

The Impact of Teacher Training Programs on Professional Stress and Peer Pressure of Young Teachers in Universities

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of training programs on professional stress and peer pressure among young teachers. Findings reveal that while teacher training programs have significantly reduced peer pressure through supportive networks and collaborative practices, they exhibit limited effectiveness in alleviating professional stress. Key contributors to stress include heavy workloads, classroom management challenges, and limited career growth opportunities. The study also highlights the moderate success of training programs in enhancing professional development, stress management, and teaching practices. Recommendations focus on establishing mentorship initiatives, fostering supportive work environments, and integrating evidence-based practices into training curricula to address workload management, interpersonal relationships, and overall well-being.

Keywords

Young Teachers; Professional Stress; Peer Pressure; Training Programs.

1. Introduction

Peer pressure, a crucial element of organizational behavior, refers to informal influence among colleagues that shapes behavior, decision-making, and team dynamics (Ashraf & Bandiera, 2018). Within workplaces, peer pressure manifests in various forms, such as performance comparisons, peer evaluations, collaborative efforts, and social interactions, which directly impact team cooperation and individual performance through incentive or constraint mechanisms (Battiston et al., 2022). Research in organizational psychology and behavioral economics identifies peer pressure as an effective informal control mechanism, particularly in environments with horizontal hierarchies, where it can reduce free-riding behaviors and foster a positive work culture (Ashraf & Bandiera, 2018).

Among university teachers, peer pressure is significantly felt in academic, teaching, and research-related pursuits. Motivated by a desire for peer recognition and a fear of marginalization, educators experience stress linked to the excessive emphasis on publishing papers, excelling in teaching evaluations, and applying for research grants. This environment of academic competition heightens professional stress and sometimes fosters unethical behaviors, such as academic misconduct, as teachers strive to meet institutional expectations for career progression (Liu Xiaojia, 2016; Li Na, 2021).

While moderate peer pressure may boost productivity, creativity, and team cohesion, excessive levels can lead to anxiety, depression, and job dissatisfaction, ultimately undermining workplace happiness and organizational commitment (Chen Xi, 2021; Frederiksen et al., 2020). These challenges are compounded by the formal performance evaluation systems in universities, which often prioritize quantitative measures such as research outputs and teaching hours, inadvertently amplifying peer pressure and undermining the long-term development of educators (Wang Hui, 2019).

To address these issues, it is essential to explore mechanisms that mitigate professional stress and balance the effects of peer pressure. Promoting teacher well-being holds particular importance, as it directly influences the quality of instruction and, consequently, students' academic achievements. Training programs designed to reduce stress and enhance teachers' mental, emotional, and physical well-being can create a high-quality classroom environment. Such initiatives foster resilience among educators, enabling them to manage peer pressure effectively and contribute to an overall improvement in the teaching and learning experience (Chen et al., 2020; Zhao Min, 2020).

This research aims to examine the impact of training programs in alleviating professional stress and managing peer pressure among young university teachers. By addressing these interrelated factors, the study seeks to enhance teacher well-being, foster collaborative cultures, and ultimately improve the overall effectiveness of higher education institutions.

2. Statement of the Problem

The primary objective of this quantitative research is to assess the relationship between participation in educational training programs and the levels of professional stress and peer pressure experienced by young teachers.

Specifically, the following problems will be answered:

1) What is the assessment of the level of professional stress of young teacher respondents in terms of:

1.1 Job requirement

1.2 Career development

1.3 Interpersonal relationship

1.4 Personal factor1

2.) What is the assessment of the level of peer pressure of young teacher respondents in terms of:

2.1 Performance Comparison

2.2 Peer Evaluations

2.3 Collaboration

2.4 Social Interaction

2.5 Support

2.6 Resource Sharing

3. What is the assessment of the respondents on the training programs given to teachers in terms of:

3.1. Work load Relief

3.2. Support effective teaching practices

3.3. Support Culture adaptation

3.4 Support Professional Development

4.) Is there a significant impact of the teacher training programs on the professional stress and peer pressure level of young teachers?

5.) Based on the results of the study, what training program can be proposed to reduce the professional stress and peer pressure of teachers?

3. Hypothesis

This study will test the following hypothesis at 5%:

H1: There is no significant impact of the teacher training programs on the professional stress and peer pressure level of young teachers?

4. Scope and Delimitation

This study will focus on three universities of Hunan province (University A, University B, and University C), which mainly focuses on professional stress and peer pressure. The research contents of professional stress include job requirement, career development, interpersonal relationship and personal factors. Peer pressure includes performance comparison, peer evaluation, cooperation and social interaction, support and resource sharing. The aim of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of existing training programs in reducing professional stress and peer pressure, and to make recommendations for improvement. The study will try to identify the shortcomings of the current training programs and suggest the design of a more targeted training program to improve the job satisfaction and career development level of young teachers in colleges and universities.

However, the following limitations may apply to this study:

First of all, this study is limited to three universities in Hunan province (University A, University B, and University C), so the external validity of the research results is limited. The study's conclusions may not apply to colleges and universities in other regions, especially those with large differences in economic levels and educational resources.

Secondly, the object of this study is limited to young teachers in these three universities, excluding middle-aged and elderly teachers and non-teaching staff. Middle-aged and elderly teachers may face different types and levels of professional stress and peer pressure due to their differences in workplace experience and psychological endurance. Therefore, the results of the study may not be representative of all college faculty groups.

Thirdly, the core variables of this study focus on professional stress and peer pressure, and are analyzed through the perspective of training programs. Other factors that may affect the stress level of young teachers, such as school management policies, socio-economic conditions, family responsibilities, etc., are not included in the scope of this study. In addition, this study only focused on the subjective feelings and experiences of teachers under professional stress and peer pressure, and did not involve the measurement of physiological stress indicators (such as blood pressure, heart rate, etc.).

Finally, this study will focus on the analysis of existing training programs for young teachers in colleges and universities and their room for improvement, and will not conduct field tests or long-term follow-up studies on new training programs. Therefore, the training improvement suggestions proposed in this study are theoretical ideas and need to be verified in future studies.

5. Results Analysis and Discussion

Assessment Of The Level Of Professional Stress Of Young Teacher Respondents In Terms Of:

5.1. Job Requirement

Table 1 shows the respondents' estimate of their professional stress based on job requirements, with a composite mean score of 2.97 and a standard deviation of 0.40. This indicates that they faced moderate stress and agree that the school's work

expectations are too high and difficult to meet ($M = 2.60$). Similarly, they claimed that it is extremely stressful for them and strongly agree that they frequently feel that their teaching and research assignments are too heavy and difficult to finish on time ($M = 3.73$) and that their teaching work leaves them physically and mentally drained ($M = 3.70$). From the result stating a low mean score ($M = 2.35$) for the subindicator "they disagree that they frequently have to

sacrifice personal time in order to perform their tasks," the following inference can be derived: This indicates that most respondents perceive their professional tasks as manageable within their designated work hours, and they rarely find themselves compromising personal time to meet job requirements. It suggests that the job does not typically demand excessive overtime or encroach on their personal life, which could imply a better balance between work and life in their professional environment. This finding may reflect positively on workplace policies and job structures that prioritize respecting employees' personal time, minimizing professional stress linked to an imbalance between work and personal obligations. However, it might also hint at tasks being perceived as less demanding or flexible scheduling arrangements that accommodate personal needs.

Table 1. Assessment of the Level of Professional Stress in terms of Job Requirement

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I often feel that my teaching and research tasks are too heavy and difficult to complete on time.	3.73	0.44	Highly Stressed	1
2. My working hours are usually longer than expected.	2.46	1.12	Less Stressed	4
3. I often have to sacrifice personal time to complete my tasks.	2.35	1.11	Less Stressed	5
4. The school's work requirements are too high and difficult to cope with.	2.60	1.13	Moderately Stressed	3
5. My teaching work makes me feel physically and mentally exhausted.	3.70	0.46	Highly Stressed	2
COMPOSITE MEAN	2.97	0.40	Moderately Stressed	

Legend: 1.00-1.50: Strongly Disagree (Not Stressed); 1.51-2.50: Disagree (Less Stressed); 2.51-3.50; Agree (Moderately Stressed); 3.51-4.00: Strongly Agree (Highly Stressed)

The assessment of professional stress among young instructors showed a moderate degree due to job responsibilities. This profession may frequently faces a particular set of pressures, such as curriculum requirements, classroom management, and the need to engage with various student populations (Stevenson et al., 2020). These elements may add to a complicated stress environment in which duties frequently outweigh individuals' experience and coping abilities. According to research, while young educators are resilient, the first few years of teaching are especially difficult. According to Carroll (2020), beginner instructors typically experience emotional tiredness as a result of the constant expectations placed on them, which can lead to moderate stress and impair their performance and well-being. This mild stress might emerge as a balancing act, in which teachers seek to achieve both educational requirements and personal expectations (Ryder & Campbell, 2020).

Furthermore, institutional support is essential for stress reduction. When schools give enough mentorship and resources, young teachers may feel less stressed, allowing them to succeed in their professions (Johnson, 2020). Finally, understanding the subtleties of job-related stress might help inform support structures that are critical for the long-term viability of teaching professions among young professionals.

5.2. Career Development

Table 2. Assessment of the Level of Professional Stress in terms of Career Development

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I am concerned about my career prospects.	2.37	1.13	Less Stressed	5
2. I find it difficult to achieve the academic results I expect.	2.45	1.15	Less Stressed	4
3. I think there are limited opportunities for promotion and lack motivation for career development.	2.51	1.07	Moderately Stressed	3
4. I feel great pressure in academic research.	3.72	0.45	Highly Stressed	1
5. My career development is not sufficiently supported by the school.	3.68	0.47	Highly Stressed	2
COMPOSITE MEAN	2.95	0.41	Moderately Stressed	

Legend: 1.00-1.50: Strongly Disagree (Not Stressed); 1.51-2.50: Disagree (Less Stressed); 2.51-3.50; Agree (Moderately Stressed); 3.51-4.00: Strongly Agree (Highly Stressed)

Table 2 shows an assessment of professional stress, with a focus on the career development opportunities provided to a sample of young educators. The composite mean score of 2.95, with a standard deviation of 0.41, is an average rating. The findings show that respondents experienced considerable stress and agreed that they believe there are few prospects for advancement and a lack of enthusiasm for career development ($M = 2.51$). Furthermore, they firmly agreed that they experience a lot of pressure in academic research ($M = 3.72$) and that the institution does not provide enough assistance for their job growth ($M = 3.68$). The indicator's low mean score ($M = 2.37$) suggests that respondents generally do not feel apprehensive about their professional prospects. This could imply that, in terms of career development, they may perceive their future opportunities and pathways as relatively stable or positive, leading to lower stress levels in this area. It might also indicate a degree of confidence or resilience when it comes to their career outlook. However, the fact that this is the lowest-rated sub-indicator in the assessment might point to a relatively weaker connection between professional prospects and overall professional stress compared to other factors evaluated. Further analysis could explore if this reflects a trend specific to the group assessed or if there are contextual factors influencing their perception.

The measurement of professional stress levels among young teachers is crucial for their career development. According to research, the teaching profession is characterized by high demands and limited resources, resulting in moderate levels of stress, which can have an impact on educators' efficacy and retention in the field. Young teachers frequently encounter substantial problems, such as classroom management, administrative responsibilities, and the need to meet the different needs of their students, all of which add to their stress levels.

The measurement of professional stress levels among young teachers is crucial for their career development. According to Ballantyne and Retell (2020), the teaching profession is characterized by high demands and limited resources, resulting in moderate levels of stress, which can have an impact on educators' efficacy and retention in the field. Young teachers frequently encounter substantial problems, such as classroom management, administrative

responsibilities, and the need to meet the different needs of their students, all of which add to their stress levels.

Moderate stress, while frequently considered bearable, can stymie professional development. It may result in fatigue, job discontent, and, eventually, significant turnover rates among new teachers (Owusu, 2021). In contrast, certain stress can act as a motivator, driving people to develop coping mechanisms and improve their educational abilities. The complex balance of stress faced by new teachers emphasizes the necessity of positive work environments and professional development opportunities. Institutions must incorporate targeted stress-reduction initiatives, such as mentorship programs and mental health services, to promote resilience and career longevity (Hammoudi Halat et al., 2023). Finally, treating moderate levels of stress among young educators is critical to developing a sustainable and successful teaching profession.

5.3. Interpersonal Relationships

Table 3. Assessment of the Level of Professional Stress in terms of Interpersonal Relationships

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I often feel strained in my relationships with colleagues.	2.62	1.12	Moderately Stressed	1
2. I find it difficult to get support and help in my work environment.	2.55	1.13	Moderately Stressed	3.5
3. I feel pressured when communicating with my supervisor.	2.55	1.15	Moderately Stressed	3.5
4. My work environment lacks cooperation and trust.	2.60	1.12	Moderately Stressed	2
5. I feel confused and stressed when dealing with my students.	2.48	1.10	Less Stressed	5
COMPOSITE MEAN	2.56	0.50	Moderately Stressed	

Legend: 1.00-1.50: Strongly Disagree (Not Stressed); 1.51-2.50: Disagree (Less Stressed); 2.51-3.50; Agree (Moderately Stressed); 3.51-4.00: Strongly Agree (Highly Stressed)

Based on the results in Table 3, which shows an average score of 2.56 and a standard deviation of 0.50, the study looked at how professional stress affected the relationships between some young teachers. This suggests that respondents experienced moderate stress and agreed that their relationships with colleagues are frequently strained ($M = 2.62$). Similarly, they agree that their workplace lacks cooperation and trust ($M = 2.60$) and that they have difficulty obtaining support and assistance ($M = 2.60$).

Interpersonal relationship stress is the most challenging sub indicator for young teachers. The lowest mean implies that this area received the least favorable assessment, suggesting it may be a significant source of stress in their personal lives.

Dealing with students is not a major stressor. The lowest mean score of 2.48 indicates disagreement with the idea that interacting with students causes feelings of confusion and agitation. This suggests that young teachers generally feel confident and composed when dealing with their students.

Stress sources may differ across interpersonal domains. While interaction with students may not be stressful, other aspects of interpersonal relationships—possibly with colleagues, superiors, or parents—might be perceived as more problematic.

These observations could help target support measures to reduce stress, focusing on the specific interpersonal challenges young teachers face outside of their interactions with students.

The assessment of professional stress among young teachers reveals a moderate level of stress, particularly in terms of interpersonal ties in the educational setting. Young educators frequently face complex social dynamics, which can have a substantial impact on their mental health and job happiness. According to Bagnall et al. (2020), the relationships teachers form with colleagues, students, and parents have a significant impact on their professional experiences.

While young teachers generally bring energy and new perspectives to their employment, they also confront obstacles such as establishing authority, maintaining relationships, and dealing with competing expectations from many stakeholders. These elements can combine to cause a moderate but significant amount of stress, resulting from the requirement to match personal teaching philosophies with institutional demands (Dignath et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the relative novelty of the teaching profession for these educators contributes to the emotional toll, since they frequently lack the substantial support systems created over time by more experienced colleagues. As a result, creating a climate that encourages collaboration and open communication becomes critical for reducing stress and increasing retention rates among young instructors. Thus, developing interpersonal skills in teacher training programs may help to reduce professional stress and increase overall job satisfaction (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2020).

6. Conclusion

1. Young teachers are experiencing moderate to high levels of professional stress due to multiple factors, including limited career growth opportunities, insufficient academic support, heavy workload, challenging interpersonal relationships, and personal factors affecting their overall well-being

2. The measurement of peer pressure among young instructors generating an average level reveals a complex terrain within educational settings. This data suggests that, while young educators may receive some influence from their colleagues, it is neither extremely helpful nor damaging.

3. Teacher training programs have been moderately effective in enhancing professional development and teaching practices. They have contributed to reducing teachers' workload, improving stress management, and supporting overall well-being, fostering a healthier work-life balance. While these programs offer valuable opportunities for career development, research skills, and digital teaching enhancement, the impact varies among participants. Promotions and career advancements are accessible but not universally experienced, reflecting a range of outcomes across educators.

4. Training programs significantly impact peer pressure among young teachers by fostering supportive networks and critical skills, as evidenced by the low p-value and large effect size. However, training programs do not have a significant effect on professional stress, with the high p-value indicating no statistical relationship between the variables.

7. Recommendation

- 1.The educational institutions may identify the aspects that contribute to moderate stress levels, such as workload, classroom management issues, and the emotional demands of teaching.
- 2.The schools administrators may create a supportive environment that includes mentorship programs, professional development opportunities, and mental health resources for the teachers.
- 3.Develop a comprehensive support system that addresses career development, workload management, and interpersonal relationships to improve young teachers' overall well-being and job satisfaction.
- 4.The educational institutions may establish mentorship programs that pair inexperienced teachers with seasoned professionals. Such partnerships can offer guidance, thereby reducing the anxiety associated with conforming to peer expectations. Mentors can provide insights into best practices and alleviate feelings of inadequacy that may arise from peer comparisons.
- 5.The department head may create open forums for discussion within faculty meetings to facilitate a culture of collaboration rather than competition. Encouraging teachers to share their experiences and challenges will normalize the struggles associated with early career development, potentially diffusing the intensity of any negative peer pressure.
- 6.The teachers may have access to ongoing mentorship and resources post-training to facilitate the application of learned concepts in their classrooms.
- 7.The school may integrate evidence-based practices into the training curriculum can significantly bolster its effectiveness. This entails adopting pedagogical strategies supported by empirical research, which enhances teacher engagement and learning.
- 8.The school administrators may provide Training programs that emphasize collaboration, shared experiences, and mutual support can effectively diminish these pressures. By fostering a culture of collegiality and professional development, teachers are less likely to engage in detrimental comparisons, thus enhancing their working relationships and overall job satisfaction. Such programs may cultivate an atmosphere where educators feel empowered to seek assistance and share best practices, ultimately reducing feelings of isolation and competition.
- 9.The school may provide training programs for mitigating professional stress within the teaching profession.

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