

## Original Article

## The Effectiveness of Job Stress Management on Improving Mental Health and Self-Efficacy of Training the Teachers

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(Received: 2 May 2017 ; Revised:30 July 2017 ; Accepted:20 Sep 2017 )

### Abstract

**Introduction:** Job stress is one of the most important problems in the modern world and has created many concerns for many organizations. The aim of the present study was to determine the effectiveness of job stress management on improving mental health and self-efficacy of training the teachers.

**Methods:** Total of 40 teachers (21 women, and 19 men) were selected by simple random sampling. Participants were assigned into the experimental and control groups. With a pre-test and post-test-control group design, subjects in the experimental group, undergone sessions of stress management training both groups were evaluated using Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) and mental health inventory (MHI) in pre-test and post-test. Data analyzed by descriptive statistics and Multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA).

**Results:** Findings showed that there were not significant differences between two groups in pretest, but stress management training has significantly increased the psychological well-being and teaching self-efficacy scores in experimental group.

**Conclusion:** The stress management training, could be intervention program in target groups and counseling centers, and with enhancing psychological well-being and senses of teaching self-efficacy of teachers, increase education to productivity of schools.

**Declaration of Interest:** None.

**Key words:** Mental health, Self-Efficacy, Stress management, School teachers, Students.

### Introduction

Job stress is one of the most important problems in the modern world and has created many concerns for many organizations (1). But the problem has not the same effect on all the existing jobs. Several studies have shown that jobs with the field of human services, such as teaching and presenting health services are more prone to higher levels of stress (2, 3, 4).

The negative consequences of job stress affect both the individual and the organization and people who deal with them, so it seems action to prevent (5).

Although teachers are satisfied with their jobs, but in a society that is subject to the various political, economic, social and cultural changes, teaching can be considered both a source of satisfaction as well as a source of stress and discontent (6), especially when

compared with other occupational groups (7). Teachers in different grades and in different time periods reported the level of mental job stress from mild to severe. Higher levels of stress among women teachers (8) and less experienced teachers (9) is more common. In one survey conducted on teachers from different countries, one third of teachers believed that the profession of teaching is extremely stressful (10). In these studies, they have also reported high levels of job dissatisfaction and depression among teachers (11).

Teachers have unique career because of their responsibility for the welfare, prosperity and activity of students. They have the duty of disseminating knowledge, education of students and order discipline in an appropriate time. For this reason, the experience of mental stress of teachers is different with other professions. (12). Teacher stress can be defined as a negative unpleasant emotions such as anger, frustration, anxiety and depression as a result of some aspects of his work. (13).

High stress can have negative consequences on the teaching load, weaken the morale teacher and undermine their ability to reduce the transmission of curriculum and educational role. Mental stress can be cut in two basic ways of teaching quality teacher: First, if the teacher find teaching profession stressful for a long time it may reduce their satisfaction of this profession and thereby discourage them. Secondly, severe mental stress may reduce the quality of interaction between teachers and students in the classroom (14).

Various studies have identified number of stressful sources towards teachers some of the most important sources are as follows: teaching students who lack the motivation, maintaining the classroom's discipline, the high volume of work, evaluation by others, unsuitable working conditions and difficulty of interacting with parents and colleagues (10); lack of sufficient time and control misbehaving students (15), lack of career advancement and administrative issues, lack of time preparation, lack of having independence (16); lack of motivation (17), limited support from the government, insufficient education,

lack of knowledge about new teaching topics, continuous changes in the curriculum, problems related to the structure of the class, disciplinary problems of the students, lack of coordination class, (18); Closed organizational atmosphere (19), mistakes at work and lack of understanding the problems from the manager side (20).

A considerable part of researches in this overall area of job stress have pointed in particular which the teachers' beliefs can be a mediator factor on their mental stress (16). The self-efficacy is directly connected with attitude and actions of individuals. From teacher's perspective, this structure is called the teacher efficacy beliefs and is defined as the teachers' beliefs in the ability of organizing and the required implementation period of practices in order to succeed in a task-specific training in a specific context (21). Also Gibson and Dembo (22) have been defined teacher efficacy beliefs according to teacher's belief that can help to students with difficulties or without incentives. At work environment, this assurance can help the psychological stress be kept at a low level and inner interest grows into her/his job. Those who are skeptical about its capabilities may assume difficult tasks as a personal threat; while people with high self-efficacy do the tasks with open arms (21). Teachers who have confidence in their work would essentially show a better preparation feeling in the work and with encountering the changes they are less susceptible to psychological stress (16).

According to the research conducted in Iran, some of the elementary school teachers do not have the necessary professional skills or lack of educational facilities and enough of educational aid, lack of adequate physical class condition and huge number of students in classes cause inability to exploit the opportunities well (23), these factors cause the drop down of their efficacy beliefs and have increased the psychological stress in them.

Teacher's psychological stress, is an environmental factor that can have negative effects on the level of adjustment and student learning in the classroom. and when the teacher has stress, the class environment would not be a suitable atmosphere for learning; especially that teachers'

psychological stress with her/his weak efficiency in classroom management and engaging students (24) and negative students emotions is comorbid; Accordingly, one of the prevention strategies of children's problems within the framework of education, is interference in level of teachers and attempt to reduce their stress and as a result, to increase the cooperative learning and provide a better learning environment (25). Ability to coping with stress, is an important skill that all teachers are required to have, and it is necessary for all of them in the first stage to learn the strategies that minimize the stress of work which can inhibit the psychological stress (11).

In the last forty years up to now, the results of different researches have indicated that stress-related work just are not due sick and absenteeism, but also affect the movement of employees and reduce efficiency and affect their performance in the organization (26). To deal with this issue several psychological stress management methods have been provided in order to educate people for how to prevent, reduce and compromise and cope with psychological stress. About education of teachers and the application of these techniques causes better progression of the students and when students do well that increases the teacher's efficacy of work and feel the psychological stress less. However, despite of many reports on high psychological stress among teachers in Iran and as many researches have done about resources and the amount of psychological stress job, there is still no considerable practical action has taken place to deal with this issue. So, the main problem in the current study is to determine the implementation effect of a training program on stress management in order to prevent and reduce teachers job mental stress and as a result, improving their efficiency in the class management and engage students in learning.

### **Methods**

In the current study the semi experimental pre-test and post-test designs has been used in two groups. Sample population were included of all teachers who were working in primary

school education and training in Tehran within the academic year of 2012-2013. Sampling was with multiple class-cluster method. In this case which Iran was divided into 5 parts North, South, East, West and Central. From each section one region and from each region four schools were selected (Two female and two male schools). Then all selected teachers were evaluated with Job stress scale. Based on the cutoff point  $T=65$  people who had a score of higher than 65 with random numbering have been included in both experimental and control groups.

Participant's ages were between 20 to 45 years, having at least associate degree. Consent to participate in research based on signature of the written consent were the requirements of entering the study. Having psychotic symptoms and organic brain disorder were considered the criteria for out of research.

The tools used in this study are as follows:

**1. Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES):** The scale created by Tschannen-Moran, Hoy (28) has been utilized for measurement of efficacy beliefs among teachers. According to the report by Dellinger et al. (28), the scale compared to scales about measurement teachers efficiency beliefs which have been written so far, includes items that measure the multi-dimensional nature of teaching via specific teaching assignments and in several functional scope. This scale had two long form (24 items) and short (12 items) and consists of three subscales: and have been adjusted on the basis of 9-point Likert scale from 1 (very low) to 9 (very high) and in present study the long form has been used. Tschannen-Moran, and Hoy (27) performed this in a sample of 410 of teachers in order to examine the factor structure and the reliability of this scale. The coefficient of Cronbach's alpha has been reported for each of the subscales efficiency teacher, educational strategies, management class and in engaging students 0.91, 0.90, and 0.87 respectively, and for total score as 0.94. That is a good sign of internal consistency of the scale. In Iran also Khan Mohammadi (2005), has been reported reliability coefficients of tool by using Cronbach's alpha for the whole scale 0.93 and

for the subscales, 0.89, 0.84 and 0.87 respectively. Bakhshae (29) has reported for all the scale coefficient 0.94 and for components Coefficients of 0.85, 0.87 and 0.86 respectively.

Scale manufacturers in the research via simultaneous implementation (TSES), Rand Scale and efficiency scale for teacher of Hoy and Woolfolk (30), that has been adapted from Gibson scale and Dembo (22), investigate convergent validity of the TSES. The results of correlation matrix represents positive correlation (For Rand scale  $r = 0.53$  and with Gibson questionnaire and Dembo  $r = 0.64$ ) that had been implemented between this scale with other scales (27).

**2. Mental Health Inventory (MHI):** Mental Health Inventory is a test with 34 questions and measures two positions of psychological well-being and psychological distress in the scale of 5 degree Likert from grades 1 to 5. The minimum test scores under scales of psychological well-being and psychological distress were 14 and 20 and the maximum scores on the same subject subscales were 60 and 100 respectively. In the Persian version of this scale, the sample composed of one hundred and sixty students from universities of Tehran and Science & Technology of Iran that was conducted in two patient groups ( $n=80$ ; 50 females, 30 males) and normal ( $n=80$ ; 50 females, 30 males). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient scales of psychological well-being and psychological distress calculated for score of normal sample 0.91 and 0.88 respectively and for the patients sample 0.85 and 0.89 respectively that is a sign of good internal consistency of the scale. The correlation coefficients was calculated between the scores of numbers of normal subjects ( $n=30$ ) in two stages with two weeks interval to measure the test-retest reliability. These coefficients for psychological well-being and psychological distress were  $r = .89$  and  $r = .87$  respectively and in it was significant in the level  $P < .001$  that is sign test-retest reliability satisfactory scale. The correlation coefficients was calculated between numbers of scores patients sample ( $n=30$ ) and in two stages with distance of one to two weeks to assess test-retest reliability. These coefficients for

psychological well-being and psychological distress were  $r = .77$  and  $r = .82$  respectively and it was significant in the level  $p < .001$ , that is test-retest reliability satisfactory scale. Simultaneous validity of mental health inventory calculated via enforcement simultaneous questionnaire of general health about all samples in the two groups. The results of Pearson correlation coefficient showed that significant negative correlation ( $r = -.85$ ,  $P < .001$ ) between the total score of the participants in the general health questionnaire with psychological well-being subscale and significant positive correlation with the psychological distress subscale ( $r = .86$ ,  $P < .001$ ). These results confirm simultaneous validity of the mental health inventory. Discriminant validity of Mental Health scale calculated by comparing the scores of psychological well-being and psychological distress in two groups of patients and normal and confirmed (31).

### Results

In terms of demographics distribution, it can be said that the minimum and maximum age of the participants in the experimental group was 23 and 47 years respectively (the mean 32.55 and variation range 7.77) and in the control group was 23 and 45 years respectively (the mean 30.10 and variation range 7.82). In terms of gender, 21 persons were (52.5%) women and 19 persons (47.5%) were male; In terms of marital status 23 persons (57.5%) married; 4 persons (10%), divorced and 13 (48.1%) were single. In terms of education 5 persons were (12.5%) Associate Degree, 20 persons (50%) undergraduate and 15 persons (37.5%) were master and higher. In conjunction with employ status 13 peoples were (32.5%) official, 11 peoples (11.5%) of the official-trial, 8 peoples (20%) with the contract and 8 peoples (20%) were tuition tutor. 10 Peoples (25%) had less than 5 years of work experience, 18 peoples (45%), 15.5 years and 12 peoples (30%) more than 15 years work experience. The results of chi-square test for gender, marital status, employment status and teaching experiences variables of subject showed there is no

statistical significant difference between the two groups ( $P > 0.05$ ).

Among the 40 participants in the study, 20 cases in group of stress management training and 20 people were in the control group and before and after intervention evaluated with research tools.

Table 1 shows scores of clients and T-test results about research variables before the

Table 1: Mean, Standard deviation and T-test results for grades of Pre-Intervention in Study Variables

Table 1: The mean, standard deviation and t-test results for grades variables before Intervention

Treatment Variable	Test	Control	Kolmogorov Smirnov	Test Homogeneity of variance Levene	t
	Mean (The standard deviation )	Mean (The standard deviation )			
Psychological Well-Being	(4.09)29.00	(3.14)30.10	KS $z=1.01$	F=0.78	T <sub>(38)</sub> =0.95
Psychological distress	(4.73)77.75	(3.68)77.90	KS $z=0.91$	F=1.59	T <sub>(38)</sub> =0.12
Effective instructional strategies	(3.68) 20.15	(5.07)27.10	KS $z=0.44$	F=2.05	T <sub>(38)</sub> =1.39
Classroom management	(7.17)25.55	(8.41)22.95	KS $z=0.38$	F=0.92	T <sub>(38)</sub> =1.05
Involving students	(4.81)28.50	(5.67)30.00	KS $z=0.64$	F=0.60	T <sub>(38)</sub> =0.90

Table 2 shows the results of stress management training on mental health of

intervention. Due to the lack of significant mean difference in groups, it can be concluded that two groups were homogeneous ( $p > 0.05$ ) in terms of these variables before the intervention. The results Kolmogorof-Smirnof test also confirmed the normality assumption ( $P > 0.05$ ).

teachers (increasing well-being and reducing psychological distress).

Table2: Mean Scores of samples in subscales of mental health

Group		The mean pre-test	The mean Post-test	The mean Corrected	Number
Experimental group	Welfare	29.00	44.40	44.77	20
	Insolvency	77.75	47.95	44.77	20
Control group	Welfare	30.10	40.80	40.42	20
	Insolvency	77.90	62.98	62.17	20

As seen in Table 2 the results of this study suggests the changes the scale of mental health the in experimental group in the post-test

compared with the control group that obtained significant difference.

Table3. Analysis of Variance to Post-test scores of Mental Health components in the experimental Group

Source Changes	Subscales	Degree of freedom	F	Level Significant	Effect Size
Mental health	Well-being	1-36	1043	0.003	0.23
	Distress	1-36	56.88	0.001	0.61

The results obtained of Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) in table 3 shows that the psychological well-being and distress subscales of experimental group compared to control group had significant difference. So

stress management training makes improving mental health groups compared with the control group.

Table 4, shows the results of stress management training to increase efficacy of

teachers (Effective instructional strategies, classroom management and student involvement).

Table 4: The Mean scores of samples on the subscales of self-Efficacy of Teaching

Group		The mean pre-test	The mean Post-test	The mean Corrected	Number
Examination group	Effective instructional strategies	25.15	52.05	52.78	20
	Classroom management	25.55	48.40	48.21	20
	Involving students	28.50	54.20	53.42	20
Control group	Effective instructional strategies	27.10	30.10	29.36	20
	Classroom management	22.95	29.15	29.34	20
	Involving students	30.00	27.85	28.63	20

As can be seen the results of current study suggest, the significant difference by the changes of the scale of self-efficacy teaching

in experimental group in the post-test compared with the control group.

Table 5: Analysis of Covariance to post test scores of self-efficacy in the Experimental Group

Source Changes	Subscales	Degree of freedom	F	Level Significant	Effect Size
Self-taught	Effective instructional strategies	1-35	84.20	0.001	0.71
	Classroom management	1-35	51.90	0.001	0.60
	Involving students	1-35	56.84	0.001	0.62

The results obtained multivariate analysis of covariance (MANOVA) showed that amount of self-efficacy of the experimental group in the subscales of efficacy in instructional strategies, classroom management, and involving students compared to the control group had significant difference. So stress management training improve the efficacy of teaching in experimental groups compared with the control group.

### Conclusion

One of the factors that teachers' health, particularly the health of elementary school teachers, affects that is the job stress. Job stress is not only physical and psychological health of teachers threatening, but on the students and learning environment have negative effect. Job stress has been known as a multi-dimensional concept and teaching is considered one of the businesses constitute the

most stress. Teachers in the educational environment with various encounter stressful stimuli such as behavioral problems students, working pressure and aggressive parents. Insufficient attention to the health of students can facing the future of any society with the serious threats. So presenting solutions to increase mental health and self-efficacy and reduce stress among teachers seems necessary. The current study have paid to check the effect of a stress management program to prevent and reduce mental job stress as expected the result, the effectiveness of engaging students in the learning and class management is increased.

In this research we were looking forward to answer the following questions:

1. Is the stress management training effective on the mental health of their teachers (well-being and psychological distress)?
2. - Is the stress management training effective on the increasing teacher's sense of efficacy of

teachers (effective instructional strategies, classroom management and engage students) For accountability to the first question, the results of this study suggests change in the post-test scales mental health groups in comparison with the control group and showed a significant difference. The results obtained also suggests significant difference in the amount of mental health groups stress management training in the domains of well-being (increase) and distress (reduced) compared with the control group. So the stress management training group makes improve in mental health for the experimental group in comparison with the control group.

These findings with results were consistent with the results of the studies by the (4, 5, 11, 32). In the explanation it can noted that stress and the ways to deal with are one of the important variables affecting on mental health, various studies have shown, that work-related stress are not just due absences and disease, but also affect the movement of employees and reduced efficiency their performance in the organization (26). To deal with this problem mental stress management methods has been developed in several years in order to educate people on how to prevent reduce and also cope with stress and stress management training program through empowerment of teachers and their equipment to ways more effective of coping and more efficient as well as increased efficacy is causes improving mental health status.

In relation to the third question, the present research results suggests a significant difference in the efficacy of teaching the experimental group under the level of self-efficacy was in instructional strategies, classroom management and engage students than the control group. So stress management training causes improve self-efficacy in the experimental group in comparison with the control group. The finding also aligned with the results of (11, 16, 17, and 32). To explain this finding, it can be noted to this problem that teacher efficacy beliefs can be an effective mediator on mental stress (16). Emotions or negative physical states as a result of perception sources of psychological stress threaten self-esteem, self-concept and

psychological well-being of teacher. These negative emotions due from psychological stress, physical or mental outcomes have shown such as depression, reduced job satisfaction and commitment or physical diseases (12).

Occupational stress in teachers, endanger their mental health. Teachers are at the center of the education system and play a major role in promoting the mental health of students. If the teachers are not in good health, cannot do their responsibility to properly, such as personality development of students. Adopt strategies to reduce stress and increase mental health and feeling efficiency of the teachers', Should be of interest to managers. Because of its neglect is facing community health with serious risks. The limitation of this research population is that limited primary school teachers in Tehran. And lack of control the effects of confounding factors such as intelligence, life satisfaction and etc can facing the generalizability of the results of the study with restrictions. Also, the lack of clinical interviews for the selection of participants and reliance on self-report tools is other limitations of the present study. Due to the obtained positive results of this to research, stress management holding educational workshops to deal with job stress and recommended increase self-efficacy of teachers. Also recommend, research with the same title on the sample of female teachers - men and little experience do with experience as a comparison, so we can generalize this results to the larger society.

### ***Acknowledgements***

Hereby, on behalf of all the authors from the Department of Education in Tehran and all the teachers who helped us in conducting this research, it sincerely thank the screw.

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