

A Study on Social Support and Stress among Married Women School Teachers

Maryam Riaz, Mueen Abid*, Naeem Ullah, Sidra Khalid
University of Gujrat, Gujrat, Pakistan

ABSTRACT: *The modern world, which is said to be a world of achievements, is also a world of stress. The current study aimed to measure the level of social support and stress among married women school teachers and to measure impact of family system on social support among married women school teachers in Gujrat city Pakistan. In order to collect data Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley, 1988) and Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, 1983) were used on a sample of 110 married women school teachers by using convenient sampling technique. Descriptive statistics (mean, median, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Spearman's rho correlation and Chi-Square) were used for analysis of data. Results of the study indicated that the level of social support was high among married women school teachers, while the level of perceived stress was low. Moreover, there was highly negative correlation between social support and the level of stress among married women school teachers ($r = -.582^{***}$). Most of the respondents were belonged to joint family system and it was identified that there was a positive association between family system and social support of working women. All the women who belonged to joint family system had high level of social support.*

Keywords: *Social support, stress, convenient sampling technique*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of study was to explore the relationship between social support and stress among married women school teachers. Social relationships are very important and crucial aspects of life, that play an important role in our social and psychological functioning across the lifespan. In other words, the requirement of social support, it's worth and amount is essential for every individual and its consistency associated to the experience of stress. Social support is so important for human beings in order to lead healthy life. Without social support we cannot live a socially and psychologically healthy life. That's why it is very important to investigate the relationship between social support and stress among married women school teachers because fully functioning teachers are sole of healthy society. As social support is a system that may composed of family, friends, neighbors and community members that psychologically, physically and financially facilitate an individual or a group of individuals by providing help and inspiration to a person with bodily or psychological deficiencies in a way that they can better cope ("Medical dictionary", 2009). There are different sources of social support including family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, different program leaders (Israel & Schurman, 1990). "Social support refers to various types of aid and succor provided by members of one's social networks" (Weiten, 2001). According to Sarson and Sarson (2005), Social support is not only a need in the time of tension and pressure but it is an important requirement for a normal life. All those people who did not receive a sufficient quantity of social support may face a lot of problem in social relationships and other daily life functioning. So an enough quantity and sufficiency of social support accessible to a person plays a central role in both helplessness and coping with stress. Susceptibility to physical and psychological collapse broadens as social support reduces.

After explaining the concept of social support the present study aims to elaborate the concept of stress. Stress is a word that broadly

used in health psychology. According to Kagan and Segal (1992), all the factors that aggravate stress are called stressors. These trials are existence emergencies such as accidents, or divorce, changes in activities such as starting a new job, different types of catastrophes like earth quakes and fires and other daily life irritations which produce pressure and anxiety. Teaching can also be a basis of stress in the existence of many other issues such as unavailability of social support, financial troubles and existence of bodily ailment. Relationship between stress and social support has also been described by many theorists. Wills (1998) identified that social support may control stress in a lot of ways. People who are facing stress, their community set-up may facilitate them in getting better activities such as doing exercise and consulting with a doctor when they are not feeling well (as cited in Brannon & Feist, 2007). So the present study showed that an adequate level of social support is very important to encourage different behaviors which can reduce the magnitude of stress. Finding of study will be very important for policy makers in order to reduce level of stress and enhance social support of teachers and it is socially significant and can be an important edition in literature as it indicates the influence of social support on the stress especially from the perspective of married female school teachers. It was important to conduct research on social support and stress of married female's school teachers because married working females have more responsibilities than unmarried and non-working females. However, results of the study will be very significant to give awareness about how social support is important and helpful for family, friends, and coworkers to decrease the level of stress of married female teachers and perception of available support will be helpful for married female school teachers to perceive possible stressors less frightening. In this way this research helps to solve particular social problem because fully functioning teachers are very important part of the society and young generation.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Different researches reflected that over the years social support has been negatively correlated with stress. For instance, a research conducted by Park et al. (2013) on social support and stress among

*Correspondence regarding this article should be directed to: mueen.abid.uog@gmail.com

college women students. It was revealed that there was significant negative relationship between social support and stress among women. This study has a great worth as it had measured the relationship between social support and stress. Nevertheless, a great limitation of this study was that it was conducted only on college women students instead of taking a sample of working women. Because working women have a high level of responsibilities than college women students.

Another research conducted by Ditzen et al. (2008) also investigated that social support reduces psychological responses to stress. Stachour (1998) found that all the participants who scores high on social support scores low on stress measure.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Participants

The population of the present study was comprised of the married women school teachers of Gujrat city. A sample of 110 married women school teachers were selected by using convenient sampling technique. The data were collected from six different schools of city Gujrat. These schools included, Government Girls High school Greebpura, Government Mission Girls High school, Municipal School, Government Madresa-tul-binaat Girls high school, Government Shah Hussain Girls School and Government Javaid School.

Instruments

To measure the level of perceived social support, Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support was used. The scale was developed by Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet and Farley in 1988. The scale was a 7 point likert scale consists of 12 items. Perceived Stress Scale was used in order to measure stress was originally developed by Sheldon Cohen in 1983. This scale consists on 10 items rated on 5-point likert response categories.

Procedure

Formal permission from schools' management was taken. To check the language difficulty of instruments pilot study was conducted on sample of 10 teachers. Convenience sampling technique was used to select study sample. Those teachers who were agreed to participate were asked to fill the questionnaire and demographic data sheet. Informed consent was obtained from the participants. The researcher personally explained each aspect of the questionnaire to the participants and also guided them where necessary without influencing their responses.

RESULTS

Results consist on three sections. In first section psychometric analysis of the scales employed in present study is described. In second section descriptive analysis was run to explore frequencies and percentages of demographic characteristics of respondents. Inferential analysis was conducted to test the hypotheses for the study as reported in third section.

Descriptive analysis revealed frequencies and percentages of demographic characteristics of respondents. It was identified that majority of respondents lies between the ranges of 31-35 (35.5%) and belonged to joint family system (55.5%).

The reliability of Multidimensional scale of perceived social support in the present study was .891 and reliability of perceived stress scale in the present study was .838. This represents the high level of reliability and internal consistency among the items of both scales (Table 1).

The above Table 2 indicates that the level of perceived social support among married women school teachers is high (79.9%). Only 10.9% married women school teachers perceived social support

Table 1.

The Cronbach's alpha reliability of multidimensional scale of perceived social support and perceived stress scale

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
social support	0.891	12
stress	0.838	10

Table 2.

The level of perceived social support among married women school teachers

	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Levels	High	78	70.9%
	Medium	20	18.2%
	Low	12	10.9%
	Total	110	100%

is low and 18.2% married women school teacher's perceived level of social support is medium.

Table 3 indicates that 62 (56.4%) of married women school teacher's level of perceived stress is low and only 14 (12.7%) respondents have high level of stress. While 34 (30.9%) married women school teachers perceived level of stress is medium.

Table 4 indicates the correlation between level of perceived social support and level of perceived stress. As p-value is 0.000 which is less than .01 and it indicates the significant relationship between two variables and the correlation value is -0.582, which shows there is a diverse relationship between social support and stress.

DISCUSSION

The first objective of this study was to identify the level of perceived social support among married women school teachers. This objective was attained by a standardized scale of perceived social support, which consists on 12 items. The findings of the present study revealed that elementary school teachers perceived that they received high social support from their friends, family, coworkers, and other around them. This showed that teachers are less anxious while performing their jobs. The second objective of the current study was to measure the level of perceived stress among married women elementary school teachers. This objective was attained by a standardized scale of perceived stress, which consists on 10 items. The findings of the current study revealed that elementary school teachers perceive low level of stress. The reason behind the high level of perceived social support and low level of perceived stress is supported by important figures of respondents. And mostly teachers belonged to the joint family system where they have more people around them who helped them and support them when they go out for the job. A similar study conducted by Kazmi, Khan, Thair, Dil & Khan (2013) found that women living in joint family setup received more social support form important figures in their life than the women living in nuclear family setup.

Third objective of the study is to find the correlation between level of perceived social support and level of perceived stress among married women elementary school teachers. The finding of the study clearly depicted that there is substantial adverse relationship between social support and stress. Consequences of the study indicated that the teachers who perceived that they received high level of social support they experienced low level of stress. The teachers who perceived that they received little level of social support they experienced high level of stress. Association between family system and social support was also checked out by using Chi Square and it was identified that there was a positive association between family system and social support. The findings of the current study were supported by a research conducted by Chao (2012) who found that social support and stress are significantly negatively correlated with each other.

Table 3.

The level of perceived stress among married women school teachers

	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Levels	High	141	2.7%
	Medium	34	30.9%
	Low	62	56.4%
	Total	110	100%

Table 4.

Spearman correlation

	Perceived social support	Perceived stress	P value
Perceived social support	1	-0.582***	0.000
Perceived stress	-0.582***	1	0.000

Hauck, Snyder & Fuenzalida (2008) also found that when people have high social support then there would be low level of stress.

LIMITATION AND SUGGESTION

One limitation of the current study is that it was correlational, which made it impossible to establish causality. Another limitation of the study is that it is not generalizable due to small sample size. It is suggested that the research should be conducted on large sample from divers' type of workplaces in order to increase generalization.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that majority of elementary school teachers perceived high level of social support. The level of perceived stress was low among most of the school teachers. The findings of the current study suggested that there is highly negative correlation between the level of perceived social support and the level of perceived stress. Some of the demographical variables were compared with social

support and stress in order to find out their intervening effects on them and it was identified that family system has a strong association with social support. All the females belong to joint family have high level of social support.

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