

A STUDY OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG SCHOOL TEACHERS IN SELECTED AREAS OF NAVI MUMBAI

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to review the various aspects of stress associated with teachers. Being very prevalent in higher education sector, stress affects a lot over the teachers working in. In this study focus was on various factors that contribute to stress in schools by reviewing various studies conducted. The paper concludes that teachers suffer from various levels of stress and face a number of responsible factors for that.

Keywords: *Teacher's Stress, Occupational Stress, Schools Working Conditions.*

Introduction

Stress is often described as a feeling of being overloaded, tensed and worried. According to 'American Psychological Association', there are three types of stress – Acute, Episodic and Chronic. All of these triggers mentally or physically in one or the other way. Some people experiences mini- crisis regularly and live in a state of tension. Symptoms of most of the stress are similar but its extents and effects vary from person to person and surrounding environment.

In modern life, we can't take big, immediate actions to solve our problems, but small steps can build over time. People often use the word stress interchangeably with anxiety, feeling anxious, fearful, nervous, overwhelmed, or panic. Moreover, stress is felt when an individual perceives a real or imagined challenge or threat to their well-being. The harmful physical and emotional responses occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker.

Professional stress manifests in a varied fashion including burnout, depression, anxiety, anger, irritability and/or substance abuse. This in turn affects the personal, interpersonal and social wellbeing of an individual which are conceptually referred as quality of life. Coping with job, stress is difficult as it usually depends on a whole range of factors which may or may not be under an individual's control. "Goodell, wolf and Rogers" (1986) suggest that the involvement of medical science with work and health problems started with Hippocrates, as early as fifth century BC. A state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances.

Occupational Stress of Teachers

The educational sector is always a prime and one of the most efficient sectors contributing towards the society. It develops and grows the future. And so as the staff involved with this sector are playing indeed roles, specially the teachers. The experience of negative emotional states such as frustration, worry, anxiety and depression attributed to work related factors is defined as occupational stress (Kyriacou 2009). The negative workload, isolation, extensive hours worked, toxic work environments, lack of autonomy, difficult relationships among coworkers and management, management hours, no pressure of work and no technicalities and rigors of bureaucratic rules are the varied factors

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that contribute to workplace stress.(Dhar & Magotra, 2018). Occupational stress is the common occurrences among various professions worldwide and is regarded as a major psychological problem for them. Occupational stress results from the complex interactions between large systems of interrelated variables. Workload, working hours, technological problem at work, inadequate salary, time for family and job worries at home are the significant sources of stress in various sectors and their professionals.

Teachers and Stress

Winefield and Jarrett (2001) state that stress levels in academic institutions are high compared to many other professions and that stress has increased significantly over the last 15 years. School teachers' work in a constant socially isolated environments surrounded by threats of being accountable for each and every action of both own self and their students. From other professions point of view teaching seems to a job with summer vacations, winter vacations and spring breaks. But reality is complete different even though having these day offs there are many constraints and hard work schedules that a teacher goes through.

Causes of Teachers Stress

Mark Greenberg, a researcher on teacher stress, suggests that teachers feel pressure from three main sources: student behavioral problems, standardized testing and unstable school leadership. And some of other causes are:

- Student-teacher ratio and class size: which is rising everywhere
- Low pay
- Continuous changes in curriculum and courses
- Pressure due to inspections
- Excessive working hours and workload
- Risk of violence from parents, pupils and intruders
- Lack of support from bureaucracy, form filling and routine tasks
- Bullying at workplace
- Lack of job security and fixed term contracts
- Changes in assessment and testing requirements
- Poor working conditions

Handling Techniques for Occupational Stress

Researches revealed that 72% of education professionals describe themselves as stressed. Conflicts, anxiety, depressions, workload, excessive changes and personal life balance with work all leads to distress teachers. Some of the practical techniques may lead a helping hand to manage stress to some extent:

- Work out priorities
- Identify your stress situations
- Don't react to imagined insults
- Think before you commit
- Move on: don't dwell on past mistakes
- Don't bottle up anger and frustrations
- Set aside time each day for recreation and exercise
- Take your time
- Don't be an aggressive on the road
- Think positively
- Cut down on drinking, smoking, sedatives and stimulants

Sometimes work can be tough, but with proper management and support from environment it can be coped. Similarly teachers do expect a lot of support and a proper managerial life to handle the daily routine stress.

Objectives

- To understand the kind of stress faced by selected school teachers
- To study the perceived stress scores of teachers facing stress.
- To study the impact of various factors causing stress among the teachers.

Hypothesis

- **Hypothesis 1**

H₀: Teachers are not found facing any kind of stress in school.

H₁: Teachers are found facing stress in school.

- **Hypothesis 2**

H₀: There is not higher perceived stress score found among teachers facing stress.

H₁: There is higher perceived stress score found among teachers facing stress.

- **Hypothesis 3**

H₀: There is no significant relationship between various factors causing stress.

H₁: There is significant relationship between various factors causing stress.

Literature Review

Literature review is a survey made out of the scholarly articles written by other authors, books, journals articles and thesis on a particular topic. Lot of work have been done on the occupational stress of a teacher in a different dimension. Researchers have tried to find out the occupational stress among faculty members in different education institution and other originations where the results showed determinants are stressed.

Overview of the Study

Dhar & Magotra, (2018) examined in their study that a variety of factors contribute to workplace stress such as negative workload, isolation, extensive hours worked, toxic work environments, lack of autonomy, difficult relationships among coworkers and management, management hours, no pressure of work and no technicalities and rigors of bureaucratic rules.

Chaly PE, Anand SPJ, Reddy et. al, (2014) results showed, Out of 504 software professionals and 504 schoolteachers, for 23% of software professionals and 85% of schoolteachers, stress was Not a Problem in their life. 71% of software professionals and 15% of schoolteachers were in moderate Stress level. For 6% of software professional stress was a Problem in their life.

S.S. Jeyaraj, (2013) worked on government and Aided higher secondary school teachers, with the sample of 185 Aided school teachers and 120 Government Teachers. Result shows that teachers who reported greater stress were less satisfied with teaching, reported greater frequency of absences and a greater number of total days absent were more likely to leave teaching (career intention) and less likely to take up a teaching career again (career commitment).

Tahira Kahttoon, (Mariya Aftab, (2012) finding reveals that nearly half of the secondary school teachers experience less stress towards their job and males displays more occupational stress towards job than the females, moreover the trained graduate teachers are found to have higher occupational stress than post graduate and untrained teachers. Teachers with an experience of 610 years face occupational stress the most and 0-5 years the least.

Dr. Bhavin U Pandya et. al, (2012) stated that stress in academic institutions can have both positive and negative consequences if not well managed. Academic institutions have different work settings as compared to other institutions or companies and therefore, one would expect the difference in symptoms, causes, and consequences of stress in these two different setups. Stress seems to be very common in college student's life. They have to balance academic pressure and prepare themselves for a corporate job.

Dhrub Kumar and JM Deo, (2011) explored the different aspects of work life of college teachers in general and to find out difference in perception of male and female as well as junior and senior teachers with regard to their responses in particular. Findings revealed that junior college teachers experienced significantly more stress on most of the dimensions of stress in comparison to senior teachers. However, female teachers experienced more roles overload and inter-role distance stress as compared to their male counterparts.

Kinman and Court (2010) The researcher investigated the levels of job related stressors in a sample of 9740 academic employees at higher education institutions in the UK including job demands, control, social support, role clarity, interpersonal relationships and involvement in organizational change and found that maximum of them exceeded the safe benchmarks as stipulated by Health and Safety executives.

Limitations of the Study

- The study was based on primary data collected which is completely perceptive and subjective on individual's opinion.
- Due to the lack of availability of time, study covered limited region.
- Samples are selected on random basis.
- Questionnaire might have excluded some important factors therefore analysis and interpretation might be exhausted.

Research Design and Methodology

A descriptive and exploratory research design is used for the purpose of the study. An organized plan for conducting a research in both quantitative as well as qualitative way was implemented. There are various statistical tools which are used in the research are mentioned below:

- **Data Collection Method:** There are two major methods of data collection – primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected through structured questionnaire and survey. The source of secondary data was written and printed electronic sources collected through news journals, research articles, books, case study of organizations etc.
- **Sampling Design:** Its clear plan for attaining a sample in given size of population. Sampling design should be a representative sample, practical and available as taken in the study. From the target population, the samples were primary and secondary teachers from selected schools in Mumbai.
- **Sampling Size:** Sample size= 150
The required size of sample by is 150. The survey is conducted from the responses and considered for the data analysis further.
- **Sampling Design used for the Study:** The design of sampling used for study included various primary and secondary teachers of schools.
- **Tools for Data Analysis and Testing of Hypothesis:** This data analysis is done with different and descriptive statistical tests. The Perceived Stress Scale developed by Sheldon Cohen was used to measure perceived stress among teachers. The questions asked in Perceived Stress Scale were about feelings and thoughts during recent passed time duration in the school.

Questionnaire

- Name: _____
- Age: _____
- Gender: _____
- Designation: _____
- Number of class and subjects handling at present: _____
- How long you have been working here: _____
- Marital Status: _____

	Questions	Never (0)	Almost never(1)	Sometimes (2)	Fairly Often(3)	Very Often(4)
1)	How Often you feel upset because of something happened unexpectedly?					
2)	How Often you feel that you are unable to control important things at your work place?					
3)	How Often you feel nervous and stressed out?					
4)	How Often you feel confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?					
5)	How Often you feel that things are going your way?					
6)	How Often you feel that you can't cope up with the things that all you have to do?					
7)	How Often you feel that you are able to control irritations in your life?					
8)	How Often you have been angered because of the things that happened and were out of your control?					
9)	How Often you feel that you are on top of the things?					
10)	How Often you feel that difficulties in work place are troubling your physical and mental health?					

- How you rate your perceived level of stress: Tick only one

Perceived Stress Level	Your level
Much lower than Average	
Slightly lower than Average	
Average	
Slightly higher than Average	
Much higher than Average	

- Read and give the score according to your choice in the following perceived stress scales ranging 0-4.
- Which factor or factors from the following you feel are the reasons behind your occupational stress? Please tick()

1	Job Insecurity	
2	Harassment	
3	Lack of respect from seniors	
4	Racism	
5	Age discrimination	
6	Inadequate Pay	
7	Lack of promotional opportunities	
8	Working conditions and co-worker's cooperation	

Analysis of Results and Findings

- Distribution of age across the groups and total population ranges from 25-59 years.
- Majority of samples were found above 45 years of age.
- Perceived stress scores scale were found higher and associated with higher levels of stress too.
- It is noted that higher scores in PSS are associated with an increase in person's vulnerability to compromised health.
- Higher scores are associated with an increased susceptibility to stress induced illness.
- It is found that 18 employees have high perceived stress and prone to feel actual stress effects i.e. they can have diseases like diabetes, obesity, heart trouble, depression etc.
- 85 employees feel slightly higher stress than average which is not good for the organization as well.
- Most of the teachers mentioned that job insecurity, lack if payment and promotional opportunities are major reasons behind higher level of stress, as they were asked to opt more than one reasons if they feel responsible.

Tabulation of Data Calculated

Table 1: Perceived stress levels by Individuals.

Age Range (years)	Frequency	Percentage
25 – 35	32	21.33 %
36 - 45	50	33.33 %
46 - 60	68	45.33 %
	Total- 150	

Table 2: Perceived stress levels by Individuals.

Perceived Stress Level	Frequency	Percentage
Much lower than Average	1	0.66%
Slightly lower than Average	1	0.66%
Average	45	30%
Slightly higher than Average	85	57%
Much higher than Average	18	12%
	Total- 150	

Table 3: Responsible factors for occupational Stress

Factors Responsible for occupational stress	Frequency	Percentage
Job Insecurity	42	28%
Harassment	5	3.3%
Lack of respect from seniors	15	10%
Racism	2	1.33%
Age discrimination	30	20%
Inadequate Pay	68	45.33%
Lack of promotional opportunities	50	33.33%
Working conditions and co-worker's cooperation	32	21.33%

Table 4: Perceived stress levels Scores

Questions	Never (0)	Almost never (1)	Sometimes (2)	Fairly Often (3)	Very Often (4)	Total
How Often you feel upset because of something happened unexpectedly?	66	74	4	6	0	150
How Often you feel that you are unable to control important things at your work place?	33	72	38	7	0	150
How Often you feel nervous and stressed out?	25	79	37	6	3	150
How Often you feel confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	14	49	72	14	1	150
How Often you feel that things are going your way?	10	52	59	25	4	150
How Often you feel that you can't cope up with the things that all you have to do?	10	40	61	32	7	150
How Often you feel that you are able to control irritations in your life?	8	38	50	44	10	150
How Often you have been angered because of the things that happened and were out of your control?	4	40	53	48	5	150
How Often you feel that you are on top of the things?	2	40	47	49	12	150
How Often you feel that difficulties in work place are troubling your physical and mental health?	9	32	44	56	9	150

Suggestions

- Schools should give due attention to their staff.
- Schools can identify the factors which causes stress among teachers.
- Special counselling and personal interactions can help to distress the staff at better levels.
- Better conditions can be provided like working conditions, rotational job design, jib sharing, introduction of monthly rewards, annual bonus, new health policies, meditations etc. all can help.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that high perceived stress score of teachers is not good for the personal health as well as for the productivity of the organization. Stress was reported in professional distress among teachers which reflect more work and less rewards to them. It is found that few similarities in factors responsible for occupational stress in teaching environment leads to imperfections in their output as well as stuck the organizational growth too.

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