



A STUDY OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOL TEACHERS

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Abstract

The present investigation was aimed to study the level of occupational stress among special education school teachers in relation to their gender. Here, a sample of 120 special education school teachers (60 males and 60 females) was selected from 15 special schools of Delhi, Haryana and Rajasthan states through simple random, purposive, convenience and cluster sampling methods. The survey questionnaire Occupational Stress Index developed and standardised by Dr. A.K. Shrivastava and Dr. A. P. Singh (1981) was used for measuring levels of occupational stress among special education school teachers. Percentage analysis, t-test were employed for data analysis. A higher percentage of special education school teachers were found to be experiencing moderate to high level of occupational stress. The dimensions which causes occupational stress are role conflict and ambiguity, powerlessness, low autonomy, low participation in decision making, little colleague social support, high professional expectations, less security, facilities, nature of job, prestige, intellectual stimulation, advancement and emolument and contingent punishment by the administrator. Besides, perceived level of occupational was also found to be related to gender of special education school teachers. A significant difference in mean OSI scores of male and female special education school teachers ($t=2.45$ which is significant at 0.05 level of significance) was found. The higher value of mean OSI scores (i.e. 126.54) of male special education school teachers than the value of mean OSI scores (i.e. 116.72) of female special education school teachers indicated that the male special education school teachers perceives high level of occupational stress at their workplace in comparison with the female special education school teachers. Thus, authority of the institutions, state managing body and personnel engaged with the administration of the special education institutions are advised to give due consideration to the above factors while planning about educational management. If the national desire for higher quality of education is to be brought in reality, there must emerge, a national concern for and commitment to a higher quality of the educational environment of the special education school teachers.

Key Terms: Occupational Stress, Gender, Special Education School Teachers



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Introduction

Teaching as a profession is a demanding job that requires highly intellectual activities however, there are various intellectual symptoms of stress that can affect people in the profession, these includes memory problem, confusion, poor judgment, lack of concentration, while the emotional symptoms can be anger, irritation, moody, and depression, all of these

can have negative adverse effects on the teachers' functionality (**Morgan & Kitching, 2007; Hemlata, 2012; Antoniou, A.S. (2012).**

Teachers' stress can be expressed as the experience by a teacher of unpleasant negative emotions such as anger, frustration, anxiety, depression and nervousness, resulting from some aspects of their work (**Kyriacou 2004**). Since the early 1970s, the magnitude of research on teacher stress has increased steadily, and it is now a major topic of research in many countries (**Kyriacou 2004; Troman & Woods 2001; Vandenberghe & Huberman 1999**). However, very few studies reported to date have explored occupational stress in the teachers who are especially engaged with teaching of children with special needs in different special education institutions i.e. the special education school teachers. The special education school teachers are also supposed to go through a number of problems just like the other professionals **Ghani M.Z., (2014)**. They also have to face the problems more or less similar to the teacher educators or can say in a more complicated way that may lead to the reduction in their level of mental health or their effectiveness too **Sukhdev (2011)**.

Thus, it becomes the need of the hour to lay due emphasis perceived level of occupational stress among special education school teachers. It is of quiet significance to identify various factors affecting teachers' performance, recognize their impact and to find the means improving the performance of the special education school teachers.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the level of occupational stress among special education school teachers
2. To compare the level of occupational stress among male and female special education school teachers

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There exists no significant difference in the level of occupational stress among male and female special education school teachers

Research Methodology

In the execution of the present study, descriptive survey method has been employed.

Population and Sample

In the present investigation, the population constitutes all the teachers working special education schools meant for serving the children with all kind of special needs i.e. children belonging to one or more kind of disability. For the execution of present investigation, a sample of 120 special education school teachers (60 males and 60 females) was drawn from

15 special schools of Delhi, Haryana and Rajasthan states through simple random, purposive, convenience and cluster sampling methods.

Research Tool

For the present investigation, the investigator adopted Occupational Stress Index developed and standardised by **Dr. A.K. Srivastava and Dr. A.P. Singh (1981)**.

Statistical Techniques

In this investigation, the data was analysed through percentage analysis and t-test.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

The data has been analyzed into following sections each corresponding to the objectives of the study.

Section 1: To Study the Level of Occupational Stress among Special Education School Teachers

For this, the scores obtained by them on occupational stress index were compared to the arbitrarily fixed norms given in the manual of Occupational Stress Index.

Table 1 Level of Occupational Stress among Special Education School Teachers

Referenced O.S.I. Score	No. of Respondents	%age of Respondents	Level of Occupational Stress
160 or above	19	15.83	High Level of Stress
99-159	71	59.17	Moderate Level of Stress
Below 99	30	25.00	Low Level of Stress

N=120

As is evident from the table 1, most of the special education school teachers (a total of 75.00%) perceive either moderate to high level of occupational stress. The percentage of such special education school teachers is 59.17% and 15.83% respectively. Comparatively a little percentage of special education school teachers perceives low level of occupational stress. The percentage of such special education school teachers is 25.00%.

Section 2: To Compare the Level of Occupational Stress among Male and Female Special Education School Teachers

In order to compare the perceived level of occupational stress by the male and female special education school teachers, their mean scores on occupational stress index were subjected to t-test. The value of t-ratio between the mean OSI scores obtained by these two groups of special education school teachers is given in the table 2 below-

**Table 2 Significance of Difference between Mean OSI Scores of Male and Female
Special Education School Teachers**

Group	N	Mean	SD	t- ratio	Significance
Male Special Education School Teachers	60	126.54	12.27		Significant at 0.05 Level
Female Special Education School Teachers	60	116.72	9.43	2.45	

N=120

The table 2 shows that the value of t-ratio between mean OSI scores of male and female special education school teachers comes out to be 2.45 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance.

This clearly meant that there exists a significant difference between the mean OSI scores of male and female special education school teachers. Further, the higher value of mean OSI scores (i.e. 126.54) of male special education school teachers than the value of mean OSI scores (i.e. 116.72) of female special education school teachers indicates that the male special education school teachers perceives high level of occupational stress at their workplace in comparison with the female special education school teachers.

Recommendations of the Study

The present investigation was carried out to study the level of occupational stress as a potential factor influencing the mental health and level of effectiveness among special education school teachers. Thus, it keeps its implication for all those who are engaged with the managerial and administrative aspects of all special residential, special day boarding, or special day schools or other special education institutions.

In the present study it was found that most of the special education school teachers experience moderate to high level of occupational stress. The dimensions which causes occupational stress are role conflict and ambiguity, powerlessness, low autonomy, low participation in decision making, little colleague social support, high professional expectations, less security, facilities, nature of job, prestige, intellectual stimulation, advancement and emolument and contingent punishment by the administrator.

It has also been found in the present investigation that the male special education school teachers in the special schools experience high level of occupational stress in comparison

with the female special education school teachers. The chief cause of this stress may be high level job insecurity, poor salary structure, heavy workload, unequal distribution of the work, indifferent attitude of the managing personnel towards their male teachers. All these contributed to the high level of occupational stress among the male school teachers. Thus the managing personnel and the administrators in the special education institutions should consider the reduction in these very factors as their prime responsibility so as to reduce the level of occupational stress among their male special education teachers.

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