) followed by average (32.00%) and high (25.00%). Equal proportion of the qualified graduates of 43.00 per cent each were found to have

average and low level of stress, followed by high stress (14.00%). The findings could be due to work overload and concern for their family's health as the most stressful. This could also be due to loss of control over work, overlapping of work with household tasks, loss of control over personal decisions, irregular schedules and concern about finances.

Thirty eight per cent each of the unmarried teachers were found in low and average stress levels, followed by high stress (25.00%). However, forty four per cent of the married respondents had low levels of stress, followed by average (33.00%) and low (23.00%). The reasons could be due to difficulty to concentrate on work because of family responsibilities and hectic job.

Marital status

Table 2. Stress levels of software professionals based on demographic variables (n=60)

S. no	Demographic variables	Extremely high	High	Average	Low	Extremely low
1	Age					
	25-30	-	10 (20.00%)	23 (46.00%)	17 (34.00%)	-
	31-35	-	2 (15.00%)	3 (23.00%)	5 (38.00%)	-
2	Gender					
	Male	-	8 (27.00%)	13 (43.00%)	9 (30.00%)	-
	Female	-	4 (13.00%)	13 (43.00%)	13 (43.00%)	-
3	Education					
	Degree	-	4 (14.00%)	13 (45.00%)	12 (41.00%)	-
	PG	-	8 (26.00%)	13 (41.00%)	10 (32.00%)	-
4	Marital status					
	Married	-	6 (20.00%)	13 (43.00%)	11 (37.00%)	-
	Unmarried	-	6 (20.00%)	13 (43.00%)	11 (37.00%)	-

Age

Forty six per cent of software professionals belonged to age group of 25-30 years had average stress levels, followed by low (34.00%) and high (20.00%). Whereas thirty eight percent who were in the age group of 31-35 years had low level of stress, followed by average (23.00%) to high (15.00%).

Gender

It exciting to note that forty three per cent of the male software professionals had average stress, followed by low (30.00%) and high stress (27.00%). Among female software professionals equal proportion of 43.00 per cent each were found in the categories of average and low stress levels, followed by high (13.00%). Irawanto *et.al* (2021) indicated that women suffer high stress because of the burden of office work and household activities.

Education

Forty-five per cent of software professionals who completed their graduation had average levels of stress, followed by low (41.00%) and high (14.00%). However, forty one percent of post-graduation respondents had average (45.00%) and followed by low (26.00%) and high (32.00%). The findings could be due to the reason that higher qualification people are given higher responsibilities and even paid more that the less qualifies professionals. Umesh *et.al* (2021) explained the lack of resources, long hours of work, overload, poor management support and employees cannot equally concentrate on both office and home work.

Marital status

The data showed that forty three percent of the married software professionals were found to have average levels of stress, followed by high (37.00%) and low (20.00%). Similar results were found for unmarried software professionals. The finding could be accounted to their responsibilities at home and office works.
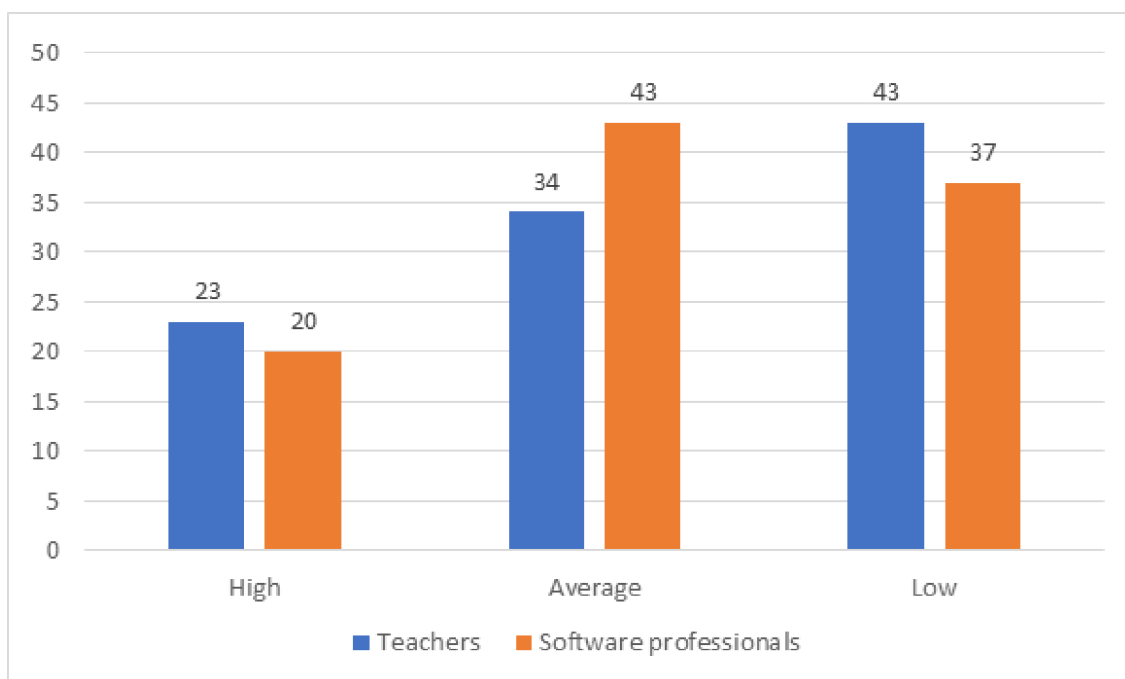
Fig 1. Distribution of teachers and software professionals based on stress levels

Table 3. Stress levels of teachers and software professionals' respondents (N=120)

S.No	Stress levels	Teachers (n=60) F (%)	Software professionals (n=60 F (%)
1	Extremely high	-	-
2	High	14	12
		-23	-20
3	Average	20	26
		-34	-43
4	Low	26	22
		-43	-37
5	Extremely low	-	-

*Figures in parenthesis indicates percentages

Table 4. Mean difference in stress levels of teachers and software professionals (N=120)

S.N	Dependent variable	Occupation	Mean± S.D	Z-value
1	Stress	Teachers	150.0±24.01	-0.28^{NS}
		Software professionals	148.2±26.01	

Overall findings, irrespective of gender indicated that 43.00 per cent of the teachers experienced low levels of stress followed by average (34.00%) and high (23.00%). However, software professionals had average stress levels (43.00%), followed by low (37.00%) and (20.00%). The teachers explained that working from home was comfortable and convenient and the reasons expressed by the software professionals for stress were increased work load, no proper network and infrastructure, sometimes uncomfortable in home (space, ventilation, lighting).

The results are line with the findings of Purwanto et.al (2020) who revealed that the work from home activity was more flexible in completing work, does not follow office hours, can minimize the level of stress experienced besides traffic jams. The teachers had high level of stress compare to software professionals. Because of the teachers felt a workload, working environment was uncomfortable, communication problems with colleagues and students. Kusumaningtiar and Anggraini (2020) found the elementary school teachers felt workload, career development was lacking and interpersonal connection were lacking.

The mean difference between teachers and software professionals in table 2 clearly indicated that teachers experienced high stress levels than software professionals, however the difference was found to be non-significant. These findings are in similar with Svedberg et.al (2018) the associations between work-to-home conflict, perceived total workload, and due to stress-related mental diagnosis were non-significant after adjusting for work-related factors and living with children. Kusumaningtiar and Anggraini (2020) found that there was no significant link between interpersonal relationships and work stress because of the absence of interpersonal relationship with work stress due to good relationships between fellow teacher colleagues, bosses and parents of the students.

CONCLUSION

Covid-19 pandemic has changed the life style, work style of individuals and society. Majority of the companies, organizations and academic institutions opted for work from home culture. This sudden change in the working pattern coupled with health and other challenges has resulted in stress among the individuals. The current study highlighted how the work from home scenario has impacted the stress levels of teachers and software professionals during covid-19 lockdown period. The study concluded that teachers experienced high levels of stress compare to software professionals. However no significant difference was found in the stress levels of teachers and software professionals.

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