

STRESS AND COPING STRATEGY AMONG TEACHERS: A COMPARISON STUDY BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL

This paper presents a comparison study of stress and coping strategy between secondary teachers in the rural and urban area. The research conducted in the Northern part (rural area) and Kota Kinabalu city (urban area) in Sabah. Altogether 623 teachers from fifteen urban and rural schools participated in this research. The researchers first modified survey instruments used in this research, which includes Index of Teaching Stress (ITS) (73 items), Stress Index (10 items), and Coping Strategy (15 items). The result shows that out of six sources of stress' subscales, three subscales were found to be significantly differences between sources of stress of urban and rural school teachers. These subscales were intrinsic, school management role and relationship with others. In addition, out of 25 coping strategies, only eight factors found to be frequently used by both teachers from urban and rural schools.

Stress is one of the most discussed psychological problems in psychology study, which calculated up to forty thousand research in last century (Caryle & Woods, 2004). Hans Selye, a prominent researcher in stress study, defines stress as somatic or psychological effect caused by any type of demand towards the body. Other researcher such as Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defined psychological stress as a type of relationship between individual and the individual appraisal about the environment as more than this individual resources and cause danger to the individual well-being. Girando, Everly and Dusek (1993) identify stress as a body's physiological reaction that connects stressor and symptom of stress.

Occupational stress is one of specific area in stress study. Kyriacou (2000) identified teacher is the most stressful occupation. A large amount of past research in this area focused on situation and manifestation of stress among urban school teacher, whereas much less research were found about rural school teacher, even though school system in urban is different from rural area (Abel & Sewel, 1999). Furthermore these researchers pointed out that there were a different main sources' of stress between rural and urban school teacher. Finding from research about the different between school system in urban and rural by Feitler and Tokar (1982) stated that there was exist a different stress level between urban and rural school teacher. In addition, Ballou dan Podgursky (1995) found that rural school teacher was less stressful than the urban.

d) 41-50 years old	122	19.6
e) 51-55 years old	10	1.6
f) More than 55 years old	5	0.8
4. Ethnicity		
a) Kadazandusun	185	30.0
b) Bajau	45	7.2
c) Brunei	24	3.8
d) Other Sabahan origin	83	13.3
e) Malay	216	34.5
f) Chinese	56	8.9
g) Indian	9	1.4
h) Non Sabahan origin	5	0.8
5. Marriage status		
a) Not married	161	25.8
b) Married	461	74.0
6. Total of children		
a) None	201	32.3
b) 1 - 2	192	30.8
c) 3 - 4	171	27.4
d) 5 - 6	46	7.4
e) More than 7 children	7	1.1
7. Incomes		
a) RM 1000 - RM 1500	10	1.6
b) RM 1501 - RM 2000	34	5.5
c) RM 2001 - RM 2500	58	9.3
d) RM 2501 - RM 3000	69	11.1
e) More than RM 3001	411	66.6
8. Total of individual in household		
a) Alone	52	8.3
b) 2 - 5 people	321	51.5
c) More than 5 people	171	27.4
9. Type of dwellings		
a) Own house	320	51.4
b) Lodging	21	3.4
c) Renting	138	22.2
d) Quarters	143	23.0
10. Total of years experience in teaching		
a) 1 - 5 years	188	30.2
b) 6 - 10 years	146	23.4
c) 11 - 20 years	225	36.1
d) 21 - 30 years	42	6.7

The difference in source of stress, coping strategies and stress level among teachers from urban and rural

Based on table 3, the result shows that out of six sources of stress subscales, three subscales which were intrinsic ($p = .006$), management roles ($p = .032$) and relationship with others ($p = .013$) has p value less than $\alpha = 0.05$. Therefore these aspects were significantly different between rural and urban school. However result shows that overall sources of stress were not significantly different. This research also found that their was no significant different level of stress between teacher in urban and rural school.

Table 3 The difference in source of stress, coping strategies and stress level among teachers from urban and rural

Independent variable	Dependent variable	N	Mean Score	Standard deviation	Sig.
Work intrinsic	Urban	331	37.76	12.397	.006
	Rural	245	35.94	10.656	
Management roles	Urban	350	18.75	6.495	.032
	Rural	253	17.66	5.948	
Relationship with others	Urban	350	28.57	9.999	.013
	Rural	252	27.55	8.857	
Career and advancement	Urban	349	24.39	8.013	.097
	Rural	251	23.51	7.346	
Family barrier	Urban	325	15.22	6.484	.270
	Rural	323	15.52	5.811	
Extrinsic	Urban	338	35.69	11.738	.325
	Rural	241	35.23	12.390	
Overall factors of stress	Urban	265	157.33	44.476	.142
	Rural	190	156.56	40.526	
Level of stress	Urban	312	2.63	.733	.178
	Rural	228	2.54	.711	

As conclusion, finding in this research stated that teacher in general had a moderate stress, however this finding cannot be taken as a permanent measure of their stress indicator. Therefore early prevention should be taken by education ministry and policy-makers to obstruct manifestation of more stressful teachers. Finding in this research can be used as a guide for future prevention mechanisms introduce by the authorize body particularly the aspect of the difference source of stress between urban and rural school and also their usage of coping strategies.

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