

Stress can impact on student learning experience?

[Education](#), [Learning](#)



Stress has a positive and negative effect on student learning experience. More than half of the staff working at the Scottish Higher Education Institute responded that they considerably extremely stressed and similar levels perceive that stress is the cause of teaching "below par" which is a negative influence on student learning experience. Levels of stress can help improve the performance of the individual, or vice versa it will lead to a decreased performance.

The questionnaires were designed, piloted and then distributed internally, to all members of the senior faculty in SHEI in 1994 to determine their level of stress. The next survey in 2003, the same questionnaire and distribution method was applied for comparative purposes. The questions cover the following areas: basic information, general attitudes, peer support, cognitive stress levels, cognitive factors, stress effects, and positive aspects of stress. Qualitative data is analyzed using content analysis.

As a result of Table III, in 2003, there were 87.9 percent of respondents saying they enjoyed being a member of profession and 64.5 percent liked their place of work. Nearly half are satisfied with their level and more than one of them is not satisfied. In terms of stress, 76.6% put excessive pressure on themselves. This leads to an increase in stress levels under individual control, not SHEI. This particular aspect should be investigated further as individuals may exert excessive pressure on themselves because of pressure from other sources.

Most respondents said they were "considerably" or "extremely" satisfied with their work (Table IV). Major Job satisfaction was considered by 71.7

percent of respondents as "students" (Table V). Respondents cite a range of activities that contribute to this, from "helping students grasp a difficult theory" by seeing graduates succeed in their chosen field. These findings suggest that many tutors are motivated to support students, implying that they consider the student's learning experience to be an important aspect of their role. This concern is illustrated by one respondent saying:

I might consider giving up teaching. . . However, for the sake of my students, I would not give up my present position happily.

According to the website www.emeraldinsight.com, respondents were asked "How stressful do you find your current job?" Analysis of responses their extremely stress have dropped from 17.2 percent in 1994 to 11.3 percent in 2003. These numbers show a general reduction in stress awareness at the Scottish Higher Education Institute since 1994; however, they still point out that 55.7 percent of tense awareness is significant or extreme, suggesting that there is no room for complacency.

There are also changes noted in the current job stressors of respondents (Table VII). At first glance, these results appear to be positive in that many of the factors seen by fewer people fall into the category of moderate / extreme stress, but the change in ranking indicates a new hierarchy of the stressors. The two stressors associated with communication and participation (not advised and not consulted) have moved further into the hierarchy (from 4 and 5 to 1 and 3, respectively). This is despite the fact that SHEI is united and consulted and negotiated between union representatives and management.

The top three stressors identified by the respondents are in the list of stressors identified by Tehrani (2002, p. 8):

. . . poor communication between managers and employees, lack of involvement in decision making, insufficient resources.

In general, the results show that the most common effect of stress is teaching under par. This has a direct detrimental impact on the student's learning experience (Joy-Matthews et al., 2004, p. 101) as well as conflicts with students. However, some other behaviors reported may have an indirect effect on the quality of the learning experience. Absence at work often leads to another teacher having to teach what can be an unfamiliar subject in a short time or even possibly canceling a class.

Although 43.6 percent were considered leaving the profession (Table III), only 20.2 percent actually sought to work elsewhere. However, they were successful, which could also have a significant negative impact on the student's learning experience when 82.3% had more than four years of teaching experience in college and in total, 42.8% have more than ten years experience.

It has been acknowledged that stress can have a positive impact, from which students can benefit. This may be best summed up by the respondent saying, "Teaching a great class brings out the best in my lecture." About 21 percent of the stress report helped improve performance and 26.6 percent said it was executing deadlines. About 13.7 percent reported "no positive aspect" of the tension as in Table X.