International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Golden Research Thoughts

GRT

COPING STRATEGIES OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS - A CASE STUDY ON OSMANIA UNIVERSITY

DR. D. RAMBABU

Research Scholar , Department of Education ,
Osmania University , Hyderabad.

Abstract:

This research aims to reveal coping strategies among the university teachers. It was identified that teachers most often used planful problem solving and accepting responsibility, while escaping-avoidance and confrontation were used most rarely. Female teachers used all coping strategies more often than male teachers. Succession of frequency of coping strategies in male and female groups differs. Senior women use confrontation and distancing coping more rarely than younger women. The specific city of frequency of coping strategies, considering the delivered subject, was disclosed. This research is an effort to elaborate various factors of job satisfaction and coping strategies, which influence the university teachers for their effective contribution to education, also to enhance their performance as well as to increase their institutional effectiveness
This paper is a study taken up to find out the coping strategies among the osmania university teachers.   To find out the differences between the regular and contract teachers coping strategies.

KEYWORDS:

Coping Strategies, Education, Job Satisfaction, Teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Higher educational institutions play fundamental role in the progress of any country. As every educated person in the society a nurse, entrepreneur, doctor, engineer, etc. has passed through the hands of teacher. So in this regard, teachers play a decisive and formative role in the lives of youth. Teachers are the most important factor in determining the quality of education that children receive in the college/ university. However, it is only possible when teachers in university/ colleges are satisfied and motivated enough to accomplish their goals effectively.. The famous rule of thumb in Human Resource Management is that it is always less costly to retain employees than to hire new ones. Another common observation is that where teachers perform well, their students are also high achievers. Also, the educational institutes where they work contribute more towards the higher education.

Instead of just lecturing in the classroom, teachers are facilitators of learning, providing students with the information and tools they need to master a subject. At times, teachers act like tutors, working with small groups of students or individual students within the classroom or after class. Teachers also play the role of evaluators, constantly assessing students' abilities through formal and informal assessments, providing suggestions for improvement and assigning grades. the most important roles teachers fill involve interacting with students. Teachers must be leaders in the classroom and in the school, earning the respect of students and setting a positive example. They must be disciplinarians, doling out fair and consistent

punishments to students who break the rules. At the same time, teachers must show care and concern for students. A teacher has the power to build up or tear down a student's self-esteem and make a student's day or ruin it in an instant. When interacting with students, a teacher must fill the role of a counselor, a surrogate parent, a nutritionist and someone who has the best interests of every child at heart.

At the planning stage, teachers play multiple roles. They are learners, constantly taking classes and attending professional development sessions to learn the latest best practices and strategies for effective teaching. Many teachers regularly collaborate with one another to gain new ideas for teaching, planning grade-level instruction and combining subjects to enhance the learning experience. They analyze test results and other data to help determine the course of their instruction and make changes in their classrooms. Teachers also design lesson plans to teach the standards and provide engaging activities, while taking into account each student's interests and instructional needs.

Modern living has not only provided innumerable comforts to human life but also has taxed human body and mind with a plethora of demands termed as stress. The phenomenon of stress is not new rather man has been experiencing stress since the origin of structured societies. The difference lies with the severity and frequency which has increased now days to such an extent that it has become a major threat to human life. It has become part of our daily life activities whether it is related to family, education, social activity, economic activity, organization or work. Occupational or work stress occurs when there is discrepancy between the demands of workplace and an individual's ability to carry out and complete those demands. Teaching as a profession also comes under the gamut of stress making it more demanding and challenging everyday (Hepburn & Brown, 2001; Johnson et al., 2005).

In this competitive era, every educational institution is setting new goals to compete not only at the local level but also at the global level. As a result teacher, at the crux of an education system, has to bear the responsibility to prepare the young generations to build a nation with purpose and tackle the challenges of tomorrow. To prepare effective, competent and committed teachers the role of teacher educators becomes prominent in achieving the desired goal. These teacher educators prepare and train good and effective teachers who further prepare and train good students.

Educational institutes are bearing the highest cost in case of managing the human capital of faculty. Therefore, bringing high quality in program delivery necessitates the research on contributing factors of satisfaction and loyalty. The level of satisfaction, which guarantees a successful educational institute, backed by the number factors like strong interactive process, inherent attraction for quality brains, likeliness to stay on job and feelings of empowerment. Satisfaction also develops high level of institutional commitment and desire to show substantial performance. The high performance do not only based on job satisfaction, but also requires satisfaction with career in education, which positively influences teaching effectiveness and resultantly, students learning.

Faculty of universities is treated with number of identities and associations, which predict various labels of quality, experiences, qualification, seniority and overall contribution towards academic discipline. Cadres in jobs such as professors, assistant professors, lecturers and junior research officers vary across the pay levels, job roles, institutional responsibility and expected outcome. The impact of cadres on job satisfaction of teachers is therefore a worthwhile area to be taken in job satisfaction search. In the context of UK higher education institutions, Oshagbemi (2003) conducted a study at university level and tried to find out the relationship in job satisfaction among different job cadres i.e. Lecturer, senior lecturer, reader and professor. The study concluded that job satisfaction has a direct positive relationship with cadre like rank and occupational level.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has been taken up as a humble beginning of the tremendous task a head with the following objectives:

1. To access the Coping Strategies used by university teachers.
2. To find out the relationship between the job satisfaction, coping strategies university teachers
3. To analyze the job satisfaction and coping strategies of university teachers in relation to their teaching experience, designation and status.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Sultana (1995) while investigating the level of organizational role stress among male and female teachers of professional and non-professional courses found that there was significant difference between professionals and non-professionals both male and females on role stress dimensions of role stagnation,

role expectation conflict and role isolation, inter-role distance, role stagnation and role overload. Jai Prakash and Bhogle (1994) found that females used significantly more emotion oriented coping strategies as compared to males. Psychological distress had a significant relationship with the use of emotion-oriented coping. The dysfunctional modes of coping may be damaging when they prevent essential direct action but may be extremely useful in helping a person maintain a sense of well being. Integration or hope under conditions otherwise will encourage psychological disintegration. Different approaches have been used in various investigations. Some have emphasized general coping traits, styles or dispositions while others have focused on ongoing coping strategies in particular stress situations. They assume that an individual will utilize the same type of coping in most stressful situations.

Pareek (1983) has suggested that stress may be either in the form of avoiding the situation i.e. reactive strategy or confronting or approaching the problem (proactive strategy). Under these two broad categories, Pareek has identified eight styles namely, Impunities (M) which has a combination of low internality, low externality and avoidance. Accepting stress is unavoidable and nothing can be done about it; Intropunitive (I) is characterized by high internality, low externality and avoidance. Blame and aggression is directed by the respondent to himself; Extra punitive (E) is characterized by low internality, high externality and avoidance. Here the blame and hostility are turned against some person or thing in the environment. Both initiation with the situation and aggression are directed towards external factors; Defensive (D) is characterized by high internality, high externality and avoidance. With involvement of both self and others, but having avoidance mode, the respondent avoids aggression or blame by use of defense mechanisms. With high involvement of the self and of others in the stress, the superego becomes more active and therefore defensive behavior is stimulated; Impressive (m) is characterized by low internality, low externality and approach. It is an expression given to the hope that time or normally expected circumstances will bring about the solution of a problem. Patience and conformity are characterized; Intropersistive (i) is characterized by high internality, low externality and approach. In this, the individual himself will take action in relation to stress; Extrapersistive (e) is characterized by low internality, high externality and approach. It is an expectation that the solution will come from others and Interpersistive (n) which is characterized by high internality, high externality and approach. It is opposite of defensive (D) style. The individual and some others take joint action to deal with stress.

Folk man & Lazarus, (1980) described generally people use two coping strategies: one is problem-solving strategies those efforts to do something active to alleviate stressful circumstances, whereas emotion-focused coping strategies involve efforts to regulate the emotional consequences of stressful or potentially stressful events. The role of social support is indicated as being strongly implicated in psychological and physiological manifestations of stress. In India, high externality helps individuals make external attributions as a major coping mechanism and may considerably reduce the level of stress experienced by the employee. Indians predominantly use the family as a major source of social support while Americans use co-workers, friends, and family as a source support. It was interesting to note that in both the countries emotion-focused strategies are more frequently used than the problem-focused methods.

COPING STRATEGIES

One more group of researches into stress goes deep into the analysis of stress coping strategies and mechanisms. Stress coping is understood as the individual's efforts, manifesting themselves at the behavioral and cognitive level, to cope with external and internal requirements when the existing resources are already exhausted or insufficient (Lazarus, 1993). The term coping is used irrespective of effectiveness or adaptively of employed efforts. Lazarus (1993) distinguishes two main functions of coping: functions directed to the problem and functions directed to emotions. Problem-focused efforts are directed to solving the situation, changing the relation with the stressful event. The function of emotion-focused coping is to help to cope with arisen emotions without changing the stressful situation. Other authors (Carver, Schneider, & Weintraub, 1989) assess adaptively and non-adaptively of coping.

Coping has been defined as the behavioral and cognitive efforts a person uses to manage the demands of a stressful situation (Chang & Strunk, 1999). Folk man, Lazarus, Gruen, and DeLongis (1986) define coping as "the person's cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage the internal and external demands in the person-environment transaction". In times of stress, an individual normally engages in certain coping strategies to handle the stressful situations and their associated emotions. The more an individual adopts adaptive coping strategies, the less his/her stress, and better his/her mental health. There are several methods of coping. Feeling in Control as a Way of Coping (Rubin, Palau, & Salovey, 1993), Optimism and Pessimism Coping Style (Rubin, Paplau, & Salovey, 1993), Approach and Avoidant Coping (Chang & Strunk, 1999), Appraisal and Coping (Rubin, Paplau, & Salovey, 1993). Endler & Purker (1990) gave three different coping styles i.e. task- oriented (problem-focused), emotion-oriented coping and avoidance-

oriented coping.

Copying style is a person's characteristics strategies used in response to life problems or traumas. These can include thoughts, emotions or behaviors. In today's life due to increasing emotional and physical strain that accompanies stresses individuals feel uncomfortable. So they are motivated to do 'things' to reduce their stress. These 'things' are what we call coping styles. Coping is a general term that describes the wide range of responses used by individuals to deal with their health problems. Lazarus and Folk man 1984 said that, "Coping is viewed as a response to perceived stress and defined as constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person". The words "manage" refers to different coping efforts that are quiet varied and do not necessarily lead to the solution of a problem. Cohen and Lazarus (1979), Lazarus and Folk man (1984), Lazarus and Lauhier (1978) said that coping can serve two main functions. It can alter the problem causing stress (problem focused coping) or it can regulate the emotional response to the problem (Emotion focused coping).

Stress is a significant factor of performance. Nearly every popular training and organizational development initiative is directly compromised by the intellectual, emotional, and interpersonal consequences of stress. Design of organizational initiatives like The Learning Organization, Process Re-engineering, Diversity Training, Collaborative Team Work, and The High Performance Organization are influenced by employee stress experiences.

Coping is defined as the process of managing demands (external and internal) that an individual appraises as taking or exceeding his or her available resources (Lazarus, 1981). An individual viewing an event as challenging is likely (within given individual differences) to cope through direct action or problem focused strategy to change the situation, similarly an individual viewing the situation as threatening is likely to cope through the use of intra psychic process such as avoidance, wishful thinking or minimization of threat.

Problem solving involves changing the situation for better; if possible, either by altering the action one is responsible for or by altering the damaging or threatening environment. The emotional function involves managing the somatic and subjective component of stress related to emotions themselves (Lazarus, 1981).

Coping strategies are known to influence an individuals' experience of stress. For most students, managing stress during college can be extremely challenging. However, learning how to manage stress may help students cope with every day social and academic pressures, and thus have a better college experience. Effective time management strategies increase academic performance (Campbell and Swenson, 1992) and are frequently suggested by academic assistance personnel as aids to enhance achievement for college students. Although programs emphasize starting large tasks well before due dates, breaking down large tasks into small ones, and doing small tasks on a regular schedule, students regularly ignore these techniques and find themselves in great distress before exams (Brown, 1991).

Coping resources enable the individual to handle stressors more effectively, reduce the intensity of symptoms and help recover faster from exposure. These are adaptive capacities that provide immunity against damage from stress (Baum & Singer, 1982). These resources are psychological prophylaxis that can reduce likelihood of stress (Baum & Singer, 1982). Some studies have demonstrated a relationship between coping and mental health. Ebata and Moos (1994), Simoni and Peterson (1997) and Srivastava (1991) found that positive coping (e.g. problem solving action, logical analysis, information seeking) was positively related to wellbeing. In contrast, avoidance coping (e.g. denial or suppression of feelings) was associated with maladjustment to life stress. Kucukalic et al., (2003) emphasized that coping is a dynamic process that is reciprocally related between the individual and his environment. He found that the subjects who faced torture used more maladaptive coping than those who had not faced torture.

COPING MECHANISMS

Personal resources for coping with stress were categorized as emotion-focused (designed to alleviate the emotional impact), problem-focused (designed to address the source of stress), and support-seeking (seeking instrumental or emotional support from others) (cf. Lazarus & Folk man, 1984). Emotion-focused coping strategies specific to Sri Lankans included sleeping, eating, stress-related illness, prayers, isolation, running away (e.g., leaving home), tantrums or pouting, drinking, and suicide. Problem-focused mechanisms included decision making, attempting to change the circumstances, taking preventive measures, asking questions, attempting different solutions and persistence, seeking professional help, and using logical arguments to resolve conflicts. Problem-focused strategies were most often reported by adult respondents. Support-seeking was characterized by (a) seeking of emotional support, for example, discussing problems with parents, teachers, siblings or peers; and (b) seeking of instrumental support such

as seeking academic help from peers or privately from tuition teachers (private tutors). Students indicated a preference for seeking academic help on an individual basis from tuition teachers to avoid peer ridicule. Asking questions in class was considered unacceptable by peers because it wasted class time for those who already knew the answers. These attitudes are closely linked to the emphasis given to academic achievement

According to Houston, Meyer, and Paewai (2006), educational institutions have classified the role of faculty members into teaching, research, and service. Rowley (1996) expressed that professors face role stress in trying to do equitable justice to these multifaceted tasks. Smith, Anderson, and Lovrich (1995), in their study, reported that professors consider work overload as a major contributor to job stress. On the other hand, Abouserie (1996) demonstrated that professors rated administrative work as the most significant cause of stress in their lives and conducting research was the secondary cause of stress at work. According to Coal drake and Stedman (1999), teaching and research have become more specialized and demanding. Accordingly, the professors are being asked to meet the dynamic requirements of diverse groups of students, master the use of information technology in teaching, teach with flexible timings and across disciplines, and design the pedagogy around learning outcomes (Mark & Smith, 2012).

Ahmady, Changiz, Masiello, and Brommels (2007) stated that only little research has been conducted in developing countries to investigate role stress experienced by professors. According to these authors, the significant role related stressors are too many tasks and everyday work load, conflicting demands from colleagues and superiors, inadequate resources for appropriate performance, insufficient competency to meet the demands of their role, and a feeling of underutilization. Reddy and Poornima (2012) noted that the Indian higher education system has undergone rapid transformation in terms of expansion, privatization, pedagogical innovations, and curricular reforms. All these changes have created a huge pressure on professors in higher education.

Coping depended on the availability of certain resources. A successful coping might involve financial, social and technical support. Coping resources were required to cope with a situation. Sometimes they were readily available with the person. The person might have money to consult a psychiatrist or purchase certain exercise machines etc. He/she might have a supportive family, friends or colleagues ready to provide an instant help. But sometimes the teacher had to find out and seek resources required to solve the problem which was by itself an additional problem. A person already at the peak of gloom and despair could not easily make the resources available at his disposal. Coping resources were the factors required to utilize coping to moderate the level of stress. Coping resources comprised two major types.

 1. Personal resources   2. Environmental resources

1. Personal Resources:

It included physical potential including the person's overall health and energy level. Health was an important factor in stress reduction. It was true that certain people had achieved much despite their poor health. Health could facilitate the coping efforts. It was comparatively easy to cope with stress when a person was physically fit and mentally sound. Psychological resources comprised all the internal and external attributes which helped a person to look peaceful and feel positive despite the adverse circumstances in which he/she was surviving. Having a positive behavior towards the problems of life provided the strength to kick out all the stresses of life. Competency resources included both the problem solving techniques and application of social strategies and skills. Facing a new challenge could create personal stress. One needed to deal with minor and major crises of life. The person might get puzzled dealing with a sudden change. Experts advised to seek as much information about a problem as possible. This could enable one to know that certain other people had also faced similar type of situation and one could meet with them to find out how successfully they managed to cope. One could neutrally analyze one's own situation from every angle and try to solve it rationally. One must keep in mind that there was a solution for every problem. There was always a way where there was a will. It was the will power which helped people in solving their problems. Social skills comprised the communication skill, the conflict resolution skill, and stress and time management skills. Social skills facilitated problem solving with contacting and seeking the cooperation by one's social circle. The

2. Environmental Resources:

It consisted of both the social support and the material resources. Social support was a kind of help and assistance which provided a moral support and other possible help and guidance to solve the problem. Material resources were financial resources plus any required material which needed to be purchased with the help of money. It was quite true that money was not the adequate solution of all human stress. Sometimes very rich people died of a sudden shock resulting from an unbearable stress. But poverty and

money shortage was by itself a very big hurt and stress for majority of the population. Poverty in the midst of plenty was a big stressor of human life.

Extracted Variables

The analysis of existing literature led to the extraction and development of variables pertinent to the present study requirements and purposes. Such variables include the demographic variables about the teachers forming the sampling population of this study. The other variables cover the various dimensions of teaching stress.

The following table gives the details of the defined variables of this study. S.No. Variable Elements/Attributes 1 Demographic & biographic Information Identification (Optional), gender, age, marital status, Job status, residential status, Qualifications, experience, designation, Income, administrative duties. 2 Level of prevalence of stress Self-reported/self-diagnosed perception of stress varying from no stress to mild, moderate, high and extreme level the dependent variable forming the basic theme around which this entire study revolves. 3 Coping Strategies Application of Stress Management techniques.

CASE STUDY

To analyzise the coping strategies among the university teachers, this study is taken up at Osmania University. For this study total 200 teachers were selected under different groups. 50 Female teachers, 50 Male teachers and 50 Contract Teachers Female and 50 Contract Teachers Male was taken. As per the study the following coping strategies were tested among the university teachers on Social Support, Task Strategies, Time Management and Home and Work Relations. The scores of the subjects were compared in terms of marital status, age, and level of teaching with the help Questioner prepared.

Mainly the focus of the study was on the following subjects
• Social Support
• Marital status
• Task Strategies
• Time Management
• Home and Work Relations
• Stress at work

From the above study the perceptions of the teachers working in the Osmania University is collected. The results and opinion of the teachers towards the coping strategies at the university is discussed as follows.

Table 1

Variables	Yes/No	Female Teacher (Regular)	Male Teachers (Regular)	Female Teacher (Contract)	Male Teachers (Contract)	Total (Respondents)
		50	50	50	50	200
Social Support	Yes	12	50	30	45	137
	No	38	0	20	05	63
Marital Status	Yes	40	38	30	20	128
	No	10	12	20	30	72
Task Strategies	Yes	30	35	50	40	165
	No	20	15	00	10	45
Time Management	Yes	20	40	45	40	145
	No	30	10	05	10	55
Home & Work Relations	Yes	45	40	30	38	153
	No	05	10	20	12	47
Stress at work	Yes	45	20	40	10	105
	No	05	30	10	40	85
Harassment at work	Yes	35	10	42	15	102
	No	05	40	08	35	88

The above table describes the perceptions of the osmania university teachers on the coping strategies. The analyses of the table is prescribed below as follows.
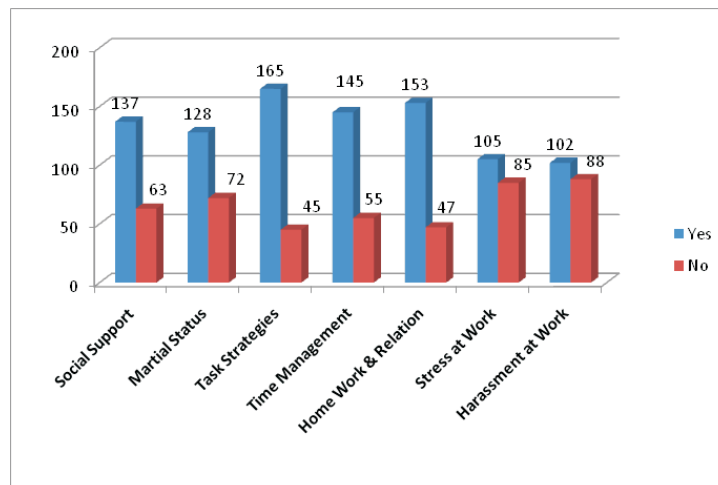
From the above graph it represents the coping strategies of the university teachers. The difference between the male teachers and female teachers.

• **Social Status :** Teachers perception is that they need social support also towards 137 teachers supported that they need it for their carrier development. Whereas 63 teachers said there is no need for their development or coping levels.

• **Martial Status :** 128 Teachers are married and 72 Teachers are unmarried who gave their opinion. The married teachers need more coping levels when compared to the unmarried teachers.

• **Task Strategies :** Out of 200 teachers perceptions 165 teachers responded that they are actively involved in the task strategies daily. These task strategies help them to keep updated to the knowledge which they can share with the students. 45 Teachers said that they are not regularly involved in task strategies due to several personal reasons.

• **Time Management :** Response regarding to the time management the 145 teachers responded that the time management is very important for the teachers to follow the punctuality and maintain discipline among the students. 55 Teachers responded as not able to maintain the time management due to their personal reasons.

• **Home Work & Relation :** Among the respondents 153 teachers responded with yes that they are involved with home work relations. And 47 teachers responded no. Due to the home related issued the teachers are unable to concentrate on the development of the students career.

• **Stress at Work :** Among the 200 respondents 105 teachers accept that there is a stress at work place from the subordinates related to the classes, completion of syllabus and other academic related issues. Most of the female teachers are facing this stress issues when compared to the male teachers. The 85 teachers who responded that there is no stress at work mostly they are seniors and unmarried teachers.

• **Harassment at work :** 102 teachers of the university accept that there is harassment at work place. They are most the female teachers, that to contract teachers facing this harassment from the seniors in the academic work. 88 teachers who responded that there is no harassment at work are mostly the senior professors and about to retirement.

Avoidance strategies involve individuals attending to insulate and distance themselves from the problem source. This is essentially evident in correction work, since the source of so many of the problems lie at the organizational and societal level.

Comparison of scores on the basis of marital status revealed significantly higher scores of married teachers on five dimensions of coping i.e. logics, social support, task strategies, time management, home and work relations as well as total score, indicating better coping ability of married teachers. Stress-coping is closely related to the overall life satisfaction of the individual (Baum and Singer, 1982). The status of marriage brings considerable satisfaction to both men and women but delivers special bonus to women in Indian society

CONCLUSION :

It is clear from the finding of this study that female teachers are often stress than male teachers, have more challenges to follow Indian orthodox customs, prevailing in the society. The coping strategies will help the teachers to build their capacity building towards their teaching profession.

REFERENCES :

• Johannsen SE; An analysis of the occupational stress factors identified by certified teachers. 2011. Retrieved from http://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd
• Kyriacou C, Chien PY; Teacher stress in Taiwanese primary schools. J. Edu. Enq., 2004; 5(2): 86- 104.
• Wilkinson RG; Teacher stress and coping strategies: a study of Eastlake comprehensive. School Organization, 1988; 8(2):185-195.
• Smith KL; Coping mechanisms and level of occupational stress among agriculture teachers and other teaching populations. Published M.Sc Agricultural Systems Technology Dissertation, Utah State University. 2012.
• Zedan R, Bitar J; Stress and coping strategies among science elementary school teachers in Isreal. Universal Journal of Education and General Studies, 2013; 2 (3): 84-97

Publish Research Article
International Level Multidisciplinary Research Journal
For All Subjects

Dear Sir/Mam,

We invite unpublished Research Paper,Summary of Research Project,Theses,Books and Book Review for publication,you will be pleased to know that our journals are

Associated and Indexed,India

✶ International Scientific Journal Consortium
✶ OPEN J-GATE

Associated and Indexed,USA

- EBSCO
- Index Copernicus
- Publication Index
- Academic Journal Database
- Contemporary Research Index
- Academic Paper Databse
- Digital Journals Database
- Current Index to Scholarly Journals
- Elite Scientific Journal Archive
- Directory Of Academic Resources
- Scholar Journal Index
- Recent Science Index
- Scientific Resources Database
- Directory Of Research Journal Indexing