The Challenges on The Work Stress of Young College Teachers in L University

Dong Xi *, Jennifer M. Dindin

College of Teacher Education, University of The Cordilleras, Baguio City, Benguet, Philippines 2600

* Corresponding Author Email: d-x4531@students.uc-bcf.edu.ph

Abstract. This study investigates the challenges encountered by young college teachers at L University and proposes coping mechanisms to address these challenges. The challenges identified in this study include workload, lack of experience, high expectations, work-life balance, and interpersonal dynamics. Through a comprehensive review of relevant literature and interview of key informants, this research examines the specific context of L University. Based on the findings, coping mechanisms are suggested, such as effective time management, professional development opportunities, clear communication of expectations, setting boundaries, prioritizing self-care, building support networks, and developing conflict resolution skills. Implementing these coping strategies can help young college teachers effectively manage their work stress, improve job satisfaction, and maintain a healthy work-life balance. By addressing these challenges, L University can foster a supportive and conducive environment for young teachers, promoting their professional growth and well-being.

Keywords: work stress, young college teachers, challenges, work-life balance.

1. Introduction

The teaching profession plays a critical role in shaping the minds and futures of individuals [1]. However, it is also a profession that is accompanied by various challenges and stressors. Among the diverse group of educators, young college teachers find themselves navigating a unique set of stressors as they embark on their professions in higher education [2]. Understanding the work stress experienced by young college teachers is essential for ensuring their well-being and enhancing the quality of education they provide. Teachers, including young college teachers, face higher expectations and professional challenges, leading to occupational stress [3]. Studies have shown that a majority of teachers experience varying degrees of stress, with negative effects outweighing the positive ones [4-7].

The work stress of young college teachers encompasses a wide range of factors that influence their professional lives. These factors include instructional responsibilities, professional advancement, research expectations, and the pressure of meeting parents' expectations [8]. Each of these dimensions contributes to the overall stress experienced by young college teachers and influences their job satisfaction, mental well-being, and overall effectiveness in the classroom.

Instructional responsibilities encompass the challenges of managing classrooms, designing engaging lesson plans, and meeting the diverse needs of students. Young college teachers often confront the pressure to deliver high-quality instruction while balancing the demands of multiple courses and maintaining a supportive learning environment [9].

Professional advancement is another significant aspect of work stress for young teachers. As they strive to establish themselves in academia, they are expected to engage in continuous professional development, publish scholarly work, and demonstrate expertise in their field. These expectations, combined with the competitive nature of the academic landscape, can generate significant stress and anxiety [10].

Research expectations further contribute to the work stress experienced by young college teachers. Conducting research, publishing papers, and securing grants are vital components of academic careers.

Balancing teaching responsibilities with research commitments can be demanding, particularly for early-career teachers who are still developing their research skills and networks [11-13].

In addition to these professional aspects, young college teachers often encounter stress arising from parents' expectations. Parents play a crucial role in the education of their children and may have high expectations regarding the academic performance and overall experience. Managing parental expectations and addressing concerns can add an additional layer of stress for young college teachers [14-15].

Therefore, the significance of this study lies in identifying the sources and manifestations of stress among young college teachers, enabling them to regulate their stress levels and contributing to systemic adjustments aimed at alleviating their stress in society and schools.

2. Literature Review

The work stress experienced by young college teachers has gained significant attention in research, recognizing its impact on job satisfaction, well-being, and overall performance. This literature review examines several studies that shed light on the work stress experienced by young college teachers and its implications.

The study conducted by Rana and Soodan (2019) [1] analyzed the effect of occupational and personal stress on job satisfaction, burnout, and health among college teachers. The findings indicated a significant relationship between work stress and negative outcomes such as burnout and reduced job satisfaction. Danish et al. (2019) [2] examined work-related stressors and their impact on the performance of college teachers. Their study revealed that excessive workload, time pressure, and lack of resources were major stressors affecting teachers' performance.

Workplace spirituality and emotional stability were explored by Wadhera and Bano (2020) [3] as factors influencing occupational stress among college teachers. The findings indicated that higher levels of workplace spirituality and emotional stability were associated with lower levels of occupational stress. Kumara (2021) [4] focused on the relationship between occupational stress and emotional intelligence among degree college teachers, revealing a negative correlation between stress levels and emotional intelligence.

Other studies have examined the work stress of college teachers in specific regions and contexts. Fang (2013) [8] investigated the impact of work stress and social support on the performance of university teachers in China, highlighting the significant influence of these factors. Cao (2005) [9] conducted a comprehensive review of occupational stress, burnout, and turnover intentions among college teachers, emphasizing the need for effective strategies to manage stress in the academic environment.

Several studies have explored the work stress of college teachers in China. Zhang et al. (2003) [10] examined the life stress of university teachers, emphasizing the need for proper stress management strategies. Li et al. (2007) [11] investigated the work stress levels of college teachers and their relationship with occupational burnout, highlighting the detrimental effects of high stress levels on teachers' well-being.

In summary, the reviewed literature underscores the significance of work stress among young college teachers and its impact on various aspects of their professional lives. The studies emphasize the need for strategies to manage stress, promote job satisfaction, and enhance well-being among teachers. Factors such as workload, time pressure, lack of resources, emotional stability, and social support emerged as key elements influencing the work stress experienced by college teachers. The findings from these studies contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by young college teachers and provide insights for the development of interventions and support systems to mitigate work stress and promote a positive work environment.

3. Methodology

The research makes use of descriptive analysis and thematic analysis to find out the challenges encountered by the young college teachers and the coping mechanisms of the college teachers in dealing with stress. Saturation method was used to get the key informants to be interview about the research questions. Literature and theories are used to support the findings.

4. Results and Discussion

The following section presents the results and discussion of the study, focusing on the work stress experienced by young college teachers.

Table 1. Challenges Encountered by The College Young Teachers

Challenges
Workload
Lack of Experience
High Expectations
Work-Life Balance
Interpersonal Dynamics

4.1. Workload

Young teachers often face a heavy workload, including teaching multiple classes, preparing lesson plans, grading assignments, and conducting research. The demands of these responsibilities can be overwhelming and lead to increased stress levels. This is aligned with the study of Rana and Soodan (2019) [1] who found that college teachers, reported a significant workload, including teaching multiple courses and engaging in research activities. Danish et al. (2019) [2] also emphasized the workload as a work-related stressor for college teachers, affecting their overall performance.

4.2. Lack of Experience

Being relatively new to their profession, young teachers may lack the experience and confidence required to effectively manage their classrooms and engage students. They may struggle with classroom management techniques, instructional strategies, and addressing the diverse needs of their students. The literature acknowledges that young college teachers often lack the experience and confidence required to effectively manage their classrooms. Wadhera and Bano (2020) [3] emphasize the role of workplace spirituality and emotional stability in coping with occupational stress among college teachers, suggesting that these factors can be particularly helpful for early-career teachers who may struggle with the challenges of their profession.

4.3. High Expectations

Young teachers are often expected to meet high standards in teaching, research, and professional development. The pressure to prove themselves and excel in multiple areas can create significant stress and anxiety. The pressure to meet high expectations is a common theme in the literature. Kumara (2021) [4] examined the relationship between occupational stress and emotional intelligence among college teachers and found that high expectations were a significant factor contributing to stress levels. Similarly, studies by Rana and Soodan (2019) [1] and Danish et al. (2019) [2] highlighted the impact of high expectations on job satisfaction, burnout, and health among college teachers.

4.4. Work-Life Balance

Balancing professional responsibilities with personal commitments is a persistent challenge for young college teachers. The demands of teaching, research, and administrative duties can encroach on personal time, leading to difficulties in maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Several studies

discuss the challenge of maintaining a healthy work-life balance for young college teachers. Rana and Soodan (2019) [1] found that personal stress was significantly associated with lower job satisfaction among college teachers.

4.5. Interpersonal Dynamics

College teachers interact with diverse individuals, including students, colleagues, and administrators. Managing relationships, resolving conflicts, and navigating departmental politics can be emotionally taxing and contribute to work-related stress. The literature acknowledges the importance of managing interpersonal relationships in the academic environment. Studies by Danish et al. (2019) [2] and Rana and Soodan (2019) [1] emphasize the impact of workplace relationships on job satisfaction and performance among college teachers. These studies highlight the significance of positive interpersonal dynamics, effective communication, and supportive work environments for the well-being of young teachers.

5. Conclusions

The study reveals that young college teachers at L University face significant challenges that contribute to work stress. These challenges include a heavy workload, lack of experience, high expectations, difficulties in maintaining work-life balance, and interpersonal dynamics. These factors collectively impact the well-being and job satisfaction of young teachers. To mitigate these challenges, it is important for L University to provide adequate support and resources, bridge the experience gap through professional development programs, establish realistic expectations, promote work-life balance, and foster positive interpersonal relationships within the university community. Addressing these challenges will contribute to creating a conducive work environment and enhancing the overall well-being of young college teachers at L University.

6. Recommendation

The following suggestions are coping mechanisms for the challenges faced by young college teachers at L University:

6.1. Workload

Time management: young teachers can prioritize tasks, set realistic goals, and break down large tasks into smaller, manageable ones.

Delegation: Seeking support from colleagues or teaching assistants to share the workload can help reduce stress and create a more balanced workload.

6.2. Lack of Experience

Professional development: L University can provide training programs, workshops, and mentorship opportunities to help young teachers enhance their skills and gain confidence in their abilities.

Collaboration: Encouraging collaboration among colleagues can foster knowledge sharing and provide a supportive environment for learning from experienced faculty members.

6.3. High Expectations

Effective communication: young teachers can communicate with their supervisors and clarify expectations to ensure they align with realistic goals.

Setting boundaries: Establishing clear boundaries can help manage excessive demands and prevent burnout.

6.4. Work-Life Balance

Self-care: Young teachers should prioritize self-care activities such as exercise, relaxation techniques, hobbies, and spending quality time with loved ones to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

Time management: Allocating specific time slots for work and personal activities can help maintain boundaries and prevent work from encroaching on personal time.

6.5. Interpersonal Dynamics

Building support networks: young teachers can seek support from colleagues, join professional communities or organizations, and engage in networking opportunities to foster positive relationships and gain emotional support.

Conflict resolution: Developing effective communication and conflict resolution skills can help navigate challenging interpersonal dynamics and maintain a harmonious work environment.

Implementing these coping mechanisms can empower young college teachers at L University to effectively manage the challenges they face, reduce work stress, and enhance their overall well-being and job satisfaction.

References

[1] Rana, A., & Soodan, V. (2019). Effect of occupational and personal stress on job satisfaction, burnout, and health: A cross-sectional analysis of college teachers in Punjab, India. *Indian journal of occupational and environmental medicine*, *23*(3), 133.

[2] Danish, R. Q., Qaseem, S., Mehmood, T., Ali, Q. M., Ali, H. F., & Shahid, R. (2019). Work related stressors and teachers' performance: evidence from college teachers working in Punjab. *European Scientific Journal (ESJ)*, *1*(4), 158-173.

[3] Wadhera, T., & Bano, S. (2020). The Role of Workplace Spirituality and Emotional Stability in Occupational Stress Among College Teachers. *IUP Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *19*(3).

[4] Kumara, P. (2021). A Study Of The Relationship Between Occupational Stress And Emotional Intelligence Of Degree College Teachers. *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education (TURCOMAT)*, *12*(3), 3490-3493.

[5] Li, Y. (2020). A Narrative Exploration of Work Stress Among Young Rural Teachers (master's thesis, Northeast Normal University). Retrieved from https://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbname=CMFD202102&filename=1020656376.nh

[6] Jin, J., & Gui, G. (2020). A Survey on the Work Stress of Ideological and Political Course Teachers in 59 Vocational Colleges in Jiangsu Province. Occupational and Health, (23), 3221-3224+3228. doi: 10.13329/j.cnki.zyyjk.2020.0838.

[7] Zhang, Z. (2020). A Study on Work Stress and Turnover Intention of High School Geography Teachers in Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (master's thesis, Yunnan Normal University). Retrieved from DOI: 10.27459/d.cnki.gynfc.2020.000971.

[8] Fang, Y. (2013). The Impact of Work Stress and Social Support on Performance of College Teachers. Science Research Management, (05), 136-143. doi: 10.19571/j.cnki.1000-2995.2013.05.017.

[9] Cao, Y. (2005). A Review of the Research on Occupational Stress, Burnout, and Turnover Intention of College Teachers. Journal of Shanxi University of Finance and Economics (Higher Education Edition), (03), 41-44. doi: CNKI: SUN: SCGD.0.2005-03-011.

[10] Zhang, J., Chen, X., & Chen, J. (2003). A Study on the Life Stress of College Teachers. Applied Psychology, (02), 6-10. doi: CNKI: SUN: YXNX.0.2003-02-001.

[11] Li, Z., Gao, Y., Yu, Y., Dai, H., Wan, B., Li, J., & Jing, X. (2007). Survey and Analysis of Work Stress Status and Its Relationship with Occupational Burnout among College Teachers. Medicine and Society, (02), 60-62. doi: CNKI: SUN: YXSH.0.2007-02-024.

[12] Qin, Q. (2014). Work Stress and Social Support of College Teachers: A Case Study of Universities in Wuhan. Higher Education Research, (04), 35-42. doi: CNKI: SUN: HIGH.0.2014-04-008.

[13] Lin, G., & Chen, L. (2009). A Survey on the Current Situation of Work Happiness, Work Stress, and Occupational Burnout among College Teachers and Its Countermeasures. Journal of Changchun University of Science and Technology (Higher Education Research Edition), (01), 25-29. doi: CNKI: SUN: CCGJ.0.2009-01-008.

[14] Jin, J., & Jin, J. (2006). An Empirical Study on the Work Stress Status and Influencing Factors of College Teachers in Beijing. Beijing Social Sciences, (05), 39-43. doi: 10.13262/j.bjsshkxy.bjshkx.2006.05.007.

[15] Zeng, X., & Qi, F. (2013). A Survey on the Current Situation of Work Stress among College Teachers and Its Management Strategies: Based on a Sample of College Teachers in Hebei Province. Modern Education Management, (08), 72-77. doi:10.16697