A STUDY OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT
In the present study an attempt was made to compare teachers’ occupational stress of primary government and private school teachers of Tehsil Laksar, District-Haridwar. A sample of 100 teachers was selected, 50 each from government and private schools. Teachers’ Occupational Stress Scale constructed and standardized by Dr. Sajid Jamal and Dr. Abdul Raheem was administered. Findings revealed that in general, the primary school teachers have found to be highly stressed. Moreover, the private primary school teachers have also found to be highly stressed in comparison to their government primary school teacher counterparts.

Keywords: Primary School Teachers, Teachers’ Occupational Stress, Government School, Private School

INTRODUCTION

In the old days there was no concept of property. The society was almost egalitarian and there was no specialization as the occupation is concerned. The society was economically independent and people got satisfied their hunger out of the natural fruits and vegetations which naturally grew on earth. Hence we can say that in olden days a person were almost free from the concept of occupational stress, but this world of ours, founded upon science and technology, is highly mechanized and materialistic. Thus, as a result the life has become quite challenging and competitive at all levels. Those who don’t have money or resources try to find it and those who have, make efforts to get more. The executives are worried about low productions in the company, businessmen are worried about low profit and workers are worried about their job security and low wages.

Now days the world has become a global village and a lot of luxuries have come to the market. People want to get them all but could not afford. As a result they develop a kind of dissatisfaction among themselves. There are various conditions in the work life like excessive work, poor remuneration, nepotism and corruption and poor boss – employee relationship that also make them unsatisfied and stressed.

Stress at work resulting from increasing complexities of work and its divergent demand has become a prominent and pervading feature of the modern organizations. Stress as opined by Robinson (2007), is a pressure of adverse influences, circumstances (such as stress of teaching) that disturbs the natural physiological balance of the body. Malow-Iroff and Johnson (2006) are of the view that stress is the individual’s response to the events (such as response to our biological temperament, interaction with others and the enviromental conditions in which one is placed, etc. and the events themselves are stressors. Life events and the stress they place on the individual are not the problem until the individual fails to handle the situation competently and engages in poor coping skills. Occupational stress may be the result of the individual characteristics of the person or related to his/her environment(Sharma, Sood and Spielberg, 1998; Ahmad, Raheem and Jamal, 2003; Hansen and Sullivan, 2003; Bachkirova, 2005; Tytherileigh, Webb, Cooper
and Ricketts, 2005; Betoret, 2006; Grebennikov and Wiggins, 2006; Jepson and Forrest, 2006; Lazuras, 2006 and Zhang, 2007).

Although the teaching profession has traditionally been regarded as low stress occupation (French et al., 1982) but during the past two decades the situation is somersaulted (Olivier & Venter, 2003) Teaching is becoming more challenging as a profession: a more paper work, more bureaucracy and more unruly classes. Worldwide surveys reveal widespread concern about the effects of stress on teachers’ sense of well-being and their willingness to stay in the profession. Compared to the general population, teachers are at risk for higher levels of psychological distress and lower levels of job satisfaction (Schonfield, 1990). Borg (1990) reported that up to one third of the teachers perceive their occupation as highly stressful. It is clear that teachers can be exposed to a number of sources of stress. Kyriacou (2001) also reported that the main sources of teacher stress are teaching students who lack motivation, maintaining discipline in the classroom, confronting general time pressures and workload demands, being exposed to a large amount of change, being evaluated by others, having challenging relationships with colleagues, administration, and management, and being exposed to generally poor working conditions prospects, unsatisfactory working conditions, ambiguity of the teacher’s role, poor relationships with colleagues, pupils, and administrators, and job insecurity.

There is a pervasive perception among teachers surveyed who have reported their jobs as highly or extremely stressful (Kyriacou and Sutcliffe, 1978; Boriles, 1982; Borg and Falzon, 1989; Soloman and Feld, 1989; O Connor and Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998; Pithers and Soden, 1998). Furthermore there is research evidence that indicates that work related stress among teachers has serious implications for their work performance, health and psychological status (Capel, 1987; Cooper, 1986; Pierce and Molly, 1990). Health and psychological outcomes can in turn lead to poorer teaching performance, poor job satisfaction, increased absenteeisim, poor decision making and bad judgement (Eckles, 1987; Quick and Quick, 1984). The pupils of stressed teachers have less effective professional and personal attention with attendant negative educational consequences. There is also a general community cost. Therefore, all those factors which influence occupational stress of teachers and its consequences must be studied thoroughly.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

From the above discussions it is clear that certainly higher level of teachers’ occupational stress generates an attitude of apathy, non-involvement and non-cooperation which will lead to low quality of education, increase in wastage, increase in cost, work breakage, low efficiency and strained relation of the teachers with the management and with fellow teachers.

Nowadays when India is progressing by leaps and bounds and is on the verge of becoming a developed nation, we can not afford to neglect talents of our teachers because the teacher is one of the pillars of the society and the country. Without good teachers, no country can progress. The importance of teachers in the life of a nation cannot be overlooked. The teacher influences the immature minds of the youth. He treats and moulds the young mind into various forms. The economic condition of teachers is also miserable and we know that our country is economically backward and the standard of the masses is very low. In present day society only those people command respects that have power and money. The society of the past which respected teachers has vanished. The poor teacher does not enjoy much prestige in the society of today. The proliferation of private schools, which are merely
teaching shops, is another reason of the decline of a teacher's prestige. These schools employ teachers at very low salaries and the teachers cannot give his best to the students. There is a great dissatisfaction and frustration among teachers. Working conditions in schools and colleges are appalling. It is very sad that the persons in charge of education are themselves quite ignorant. They look down upon teachers as mere employees and nothing else. In such conditions, the teacher feels helpless and frustrated.

Within the limited time period and on the basis of available literature the investigator could not find a single study which investigated the influence of the said variables on the level of teachers' occupational stress of primary teachers. So it becomes very essential to know whether there is any influence of the said variables on the teachers' occupational stress of primary teachers. It is in this specific context that the present investigation has been undertaken to specifically provide empirical answers to the following questions.

a. What is the influence of the gender on the level of occupational stress of primary school teachers?
b. What is the difference in the level of occupational stress of primary teachers in relation to the type of schools?

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Incorporating the above raised questions, the study has been formally titled as:

A STUDY OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To know the level of occupational stress among primary school teachers.
2. To compare the occupational stress of government and private primary school teachers.
3. To compare the occupational stress of male and female primary school teachers.
4. To compare the occupational stress of male and female teachers of government primary schools.
5. To compare the occupational stress of male and female teachers of private primary schools.
6. To compare the occupational stress of government and private primary school male teachers.
7. To compare the occupational stress of government and private primary school female teachers.

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses have been formulated while dealing with the present problem:

1. There is no significant level of occupational stress among the primary school teachers.
2. There is no significant difference in the level of occupational stress of government and private primary school teachers.
3. There is no significant difference in the level of occupational stress of male and female primary school teachers.
4. There is no significant difference in the level of occupational stress of government male and government female primary school teachers.
5. There is no significant difference in the level of occupational stress of private male and private female primary school teachers.

6. There is no significant difference in the level of occupational stress of government school male and private school male primary school teachers.

7. There is no significant difference in the level of occupational stress of government school female and private school female primary school teachers.

**METHODOLOGY**

Present study is an empirical study and is exploratory in nature. In the present study data has been collected from government and private teachers of primary schools of Tehsil - Laksar, District – Haridwar (Uttarakhand) by administering Teachers’ Occupational Stress Scale constructed and standardized by Dr. Sajid Jamal and Dr. Abdul Raheem

**SAMPLE**

In the present study data has been collected from government and private teachers of primary schools of Tehsil-Laksar, District – Haridwar (Uttarakhand). Haridwar is one of the thirteen districts of Uttarakhand. District Haridwar has four Tehsils and Laksar is one of it. There are many primary schools which are recognised by Uttarakhand government. On the basis of salary given to teachers there are two types schools - government schools where salary is given by the state government of Uttarakhand and private schools where salary to the teachers is given by the management of the schools. The sample of the study is consisting of 100 primary school teachers of Tehsil – Laksar, District-Haridwar. Researcher has selected first of all twenty primary schools (ten government schools and ten private schools) purposively. Further, at schools’ level sample has been drawn by stratified random sampling technique. The 50% teachers are taken from government primary schools and 50% from private primary schools. The sample is further divided into 50% male teachers and 50% female teachers in each category.

**Tool Used**

To know the level of teachers’ occupational stress in primary school teachers of Tehsil-Laksar, Teachers’ Occupational Stress Scale developed by Dr. Sajid Jamal and Dr Abdul Raheem was administered. It is thirty items likert type scale based on five dimension (work load, students’ misbehavior, lack of professional recognition, lack of classroom resources and poor colleague relations). Although there is no time limit but the respondents are expected to complete it within 30 minutes. Half of the items are positively phrased and half are negatively phrased. The positive items (the items having the even serial numbers) will be scored as 5 to the ‘strongly agree’ 4 to the ‘agree’ 3 to the ‘undecided’ 2 to the ‘disagree’ and 1 to the ‘strongly disagree.’ The negative items (the items having the odd serial numbers) the scoring will be reversed, i.e, they will be scored as 1 to the ‘strongly agree’ 2 to the ‘agree’ 3 to the ‘undecided’ 4 to the ‘disagree’ and 5 to the ‘strongly disagree.’ The total score for the TOSS will be the scores on all the dimensions. The scores of the scale are to be interpreted like higher the score implies higher the level of occupational stress.
STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

To analyze the data and interpret the data, the investigator used the following statistical techniques:
1. Mean and Standard Deviation
2. t-test to compare groups

RESULT AND INTERPRETATION

Objective 1: To know the level of occupational stress among primary school teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Occupational Stress</th>
<th>No of Teachers</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly Stressed</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately Stressed</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low level of Stress</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is observed from table I that the number of highly stressed primary school teachers comes out to be 65. This shows that 65% of the Primary school teachers have found to be highly stressed. Thus, the null hypothesis no.1, “There is no significant level of occupational stress among the primary school teachers,” is rejected.

Objective 2: To compare the occupational stress of government and private primary school teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Numbers of teachers</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>‘t’-value</th>
<th>Level of significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private school teachers</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60.26</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government School teachers</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>44.64</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear from table II that t-value is 2.14 which is significant at 0.05 level. Thus the null hypothesis, “There is no significant difference in the level of occupational stress of government and private primary school teachers,” is rejected. This shows that there is a significant difference in the level of occupational stress of government and private primary school teachers. The private primary school teachers are found to have significantly more stresses than their government primary school teacher counterparts.

Objective 3: To compare the occupational stress of male and female primary school teachers
Table III Mean, SD and t-value of male and female primary school teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Numbers of teachers</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>‘t’-value</th>
<th>Level of significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male teachers</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>51.16</td>
<td>7.95</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female teachers</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>53.74</td>
<td>8.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear from table III that t-value is 0.12 which is not significant. Thus, the null hypothesis, “There is no significant difference in the level of occupational stress of male and female primary school teachers,” is accepted. This shows that there is no significant difference in the level of occupational stress of male and female primary school teachers.

**Objective 4:** To compare the occupational stress of male and female teachers of government primary schools

Table IV Mean, SD and t-value of government male and government female primary school teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Numbers of teachers</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>‘t’-value</th>
<th>Level of significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Govt. School Male</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>43.36</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govt. School Female</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>45.36</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear from table IV that t-value is 0.01 which is not significant. Thus, the null hypothesis 4, “There is no significant difference in the level of occupational stress of government male and government female primary school teachers,” is accepted. This shows that there is no significant difference in the level of occupational stress of government male and government female primary school teachers.

**Objective 5:** To compare the occupational stress of male and female teachers of private primary schools

Table V Mean, SD and t-value of private male and female primary school teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Numbers of teachers</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>‘t’-value</th>
<th>Level of significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private School Male</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>58.40</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private School Female</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>62.12</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear from table V that t-value is 1.3 which is not significant. Thus, the null hypothesis, “There is no significant difference in the level of occupational stress of private
male and private female primary school teachers,” is accepted. This shows that there is no significant difference in the level of occupational stress of private male and private female primary school teachers.

**Objective 6:** To compare the occupational stress of government and private primary school male teachers

Table VI Mean, SD and t-value of government and private primary school male teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Numbers of teachers</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>‘t’-value</th>
<th>Level of significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Govt. School Male teachers</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>43.49</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private School Male teachers</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear from table VI that t-value is 4.41 which is significant at 0.01 level. Thus, the null hypothesis, “There is no significant difference in the level of occupational stress of government school male and private school male primary school teachers,” is rejected. This shows that there is significant difference in the level of occupational stress of government school male and private school male primary school teachers. The private school male teachers have found to be significantly more stressed than their government school male teacher counterparts.

**Objective 7:** To compare the occupational stress of government and private primary school female teachers

Table VII Mean, SD and t-value of government and private primary school female teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Numbers of teachers</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>‘t’-value</th>
<th>Level of significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Govt. School Female teachers</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>45.36</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private School Female teachers</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>62.12</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear from table VII that t-value is 2.41 which is significant at 0.05 level. Thus, the null hypothesis, “There is no significant difference in the level of occupational stress of government school female and private school female primary school teachers,” is accepted. This shows that there is significant difference in the level of occupational stress. Similarly, here also, as in the case of private school male teachers, the private school female teachers have also found to be significantly highly stressed than their government school female counterparts.

**DISCUSSION**

From the results of the study it is clear that the primary school teachers as a whole are found to be highly stressed. This finding support the past research that the teaching profession has became one of the most stressful profession (Olivier & Venter, 2003).
The next finding of this study revealed that on the basis of type of school private school teachers face more stress than the government teachers this may be due to low salary and more burden of work in the private schools. This result is in line with the findings of John (2007) and Ravichandran & Rajendran (2007).

The next finding of this study revealed that there is no significant difference in the level of occupational stress of male and female primary school teachers. This result contradict with the findings of Aftab & Khatoon (2012), Anbuchelvan (2010), Chopra & Gartia (2009), Further from the result it is clear that no significant difference has been found in the level of occupational stress of government male and government female primary school teachers. This result contradict with the findings of Cooper & Kelly (1993), DeNobile & McCormick (2007), Okoza et al. (2010), Reddy (2011), and Yang et al. (2009).

Similarly, private school, male and female primary school teachers have been found to differ non-significantly in the level of occupational stress. The private school male teachers have found to be significantly more stressed than their government school male teacher counterparts. Similarly, here also, as in the case of private school male teachers, the private school female teachers have also found to be significantly highly stressed than their government school female counterparts.

REFERENCES


