

Spiritual and non spiritual practices for work stress coping: a comparative study among academic faculties in India

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ABSTRACT

Stress is an inevitable part of our life. Most of the people experience stress every day to some extent. Stress in workplace is also one of the big issues and it is observed in every job. Coping is an effort to manage stress. The research in the area of occupational stress and coping strategies is wide and varied. But not much work has been done to analyze the potential relationship between spirituality and work stress particularly among faculty members of higher educational institutions in India. The present study aimed to make a comparison between the spiritual techniques and non-spiritual techniques on coping strategies applied by faculty of autonomous colleges in Madhya Pradesh state of India. t-test has been applied to test the hypothesis. The study shows that there is no significant difference between spiritual and non spiritual coping strategies applied by male and female faculties.

Keywords: Coping, Coping strategies, Occupational stress, Stress, Spirituality

The occupational stress is subjected to the stress that a person experiences in his/her workplace. Stress creates physical and psychological imbalances in human's body and mind. The teaching profession has become more complex due to global competition, open market and technological advancement. Recent studies confirmed that teaching is one of the stressful professions like many other professions. The problem of stress in teachers is an important aspect of the process of social change in India over the past 25 years. Faculties of higher education have to perform multiple roles and responsibilities and have to maintain cordial relationship with management, administrators, colleagues and students.

Stress leads to several physical and psychological disorders, absenteeism and job-burnout, everyone has to learn and apply the appropriate coping techniques. Therefore, in the recent years, the high attention to the occupational stress and coping strategies have been done in different studies. People apply various approaches to reduce their stresses. The selection of the appropriate coping technique against the stress can reduce the impact of the stress on people's psychological health.

Recently, the importance of spirituality in daily life has been discussed widely in the literature. It has been clearly mentioned that practice of spirituality at home and office like

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daily prayer helps in handling and controlling stress. However, localized studies on the role of spirituality in faculty stress have not been prominently discussed. Therefore, two main categories of methods have been considered in this study. The spiritual and non-spiritual. Thus, this paper mainly focuses on presenting comparative study on spiritual and non-spiritual coping techniques applied by teaching faculty of autonomous colleges in Madhya Pradesh state of India.

In order to understand the use of spiritual and non-spiritual practices on coping strategies, the following objectives are defined:

1. To identify the spiritual and non-spiritual practices and their effectiveness used for stress coping
2. To verify how faculties, differ significantly in applying these practices.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Spirituality has historically been seen as an inner source of strength, especially when dealing with problems and troubles in one's personal life. It should also help in bettering individual's working life and reducing work stress. As Mahakul and Satyanarayan (2016) argued that "Stress has many folds to appear in human life. And spirituality is the gateway to counter stress in day to day life".

Csiernik and Adams (2002) conducted a study of 154 helping professionals from seven different work environments employed five different measures to examine the impact of stress on spirituality and of spirituality on ameliorating workplace stress. JAREL spirituality scale was used for the study. Participants who indicated a greater sense of spirituality perceived lower levels of workplace stress than less spiritually inclined colleagues.

Adnan Iqbal and Husam Kokash (2011) conducted a study to explore the faculty perception towards occupational stress and coping strategies that faculty used to tackle their stress. The study was carried out among faculty members in one of the private universities of Saudi Arabia. The 109 questionnaires were distributed. The result found that exercise and yoga, spirituality, time management and spend time with family are the main techniques to cope their stress. 57% of faculty indicated that they followed the path of spirituality to cope their stress.

Bell, Rajendran and Theiler (2012) used a spiritual appraisal model of stress and health to investigate the moderating effects of spirituality at work on job stress, wellbeing, and ill-being amongst Australian academics staff members employed in Australian universities. 139 staff members completed a self-report questionnaire containing quantitative measures of spirituality at work (individual, work-unit and organization wide spirituality), wellbeing, ill-being, job threat stress and job pressure stress. Results of the initial correlation analyses suggested that academics with high levels of spirituality at work tended to experience fewer instances of ill-being, more instances of wellbeing, less job threat stress and less job pressure stress.

Carolyn Martha Nakisuyi (2012) investigated the relationship between spirituality and stress on one hand; and also stress and job satisfaction on the other hand. The study used a non-experimental research design, over interviewing a total of 92 workers chosen according to convenience of ability to answer the questionnaire in Ugandan academic institutions.

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Spirituality, stress and job satisfaction were measured using five-point Likert scale. Data was analyzed using the Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient. The results indicated that stress was not related to spirituality because spiritual people did not complain when overloaded with work.

The article from Hartwick and Kang (2013) documents various spiritual practices as a means of coping with stress employed by teachers with religious beliefs and illustrates how they process stress using spiritual practices. Many teachers report managing professional stress through spiritual practices such as prayer, meditation, and reading devotionals or scripture.

Salasiah Hanin Hamjah et al. (2015) identified the perceptions of academicians regarding their career and to examine the role of the spiritual aspect in managing stress experienced by them. 37 out of 108 academicians at the Faculty of Islamic Studies, National University of Malaysia were randomly selected as study sample. Questionnaires were used as instrument of data collection. The findings showed that work-related stress may be overcome by a spiritual approach.

Mahakul and Satyanarayan (2016) proposed a new model theory and name this as Spiritual Optic Funnel (SOF) to filter various elements of stress. This model confirms that filtration of mind or personality is necessary in the funnel of spirituality in workplace to eliminate stress time to time. Workplace spirituality smoothly handles stress and brings mental sharpness that holds knowledge and skills.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Sample of the Study

The sample for the study includes the academic faculty of autonomous colleges in Madhya Pradesh covering different public and private institutions consisting both male and female faculties. This research includes a sample size of 400 (male-215 and female-185) and considers only general colleges and excludes engineering and professional colleges.

Random sampling technique is selected for data collection using a well-structured questionnaire taken as research instrument. Further, according to the objectives of the study, only senior faculties having experience of 5 years or more are considered as the target respondents.

Research Instrument

A structure questionnaire has been selected as a research tool. It has a five-point rating scale to collect the data about the work stress on faculties of autonomous colleges. The study is purely based on primary data.

The questionnaire is shown in the following table. The following five factors have been identified in this questionnaire. The responses are recorded in a 5-point Likert scale. The ratings are from Highly Helpful to Least / Not Helpful and the corresponding values are from 5 to 1.

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Table No. 1 Spiritual Factors & Non- Spiritual Factors

Item. No.	Spiritual Factors
1.	Yoga and Meditation
2.	Reading Spiritual Books
3.	Positive Thinking & Optimism
4.	Self-control & Tolerance
5.	Other Spiritual practices (Prayer etc.)
Item. No.	Non Spiritual Factors
1.	Eating / Nutrition
2.	Avoidance / Escaping
3.	Relaxation Activities (Outing, Singing, Dancing, Walking, Sleeping etc.)
4.	Entertainment (Music, TV, Movies etc.)
5.	Internet (email, chatting, social media sites etc.)
6.	Mobile Applications (SMS, MMS, Humour, WhatsApp etc.)

Measuring Agreeability Index: The Agreeability Index of each item is used for respondents' analysis. The A.I. will be calculated as given below:

The total number of respondents = R

The maximum score of each item= R *5

A. I. = (Total Score of each item / R*5) X 100

Hypothesis testing

1. Hypothesis testing of Ho for Male

- Null: There is no significant difference in the spiritual and non spiritual strategies for coping applied by male faculties.
- Alternate: There is significant difference in the spiritual and non spiritual strategies for coping applied by male faculties.

Result of t-Test: An independent-samples t-test was conducted to examine the difference between spiritual and non spiritual techniques of coping applied by male faculties. There were 215 male faculties who participated in the study. The results are shown in the following table.

Table 2: t-Test Result of Ho for Male

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances		
	Agreeability Index	
	Spiritual Factors	Non Spiritual Factors
Mean	28.83093023	29.53195349
Variance	17.13404119	34.64008215
Observations	215	215
Pooled Variance	25.88706167	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	428	
t Stat	-1.428549451	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.076931559	
t Critical one-tail	1.648421601	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.153863119	
t Critical two-tail	1.965522115	

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DISCUSSION

The t-test analysis was performed as given in the table. The value of $t(\text{stat}) = 1.42$ and table value of $t = 1.96$. Since the value of $t(\text{stat})$ is less than the table value of t (t -critical). Therefore, t-test was not significant. Similarly, the p-value is higher than 0.05. The result shows that there is no significant difference between the coping strategies adopted by male faculties. There is not enough evidence of rejecting the null hypothesis that means the alternative hypothesis is rejected here.

Hypothesis testing of H_0 for Female

- Null: There is no significant difference in the spiritual and non spiritual strategies for coping applied by female faculties.
- Alternate: There is significant difference in the spiritual and non spiritual strategies for coping applied by female faculties.

Result of t-Test: An independent-samples t-test was conducted to examine the difference between spiritual and non spiritual techniques of coping applied by male faculties. There were 185 female faculties who participated in the study. The results are shown in the following table.

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances		
	Agreeability Index	
	Spiritual Factors	Non spiritual Factors
Mean	29.28989189	29.47032432
Variance	16.33680651	41.57674229
Observations	185	185
Pooled Variance	28.9567744	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	368	
t Stat	-0.322485639	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.373633975	
t Critical one-tail	1.649004811	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.747267949	
t Critical two-tail	1.966431267	

The t-test analysis was performed as given in the table. The value of $t(\text{stat}) = 0.32$ and table value of $t = 1.96$. Since the value of $t(\text{stat})$ is less than the table value of t (t -critical). Therefore, t-test was not significant. Similarly, the p-value is higher than 0.05. The result shows that there is no significant difference between the coping strategies adopted by female faculties. There is not enough evidence of rejecting the null hypothesis that means the alternative hypothesis is rejected here.

CONCLUSIONS

Faculty stress at higher education is becoming one of the major issues around the world. The impact of globalization, urbanization, increased competition and rapid technological changes in higher education system in India has influenced the role of teaching professionals, therefore, the teaching faculties of higher educational institutions are experiencing stress at work. Autonomous colleges in Madhya Pradesh are also facing stress in their academic and non-academic works. They use different coping strategies in stress coping. This paper tried

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to investigate the comparison between the spiritual coping techniques and non spiritual coping techniques used by the faculties of autonomous colleges. The results of this study reveal that there are no significant differences between spiritual and non spiritual coping techniques applied by male and female faculties.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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