



OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG ELEMENTARY TEACHERS IN RELATION TO LOCUS OF CONTROL AND SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

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Abstract

In the modern era, it's teachers community who is most severely exposed to the public criticism and held responsible for not so well accomplishing the task of making the future of Nation by their diminishing sense of sincerity, dedication and responsibility towards their job. If there is any veracity in the above public notion, something must be deplorably wrong somewhere which led to the corrosion of values and respect of teacher, which he used to command in the past. This is an established fact that teacher has a vital role in making or marring the future/career of a student. Thus he is the dominating factor in furthering the national development. Since this study is restricted to the elementary school teachers, here the participation of teachers becomes more crucial as this stage is the base of a child on which the whole load stands. You may drop the superb infrastructure minus the competent teacher, you won't and you can't move an inch towards education. For the competency of a teacher, it is important to provide a conducive environment where he could attain the objective of improving child's growth, child's behavior, child's personality, child's education, its type and ways in all over the world but a very negligible thought has been given on the problems and hindrances confronted by a hapless teacher in the present set up. Now it is realized that yet we have not lost the time to ponder over the issues and come out with some concrete solution by which the teachers can be dragged out of this marsh of stress and strain so that they can enjoy complete job-satisfaction and in return deliver the superb goods. This is in favour of the health of our society and qualitative and quantitative progress of our Nation. If the things are set right, in favour of elementary school teachers who are the worst sufferers, they can contribute to the nation's progress.



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Introduction

Stress, in, general, and occupational stress in particular, is a fact of modern life that seems to have been on the increase. Hans Selye first introduced the concept of stress into the life science in 1936. He defined stress as "The force, pressure, or strain exerted upon a material

object or person which resist these forces and attempts to maintain its original state."

According to Hammond & Onikama, (1997) "In educational sector, stress is increasing day by day because teaching today's young people is not only arduous work, but can be dangerously stressful. Anxiety due to school reform efforts, minimal administrative support, poor working circumstances, lack of involvement in school decision making, encumbrance paperwork, and lack of resources have been identified as factors that can cause stress among educators." The No **Child Left** behind **Act (NCLB)** and its sub sequential mandated standardized assessments reported "Family responsibilities, continuing education, low salaries, and poor working conditions can create stress". Singla (2006) during her study "A study of the occupational stress among employees from different careers of Chandigarh" revealed that physicians, surgeons and educators are highly stressed as compared to the employees from other professions because they face new challenges every day. It also revealed that females are more stressed as compared to their male counterparts. A certain amount of stress in education is predictable, even constructive but when it crosses the threshold point it can prove to be detrimental. The exhilaration and challenges of educating children can physically cause adrenaline levels associated with stress to increase.

Dimensions of occupational stress

According to Osipow (1998) there are six major dimensions of occupational stress. These dimensions are as:-

- **Role overload** "measures the extent to which job demands exceed resources (personal and workplace) and the extent to which the individual is able to accomplish workloads."
- **Role insufficiency** "measures the extent to which the individual's training, education, skills, and experience are appropriate to job requirements."
- **Role ambiguity** "measures the extent to which priorities, expectations, and evaluation criteria are clear to the individual."
- **Role boundary** "measures the extent to which the individual is experiencing conflicting role demands and loyalties in the work setting."
- **Responsibility** "measures the extent to which the individual has, or feels, a great deal of responsibility for the performance and welfare of others on the job."
- **Physical environment** "measures the extent to which the individual is exposed to high levels of environmental toxins or extreme physical conditions."

Occupational Stress is stress related to work. Stress is defined in terms of its "physical

and physiological effects on an individual, and can be a mental, physical or emotional strain. It can also be a tension or a situation or factor that can cause stress.” Occupational stress occurs when “there is a discrepancy between the demands of the environment/ workplace and an individual's capability to carry out and complete these demands.” Often a stressor can lead the body to have a physiological reaction which can strain a person physically as well as mentally. One of the main causes of occupational stress is work overload.

Causes

It has been observed that increasing workload, non-friendly environment of workplace and incompatible colleagues can precipitate occupational stress. Most of the time workload remains enormous even though employees try their level best to complete it and consequently they experience stress. Rising demands and time bound assignments also lead to stress. Privatization in education and industries sometimes promotes reducing of the manpower. When this takes place the remaining employees have a fear of being fired or lose their jobs. On one hand, they remain apprehensive and insecure about their jobs. On the other, they have to share the extra workload which was being covered by their outgoing colleagues. This aggravates the level of stress among persons who are still on the job. Sometimes conflicts among colleagues and underutilized abilities can also trigger occupational stress.

Effects

Physical manifestations that may be the outcome of occupational stress include tiredness, annoyance, stomach problems, muscular aches and pains, unending mild sickness, sleep disorder and consumption turmoil. Psychosomatic disorders that may gradually come along occupational stress include nervousness, bad temper, alcohol and drug use, feeling feeble and low confidence. If a person is exposed to these stressors for a long time, he can be a victim to health problems that are chronic in nature. Occupational stress among teachers is a major culprit which may lead to burn out. Studies among the Japanese population specifically revealed a more than 2-fold increase in the risk of total stroke among men with job stress (combination with high job demand and low job control). Stress in general may lead to hypertension, diabetes and immune system dysfunction which may act as a harbinger of multiple chronic problems.

Stress Models

There are two work stress models namely: Demand Control Model and Effort Reward Imbalance Model. These two models assist to figure out specific job characteristics required for employee well-being. The Demand Control Model indicates that physical and mental problems occur when job expectations or requisition is high and the ability to take resolution is low. On the other hand, Effort Reward Imbalance Model claims that psychosomatic problems increase when there is perceptible imbalance between efforts and occupational rewards.

Objectives Of The Study

- 1 To find out the relationship between locus of control and occupational stress among elementary teachers.
- 2 To compare occupational stress of elementary teachers having internal and external locus of control.
- 3 To compare occupational stress of male and female elementary teachers.
- 4 To compare occupational stress of urban and rural elementary teachers.
- 5 To compare occupational stress of married and unmarried elementary teachers.

Hypotheses Of The Study

- 1 No significant relationship exists between Locus of Control and Occupational Stress among Elementary teachers.
- 2 Elementary teachers having internal and external locus of control do not differ significantly on occupational stress
- 3 Male and Female Elementary Teachers do not differ significantly on Occupational Stress.
- 4 Urban and rural Elementary Teachers do not differ significantly on Occupational Stress.
- 5 Married and Unmarried Elementary Teachers do not differ significantly on Occupational Stress.

Research Methodology

In the present research, considering all the above-discussed facts, the investigator selected the descriptive research method which is intended to acquire relevant and specific information regarding the present status of phenomena and to decide the sufficiency of the position of comparing it with well-known standards. The major objective of the study was to find out the occupational stress among elementary teachers in relation to their locus of control and some socio demographic variables, so survey type descriptive research method was justified and

hence used.

Sample

Initially a sample of 300 elementary teachers was selected but due to sample mortality the investigator was left with a sample of 274 elementary teachers. To obtain sample for the present study Haryana was divided into four zones. From each zone one district was selected randomly. A list of schools in each district was obtained from District Education Office. From these four districts the schools too were selected randomly from the list so obtained following lottery system taking 10 schools from each district which comprised 5 rural and 5 urban schools from the concerned districts. All available elementary teachers from a particular school were included in the sample.

Tools Used

- (i) **The Occupational Stress Index** by Srivastava and Singh (1983)
- (ii) **Locus of Control Scale** by Rotter (1966)

Statistical Techniques Used

Mean, S.D., t-test and coefficient of correlation were used for analysis of the data.

Table 1 Relationship of locus of control and occupational stress among elementary teachers.

Locus of Control and Occupational Stress	Pearson Correlation	.078
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.200
	N	274

The result ($r=.078$, $p=.200$) shows no significant correlation between Locus of Control and Occupational Stress. It indicates that locus of control and occupational stress are not significantly correlated to each other. Therefore, formulated null hypothesis which states that “No significant relationship exists between Locus of Control and Occupational Stress among Elementary teachers” stands accepted.

Table 2 Comparison of elementary teachers having internal and external locus of control on Occupational Stress.

	Locus of Control	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Occupational Stress	Internal	123	127.48	10.584	.954	1.283	.200
	External	151	129.11	10.387	.845		

The t-test result ($t=1.283$, $p=.200$) shows no significant difference between the two groups of elementary teachers having internal (Mean-127.48) and external (Mean-129.11) locus of control on occupational stress. It indicates that elementary teachers having internal

and external locus of control do not differ significantly on occupational stress. Therefore, formulated null hypothesis which states that “Elementary teachers having internal and external locus of control do not differ significantly on occupational stress” stands accepted.

Table 3 Comparison of male and female elementary teachers on Occupational Stress.

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Occupational Stress	Male	161	131.14	10.514	.829	5.461	.000
	Female	113	124.45	9.150	.861		

The t-test result (t=5.461, p=.000) shows a significant difference between the scores of male and female elementary teachers on Occupational stress. Therefore, formulated null hypothesis which states that “Male and Female Elementary Teachers do not differ significantly on Occupational Stress” stands rejected. It can be reframed that male and female elementary teachers differ significantly on Occupational Stress. Further, it is evident from the table that scores of male elementary teachers (Mean=131.14, SD=10.514) are greater than those of female teachers (Mean=124.45, SD=9.150). A Perusal of mean scores of two groups makes it clear that male elementary teachers have higher level of occupational stress as compared to their female counterparts.

Table 4 Comparison of urban and rural elementary teachers on Occupational Stress.

	Location	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Occupational Stress	Urban	115	125.34	11.791	1.100	4.204	.000
	Rural	159	130.58	8.841	.701		

The t-test result (t=4.204, p=.000) shows a significant difference between the scores of elementary teachers working in urban and rural areas on Occupational stress. Therefore, formulated null hypothesis which states that, “Urban and rural Elementary Teachers do not differ significantly on Occupational Stress” stands rejected. It can be reframed that urban and rural elementary teachers differ significantly on Occupational Stress. Further, it is evident from the table that scores of urban elementary teachers (Mean=125.34, SD=11.791) are smaller than those of rural teachers (Mean=130.58, SD=8.841). A Perusal of mean scores of two groups makes it clear that elementary teachers working in rural areas have higher level of occupational stress as compared to teachers working in urban areas. Therefore, it may be concluded that elementary teachers working in rural areas have been found to possess higher occupational stress than elementary teachers working in urban areas.

Table 5 Comparison of married and unmarried elementary teachers on Occupational Stress.

	Marital Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Occupational stress	Married	238	128.68	10.248	.664	1.223	.222
	Unmarried	36	126.39	11.927	1.988		

The t-test result (t=1.223, p=.222) shows no significant difference between the scores of married and unmarried elementary teachers on Occupational stress. Therefore, formulated null hypothesis which states that “Married and Unmarried Elementary Teachers do not differ significantly on Occupational stress” stands accepted. Although there exists difference between the scores of Married (Mean=128.68, SD=10.248) and Unmarried (Mean=126.39, SD=11.927) elementary teachers but this difference is not significant. It may be concluded that married and unmarried elementary teachers do not differ significantly on Occupational stress.

Findings :

1. It was found that there is no significant correlation between Locus of Control and Occupational Stress among elementary teachers.
2. It was found that elementary teachers having internal and external locus of control do not differ significantly on occupational stress.
3. It was found that Male and Female Elementary Teachers differ significantly on Occupational Stress. Further, it was found that mean scores of male elementary teachers was greater than female teachers indicating that male elementary teachers have higher level of occupational stress as compared to their female counterparts.
4. It was found that elementary teachers working in urban and rural areas differ significantly on Occupational Stress. Further, it was found that mean scores of urban elementary teachers are smaller than rural teachers indicating that elementary teachers working in rural areas have higher level of occupational stress as compared to teachers working in urban areas.
5. It was found that married and unmarried elementary teachers do not differ significantly on Occupational stress.

Discussion Of Results

- ❖ The finding of the present investigation that male and female elementary teachers differ significantly on occupational stress is in consonance with the finding of **Young, Ing Thung (1999)** who concluded that there were significant differences in occupational stress of male and female subjects. The finding is also supported by the finding of **Misra et al. (2008)** who examined the educational stress among male and female subjects and revealed that stress varied by gender. **Mark G.Boag (1991)** conducted a study on teacher stress with other variables and revealed that some of the demographic characteristics of the sample were related to self reported teacher stress. The finding is also similar to the finding of **Rajendra Kaur (2002)** who concluded her study with the finding that male and female teachers differ significantly on occupational stress. In the present study when male and female elementary teachers were compared on Role conflict as a dimension of occupational stress it was observed that female elementary teachers were found to possess higher level of occupational stress in terms of Role conflict. This finding is supported by the finding of **Singla (2006)** who in her study revealed that females are more stressed as compared to their male counterparts due to role conflict.
- ❖ However the finding that married and unmarried elementary teachers do not differ significantly on occupational stress deviates from the findings of **Young, Ing thung (1999)** who reported that there were significant difference in occupational stress by marital status and **Neena Poloski Vokie (2007)** who concluded that there is an association between marital status and occupational stress.

Educational Implications Of The Study

- ❖ The findings of the present study reveal that elementary teachers working in rural areas have higher level of occupational stress as compared to their urban counterparts. May be that the schools situated in rural area do not have up to the mark infrastructural and instructional facilities along with other support system. Rural schools may not be providing conducive environmental for effective teaching and learning process. The Govt. should take initiative in this direction and all necessary facilities in terms of students' friendly building, well equipped library, Labs, well lighted and airy class rooms, separate toilets for male and female (staff and students)

playground etc. should be provided in the rural schools so that rural postings may not trigger stress among elementary teachers.

- ❖ Government has been kind enough to plan and implement various women friendly policies. Educational policies should be framed in order to reduce stress among teachers particularly male teachers. There should be time to time promotional activities, rewards and recognitions for teachers. Some advance psychology courses or counselling courses or work alternatives such as job rotation, job enrichment or continuing education should be provided to teachers.
- ❖ The school authorities should try to have open interaction with teachers and allow more opportunities for communication among members of the staff by organising informal social gatherings and various kinds of extracurricular activities to promote mutual understanding. The principal should act like a friend and guide and not as “**a sage on the stage**”.
- ❖ Specific stressors within work environment should be identified. Proper consideration should be given for allocation of duties, funding, facilities and shortage of staff.
- ❖ Professional support networks should be implemented to overcome occupational stress. Recreational activities should be there for washing off stress. Teachers’ organizations like teachers’ club and meetings can help in making them aware of new developments. These organizations should hold seminars and organize workshops which may help the teachers to cope with work stress. All teachers should be encouraged to participate in these programmes.

The incidence of stress is a challenge thrown by the complex life of modern times. The havoc of this problem has spread in different institutions of learning and remedial measures need to be taken. It is urgently required to arrest such trends by authorities otherwise such trends will weaken the foundation of our national life. What service can India expect from its future citizens who are not guided properly by their teachers when they remain under the grip of frustration and consequently under stress and strain. It means in any educational setting, the teachers need to be kept satisfied in their job by channelizing their energies in a manner which keeps the ego up and mental health sound. The well being of the teacher is an asset for the development of the Nation as the teacher has to play a very important role in moulding and shaping the personality of the students physically, mentally, emotionally and socially, he himself too needs to have a compact equilibrium of his psycho-

physical domains only then a teacher can continue to be a leader of his pupils and architect of the Nation.

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