



A Study on Occupational Stress of Primary School Teachers

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Abstract: This study investigates about the occupational stress faced by the primary school teachers. Like all other professions teaching is also a stressful job. This stress reduces productivity of the teacher. So it is important to know the causes and effects of stress. Because of this, researcher wants to study the stress of primary school teachers. For this the researcher chooses some primary school teachers and administrated a test further analyzed the data using some statistical techniques.

Introduction

Occupational stress can defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. Job stress can lead to poor health and even injury. The concept of Occupational stress is often confused with challenge, but these concepts are not the same. Challenge energizes us psychologically and physically, and it motivates us to learn new skills and master our Occupations. When a challenge is met, we feel relaxed and satisfied (U.S NIOSH, 1999).

Thus, challenge is an important ingredient for healthy and productive work. The importance of challenge in our work lives is probably what people are referring to when they say, "a little bit of stress is good for you. Occupational stress is that which derives specifically from conditions in the work place. These may either cause stress initially or aggravate the stress already present from other sources. In today's typical workplace, stress is seen as becoming increasingly more common. People appear to be working longer hours, taking on higher level of responsibilities and exerting themselves even more strenuously to meet rising expectations about

Occupational performance. Competition is sharp. There is always someone else ready to "step into one's shoes" should one be found wanting.

Occupational Stress of School Teachers

In general job stress can be defined as a lack of harmony between the individual and the work environment. The teaching profession is unique in many ways, and as such, it is concerned with certain stress-related conditions. Teacher stress has come under considerably scrutiny since the 1930s. Both international and national teacher stress studies are numerous (e.g. Haikonen, 1999, 23). Differences in the concepts used, and methodological problems make it difficult to comprise studies. Teacher stress studies have usually been cross-sectional and focused mainly on psychological stress indicators.

"Teacher stress may be defined as a response syndrome of negative affect (such as anger or depression) by a teacher usually accompanied by potentially pathogenic physiological and biochemical changes (such as increased heart rate or release of Adriano corticotrophin hormones into the blood stream) resulting from aspects of the teacher's job and mediated by the perception that the demands made upon the teacher constitute a threat to his self-esteem or



well-being and by coping mechanisms activated to reduce the perceived threat." Teacher stress is found to be associated with both subjective (e.g. interaction with pupils) and objective (e.g. sex, age, school level) factors. The most general stressors are associated with the quality of social interaction at work (with pupils and colleagues) and time demands and the amount of work (e.g. Cooper & Kelly, 1993; Rasku & Kinnunen, 1999; Salo & Kinnunen, 1993). Also, changes in society based requirements (Esteve, 1989) and structural changes in schools (Bell, 1995) have been seen as reasons for teacher stress. In studies, the teaching profession has been seen as a mission where feelings of inadequacy and risks of self-esteem are common (e.g. Niikko, 1995). Of course, none of these studies claims that all teachers share these feelings. Line of business is not a central explanatory factor for stress in the same way as are the organizational mode of actions and the contents of duties (Elo, Leppänen & Jahkola, 1999). Teaching and teacher stress is very individual and dynamic by its nature (Kinnunen, 1989; Salo & Kinnunen, 1993).

Stress management is to enhance the understanding of negative effects of stress in the classroom. Furthermore, this focus will be to understand the nature of stress and to address specific sources of stress that undermine effective teaching and learning in the classroom.

Causes of stress for teachers

According to a research the major causes of teacher stress are:

- Excessive working hours
- Excessive workload
- Rising class sizes
- Pressures due to inspection
- Changes in curriculum & courses
- Changes to assessment & testing requirements

- Poor management
- Workplace [bullying](#)
- Crumbling schools
- Pupil misbehavior
- Risk of violence from pupils, parents and intruders
- Lack of support with bureaucracy, form filling and routine tasks
- Lack of job security due to redundancy and fixed term contracts
- Lack of control over the job
- Threat to early retirement arrangements

Methods of identifying stress

Identification is the first step towards correction; with this belief in mind it is strongly advised that a teacher should understand the implications of stress on his personal health and social life. The best ways to have stress identified easily is to remain active in his social circle and readily accept any recent psychological or behavioral change observed by the others.

It is also possible to keep a track of own changes by maintaining a self checklist. This will help in establishing changes in ideas and opinions over a period of time. This will show a clear picture of how the work place environment have affected your thinking gradually and with the help of your friends, colleagues and relatives, you can change the effects of stress on your life.

(A) Self Analysis

The best way is to keep a check on your own health, attitude and behavior. Any change in these should be noted and necessary remedial measures be taken immediately to overcome this situation. The self stress checklist given at appendix 1 can be a helpful aid in determining the change in attitude which can be useful for determining the own state

(B) Mutual Analysis



Another way is to maintain close liaison with other members of the faculty and discuss the irritants that are creating problems or are likely to create stress for the teachers. This is one way to identify and eradicate the issues which are likely to become the cause of stress beforehand. The faculty members or an organization of teachers can benefit the affected teacher with each other's experience.

(C) Organizational Role

The organization can also play a positive role in helping their teachers in identifying the causes of stress within their schools. Problems such as isolation and disruptive behavior on the part of students and their parents can very conveniently be handled at the top level by the management amicably without putting the teacher in a stressful situation.

Remedial Measures

Some elements of stress are intrinsic while others are situational in the profession of teaching. The teacher has to understand how to cope with those which are intrinsic, while the situational ones can be managed with experience and common sense.

(A) Individual Measures

When a person decides to adopt the teaching profession, he or she during the training phase must realize the demands of this profession in terms of effort involved and in terms of time investment. The workload on a teacher will always be great and everything will always be bracketed by a very tight time schedule. A teacher has to be punctual and able to meet the deadline without fail. A teacher will have to always face the criticism of parents of the weak students and face the school board with a different set of problems.

(B) Adopt a Hobby

It is very important for a teacher to have a hobby which is totally different from what he does at school. Music, gardening, hiking and painting are a few examples of hobbies which a teacher may adopt. These can give them an outlet and take their minds off from the problems that they face at school. This is one way of getting the day's stress off from one's minds.

Need and Importance of Study

The quality of teacher effectiveness depends upon several facts. One of such factor is occupational stress. It adversely affects the performance of teacher. Hence the researcher felt the need for assessing occupational stress of teacher so that the researcher can suggest certain measure for reducing occupational stress in order to make teachers perform their level best with lesser tension.

Statement of the problem

"A study on occupational stress of primary school teachers".

Objectives of the study

To study the occupational stress among primary school teachers of Krishna district.

To study the occupational stress of primary school teachers of Krishna district in relation to their age.

To study the occupational stress of primary school teachers of Krishna district in relation to teacher pupil ratio.

To study the occupational stress of male and female primary school teachers of Krishna district.

To study the occupational stress of government and private primary school teachers of Krishna district.

Limitations of the Study



The study is limited to study the occupational stress of teachers working in primary schools only.

2. The present study is limited to the teachers working in the primary schools of Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh only.

3. The study is further limited to the sample chosen for the study only.

4. The level of significance considered in this study is 0.05 levels.

Tools used in the study:- A standardized questionnaire was adopted and used to study the occupational stress of primary school teachers. The adapted tool's name was occupational stress index (OSI) which was prepared and tested by Srivastava and Singh in 1984.

Variables of the study:-

For the present study, the following dependent and independent variables are chosen.

Gender: It refers to male and female teachers.

Management: It refers the type of management i.e. government or private.

Age: It refers the age of the teacher i.e. below 35 years or above 35 years.

Strength of the school: It refers the teacher pupil ratio i.e. teacher: pupil < 1:20 or teacher: pupil \geq 1:20

Population and sample: For the present study, the investigator has taken up a stratified random sample of 100 primary school teachers from different school in Krishna district.

Sample technique: For the present study the researcher, choose a simple random sampling technique. In this method, the whole population considered as a composite unit and then we select a

sample of required size. The sampling is done in lottery method. In this method, each individual in the population has an equal chance of being chosen. This is suitable for the present study as a universe considered for the study is homogeneous.

For this study survey method was used. The simple random sample technique was adopted for this sampling study. The total 38 schools were selected for the study. Among these 30 schools are government and remaining 8 are private.

Testing of Hypotheses

HYPOTHESIS-1

There is no significance difference between the occupational stresses of primary school teachers.

To test this hypothesis, the following procedure is adopted. Mean and SD of the whole group on the scores pertaining to occupational stress of primary school teachers has been computed groups.

The calculated values of mean and standard deviation are 134 and 18 respectively. On the basis of Mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) calculated, the total sample was further classified into high (above $M+1SD$), moderate (between $M-1SD$ and $M+1SD$) and low levels of (below $M-1SD$) attitude groups.

The respondents whose scores are less than 116 was considered as having high occupational stress group. Their number is 1 i.e., 1%. The respondents whose scores are above 152 are considered as having low occupational stress group. Their number is 36 i.e., 36%. The respondents whose scores are in between 116 & 152 are considered as



moderate occupational stress group. their verbal description is presented in
 Their number is 63 i.e., 63%. table

The data pertaining
 to the above three categories along with

Classification of the total sample on occupational stress of primary school teachers

S.NO	SCORE	N	VERBAL DESCRIPTION
1	BELOW 116	1	High occupational stress
2	BETWEEN 116&152	63	Moderate occupational stress
3	ABOVE 152	36	Low occupational stress

From table , it can be seen that nearly 1% of the sample have high occupational stress, 63% of the sample has moderate occupational stress, and remaining 36% of the sample has low occupational stress. This finding clearly shows that there is significant difference in occupational stress of primary school teachers

Hypothesis – 2: There is no significant difference between the occupational stress of Male and Female primary school teachers.

To test the validity of above hypothesis the mean value, S.D, t-test was calculated and the results was tabulated as follows
 occupational stress of male and female primary school teachers.

Variables	Sample size	Mean	S.D	t-test
Male	50	155	18.0	2.91
Female	50	145	16.9	

*significant at 0.05 level

The obtained t-test value (2.91) is greater than the table value.

Therefore, it is significant at 0.05level. in other words gender of the primary school teachers make significant difference in their occupational stress.

The null hypothesis was rejected.

Hence, it can be inferred that female primary school teachers have more occupational stress when compared to male primary school teachers.

Hypothesis – 3: There is no significant difference between the occupational stresses of primary school teachers in relation to their age.

To test the validity of above hypothesis the mean value, S.D, t-test was calculated and the results were tabulated as follows.

Occupational stress of primary school teachers with respect to their age

Variables	Sample size	Mean	S.D	t-test
> 35	53	152	18.3	1.23
< or = 35	47	148	17.8	

* Not significant at 0.05 level



The obtained t-test value (1.23) is less than the table value. Therefore, it is not significant at 0.05 level. In other words age of the primary school teachers, make no significant difference in their occupational stress. The null hypothesis was accepted. Hence, it can be inferred that below 35 years primary school teachers have more occupational stress when compared to above 35 years aged primary school teachers, though not statistically significant.

Hypothesis – 4: There is no significant difference between the occupational stress of primary school teachers in relation to their pupil ratio.

To test the validity of above hypothesis the mean value, S.D, t-test was calculated and the results were tabulated as follows.

occupational stress primary school teachers in relation to teacher pupil ratio

Variables	Sample size	Mean	S.D	t-test
Pupil: teacher <20	57	151	18.1	0.542
Pupil: teacher >or=20	43	149	18.3	

*not significant at 0.05 level

The obtained t-test value (0.542) is less than the table value. Therefore, it is not significant at 0.05 level. In other words teacher pupil ratio of the primary school teachers make no significant difference in their occupational stress.

Null hypothesis was accepted. Hence, it can be inferred that above 1:20 teacher pupil ratio primary school teachers have more occupational stress when compared to below 1:20 teacher pupil ratio primary school teachers, though not statistically significant

Hypothesis – 5:

There is no significant difference between the occupational stress of government and private primary school teachers.

To test the validity of above hypothesis the mean value, S.D, t-test was calculated and the results were tabulated as follows.

occupational stress of government and private primary school teacher

Variables	Sample size	Mean	S.D	t-test
government	79	149	16.3	1.74
Private	21	156	23.3	

*Not significant at 0.05 level

The obtained t-test value (1.74) is less than the table value. Therefore, it is not significant at 0.05 level. In other words management of the primary school



teachers make no significant difference in their occupational stress.

Null hypothesis was accepted.

Hence, it can be inferred that government primary school teachers have more occupational stress when compared private primary school teachers, though not statistically significant

Findings

About 1.1% of the sample primary teachers have high occupational stress. 36% of the sample has low occupational stress and remaining 63% of sample has moderate occupational stress. There is significant difference between the occupational stress of Male and Female primary school teachers. There is no significant difference between the occupational stresses of primary school teachers in relation to their age. There is no significant difference between the occupational stresses of primary school teachers in relation to pupil ratio. There is no significant difference between the occupational stress of government and private primary school teachers.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS:

The major findings of the study and the conclusions drawn helped the researcher to suggest the following implications.

1. The findings of the present study showed that 63% of the sample had moderate level of occupational stress. Therefore, the managements need to conduct an activity, which decreases the occupational stress.
2. The study revealed that female primary school teachers have more

occupational stress. Therefore, the management should conduct orientation classes for them on stress management.

3. The teachers less than age 35 years felt high occupational stress. Therefore, the management should introduce yoga meditation classes for them.

4. Since high teacher pupil ratio increases the stress on primary school teachers, the management should take necessary steps for small sections in the school.

CONCLUSION

Knowledge of occupational stress of primary school teachers is a necessity for a developing country. It helps to increase the productivity in the field of education. Consequently, additional research is needed to gain not only theoretical consensus but also clarity regarding the most appropriate measurement strategy.

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