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TRENDS OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG PRINCIPALS: A STUDY

Ujjwala Sadaphal, Ph. D.

Assistant Professor, Swavalambi College of Education, Wardha

Email: ujjwala.sadaphal@gmail.com

Abstract

The role of the principal continues to expand and change with rapidly changing higher educational scenario thus they can be prone to occupational stress. Paper aims to study the level of occupational stress among the principals across faculties. For this normative survey method is used and the area covered is Maharashtra state in India. The sample of 245 college principals from different faculties is collected randomly using Occupational Stress Index by A. K. Srivastava and A. P. Singh. Data are analyzed using statistical measures. The results showed that the principals of law faculty exhibit more occupational stress whereas the principals of pharmacy faculty indicated lessor level of occupational stress. The stressors identified are role over – load, role conflict, group and political pressures, under participation, poor peer relations, strenuous working conditions and intrinsic impoverishment.

Key Words: *Occupational Stress and College Principals*

Introduction

Principals of colleges play a critical role in determining the quality of higher education. The overall functioning of a higher education institution is dependent on principal's leadership role. His role is critical in effective resource management. The multifaceted job of the college principal tests his coping abilities and puts him under stress. Stress adversely affects his capacity to perform at the best level. It also affects the overall wellbeing of an individual consequently affecting health of an organization. Adebola and Mukhtari (2008) have noted the sources of stress as occupational, domestic and economic. It is widely recognized fact that work – related stress is a major challenge to be faced in 21st century. This issue needs to be addressed urgently for improving occupational health and safety of employees. Occupational stress is a term used to define stress related to workplace. Occupational stress occurs when there is a discrepancy between the demands of the work and individual's ability to carry out and complete these demands (Mahmood, Nudrat and Zahoor, 2013). APA Dictionary of Psychology defines occupational stress as a physiological and psychological response to events or conditions in the workplace that is detrimental to health and well-being.

The symptoms of stress are physical and mental. Antoniou (2006) has identified physical symptoms of stress as loss of appetite, indigestion, fatigue, insomnia, increased eating, smoking etc. Further Antoniou (2006) noted that diseases due to occupational stress are hypertension, heart attack, migraine headaches, allergies, high blood pressure etc. Kedjidjian (1995) has reported that stress leads to absenteeism, dissatisfaction, reduced productivity and low morale. Occupational stress can have many detrimental effects on individual as well as on functioning of organization.

The role of the principal continues to expand and change with rapidly changing higher educational scenario. Principals of the higher education institutions find themselves engrossed in many conflicting situations. This may be due to rapidly changing world causing manifold challenges. Higher education institutions face challenges of enrollment, quality output, maintaining cordial relationships with its stakeholders and achieving the institutional objectives. It can naturally lead to occupational stress for principals. If the level of stress exceeds to a point which may hinder normal functioning it is certainly a cause of concern as it will adversely affect the quality of the institution. Singla (2006) conducted a study of the occupational stress among the employees from different careers of Chandigarh, concludes that physicians, surgeons and educators are highly stressed as compared to the employees from other professions because they face new challenges every day. Uma Maheswari G. (2018) investigated occupational stress amongst faculty members in select engineering colleges in Nellore District Andhra Pradesh India. It revealed that about 80.57% of faculty members experienced moderate level of occupational stress. The researcher has observed that many head of the institutions complain of moodiness, agitation, general unhappiness and constant worrying. As these are some of the symptoms of stress, the researcher opined that these may be due to occupational stress.

Educational challenges and opportunities have increased over the period of time. There are numerous stressors causing stress in every field of life. Occupational stress is steadily increasing due to competition and complexities of modern life. Principals can be prone to stress as they play multiple roles, they are responsible for functioning and are answerable to the stakeholders. The study of Darmody and Smyth (2016) indicated that a significant number of primary school principals in Ireland feel stressed about their job. Romney (2012) noted that the Task – based stressors gave school principals in Texas more stress, while boundary – spanning stressors caused them the least amount of stress. Anyanwu, Ezenwaji,

Okenjom, Enyi (2015) studied the sources and symptoms of occupational stress among principals of secondary schools which showed that poor working environment, pressure from teachers etc. affect the performance of principals and persistent head ache, regular body pain and hypertension are principals' symptoms of stress.

The review of related literature has clearly pointed the prevalence of occupational stress in education sector. There are some studies regarding occupational stress among the population of school teachers, college teachers, teacher educators and school principals at national and international level but study of occupational stress among college principals are rare. So it is imperative to study level of occupational stress among college principals. The study of the occupational stress among principals of the under graduation colleges from different faculties will help in identifying faculties with maximum stress and also in formulating suitable policies for reducing occupational stress.

Objectives:

1) To study the level of occupational stress among the principals.
2) To compare the level of occupational stress among the principals based on faculties

Hypothesis:

1) There is no significant faculty wise difference in the level of occupational stress among the principals.

Limitations and Delimitations:

The study is limited to the sample of 245 principals of Arts, Science, Commerce, Pharmacy, law and Education colleges at under graduation levels. The geographical area is limited to Maharashtra state of India. The variable Occupational stress and faculty wise differences are only considered.

Methodology:

The study uses normative survey method and the geographical area covered is Maharashtra state in India. The principals of colleges from the region constitute the population for the study. Random sampling method is used to collect the sample and total 245 college principals at undergraduate level from Arts, Science, Commerce, Pharmacy, Law and Education constitute the sample. Occupational Stress Index by A. K. Srivastava and A. P. Singh is used to collect the data. It purports to measure the extent of stress which employee's perceive arising from various constituent and conditions of their job. The scale consists of 46 highly discriminating items, each to be rated on the five – point scale. Out of 46 items 28 are 'true –

keyed' and rest 18 are 'false – keyed'. The items are related to role over – load, role ambiguity, role conflict, group and political pressures, responsibility for persons, under participation, powerlessness, poor peer relations, intrinsic impoverishment, low status, strenuous working conditions and unprofitability. Data so collected are further interpreted using test norms. Tabulated Data are subjected to statistical treatment. Statistical measures like mean, standard deviation One way ANOVA and t – test are used to test the hypothesis. Conclusions are then drawn based on analysis.

Results and Discussions:

1) The level of Occupational Stress among the principals

Table No.1: Level of Occupational Stress among principals

Faculty	No. of Principals	Occupational Stress					
		High	%	Moderate	%	Low	%
Arts	59	29	49.15	27	45.76	3	5.08
Science	56	12	21.43	39	69.64	5	8.93
Commerce	46	10	21.74	34	73.91	2	4.35
Pharmacy	16	1	6.25	2	12.5	13	81.25
Law	12	8	66.67	4	33.33	0	0
Education	56	8	14.29	33	58.93	15	26.78
Total sample	245	68	27.75	138	56.32	39	15.91

Table no. 1 shows the Level of Occupational Stress among principals. Out of 245 Principals 68 (27.75%) have high Occupational Stress 138 (56.32%) have Moderate Occupational Stress and 39 (15.91%) have low Occupational Stress. Occupational Stress level among principals of different faculties are also shown in the table. Out of 59 principals of art faculty 29 (49.15%) have high 27 (45.76%) have moderate and 3 (5.08%) have low Occupational Stress. From 56 principals of Science faculty 12 (21.43%) have high 39 (69.64%) have moderate and 5 (8.93%) have low Occupational Stress. Out of 46 principals of commerce faculty 10 (21.74%) have high 34 (73.91%) have moderate and 2(4.35%) have low Occupational Stress. From total 16 principals of pharmacy faculty 1 (6.25%) has high 2 (12.5%) have moderate and 13 (81.25%) have low Occupational Stress. Out of 12 principals of law faculty 8 (66.66%) have high 4 (33.33%) have moderate and none have low Occupational Stress. From the 56 principals of education faculty 8 (14.29%) have high 33(58.93%) have moderate and 15(26.78%) have low Occupational Stress

Table no. 2 shows the number of principals higher on each sub – scales of Occupational Stress Index Scale. For arts faculty principals the higher level of occupational stress is observed on the sub- scale role over – load 49 (83.05%) principals, 48 (81.36%) principals higher on both sub - scale role conflict and group and political pressures, 41 (69.49%) for responsibility for persons, 40 (67.80%) principal on poor peer relations and 38 (64.41%) principals higher on both sub - scales intrinsic impoverishment and low status.

Table No. 2: Number of Principals higher on each sub – scales of Occupational Stress Index Scale

Sr. No	Sub – Scales	Arts	Science	Commerce	Pharmacy	Law	Education
1	Role over – load	49	42	29	9	7	35
2	Role ambiguity	--	--	--	--	--	--
3	Role conflict	48	35	--	--	8	14
4	Unreasonable group & political pressures	48	42	26	8	7	30
5	Responsibility for persons	41	--	--	--	7	8
6	Under participation	--	22	13	--	--	6
7	Powerlessness	--	--	--	--	6	10
8	Poor peer relations	40	26	25	10	7	37
9	Intrinsic impoverishment	38	15	23	--	--	--
10	Low status	38	--	--	--	--	9
11	Strenuous working conditions	--	26	--	3	6	15
12	Unprofitability	--	--	--	3	5	9

Table no. 2 shows In case of Science faculty, higher level of occupational stress among 42 (75%) principals is observed on both sub – scales role over – load and group and political pressures, 35(62.5%) principals on role conflict, 22 (39.29%) principals on under participation, 26 (46.43%) principals on both poor peer relations and strenuous working conditions and 15 (26.79%) principals on Intrinsic impoverishment.

For the commerce faculty principals, the occupational stress is found to be higher for sub – scales viz. 29(63.04%) principals on role over – load, 26(56.52%) principals on group and political pressures, 13(28.26%) principals on under participation, 25(54.35%) principals on poor peer relations and 23(50%) principals on Intrinsic impoverishment.

The pharmacy faculty principals are found to be higher in occupational stress on sub –scales. 9 (56.25%) principals are higher on role over – load, 8(50%) on group and political pressures, 10 (62.5%) on poor peer relations, 3 (18.75%) on both sub – scales strenuous working conditions and unprofitability.

In case of principals of law faculty, the higher level of occupational stress on sub – scales 7(58.33%) principals on role over – load, group and political pressures, responsibility for persons and poor peer relations. 8(66.67%) principals on role conflict, 6 (50%) principals on both Powerlessness and strenuous working conditions sub - scale and 5 (41.67%) Principals are found to be higher on unprofitability.

The education faculty principals are higher on occupational stress sub – scales like 35 (62.5%) principals on role over – load, 14 (25%) on role conflict, 30 (53.57%) on group and political pressures, 8 (14.29%) on responsibility for persons, 6 (10.71%) on under participation, 10 (17.86%) on Powerlessness, 37 (66.07%) on poor peer relations, 9 (16.07%) on both low status and unprofitability sub – scale and 15 (26.79%) on strenuous working conditions.

2) Comparing the level of Occupational Stress among the principals across faculties

Table No. 3: Statistical properties of Occupational Stress among principals of different faculties.

Sr. No.	Faculty	N	Mean	S. D.	F - value
1	Arts	59	154.25	18.25	32.8**
2	Science	56	142.91	14.23	
3	Commerce	46	140.48	14.84	
4	Pharmacy	16	113.75	14.15	
5	Law	12	166.58	15.31	
6	Education	56	126.32	17.29	

**significant at 0.05 and 0.01 level

Table No. 3 shows Mean, S. D. and N for occupational stress of principals of Arts, Science, Commerce, Pharmacy, Law and Education faculties. The obtained F – value is greater than the value to be significant at .05 and .01 level, and hence significant. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that the means of our faculties do in fact differ significantly.

To find out the significance of mean differences among principals of different faculties further, t – test is applied and results were obtained. It showed significant faculty wise difference.

Table No. 4: Comparison of Occupational Stress among Principals of Arts faculty and other faculties.

Occupational Stress level	**Occupational Stress level**	
Arts Faculty	Other faculties	't – value'
Principals of Arts compared with	Principals of Science	3.72**
	Principals of Commerce	4.26**
	Principals of Pharmacy	9.51**
	Principals of Law	2.456*
	Principals of Education	8.41**

* Significant at 0.05 level ** Significant at 0.01 level

Table no. 4 shows that the mean difference is in favor of Principals of Arts faculty when compared with the principals of science, commerce, pharmacy and education faculty and the obtained 't - value' is significant at .01 level. And for mean difference in favor of Principals of Law faculty when compared to the principals of Arts faculty 't' – value is significant at .05 level.

Table No. 5: Comparison of Occupational Stress among Principals of Science faculty and other faculties

Occupational Stress level	**Occupational Stress level**	
Science Faculty	Other faculties	't – value'
Principals of Science compared with	Principals of Commerce	0.838##
	Principals of Pharmacy	7.25**
	Principals of Law	4.92**
	Principals of Education	5.66**

** Significant at 0.01 level ##Not Significant at 0.05 level or 0.01 level

Table no. 5 indicate the mean difference in favor of Principals of Science faculty when compared with the principals of Commerce faculty, 't' – value is not significant at both 0.05 and 0.01 level. Whereas the mean difference in favor of Principals of Science faculty when compared with the principals of Pharmacy and Education faculties 't' – value is significant at .01 level. The mean difference in favor of principals of Law faculty when compared with science faculty principals 't' – value is significant at .01 level.

Table No. 6: Comparison of Occupational Stress among Principals of Commerce faculty and other faculties

Occupational Stress level	**Occupational Stress level**	
Commerce Faculty	Other faculties	't – value'
Principals of Commerce compared with	Principals of Pharmacy	6.43**
	Principals of Law	5.29**
	Principals of Education	4.45**

** Significant at 0.01 level

Table no. 6 has pointed that the mean difference in favor of principals of Commerce faculty when compared with principals of pharmacy and education faculties, the t – value is significant at 0.01 level. But when comparing Commerce faculty principals with that of law faculty principals, the mean difference is in favor of law faculty principals and the t – value is significant at 0.01 level.

Table No. 7: Comparison of Occupational Stress among Principals of Pharmacy faculty and other faculties

Occupational Stress level	**Occupational Stress level**	
Pharmacy Faculty	Other faculties	't – value'
Principals of Pharmacy compared with	Law	9.33**
	Education	2.97**

** Significant at 0.01 level

Table no. 7 denote that the principals of pharmacy faculty have lower mean level than the principals of Law and Education faculties. This indicates that principals of law and education faculties are higher in occupational stress with higher mean levels when compared with that of principals of pharmacy faculty. The t - value is significant at 0.01 level.

Table No. 8: Comparison of Occupational Stress among Principals of Law faculty and Education faculty

Occupational Stress level	**Occupational Stress level**	
Law Faculty	Other Faculty	't – value'
Principals of Law compared with	Education	8.07**

** Significant at 0.01 level

Table no. 8 shows that the principals of law faculty when compared with the principals of education faculty, the mean difference is in favor of principals of law faculty and the t – value is significant at 0.01 level.

Conclusions

A) In case of the sub scales which helped in identifying stressors, the data exhibited following trends:

1) The principals of Arts faculty are higher on role over – load, role conflict, group and political pressures, responsibility for persons, under participation, poor peer relations, intrinsic impoverishment and low status.
2) In case of principals of Science faculty, the higher level of occupational stress on sub – scales role over – load, role conflict, group and political pressures, under participation,

poor peer relations, strenuous working conditions and Intrinsic impoverishment are found.

3) For the commerce faculty principals, the higher levels of occupational stress are found on sub – scales viz. role over – load, group and political pressures, under participation, poor peer relations and Intrinsic impoverishment.
4) The principals of pharmacy faculty are found to be higher on role over – load, group and political pressures, poor peer relations, strenuous working conditions and unprofitability.
5) In case of principals of law faculty, the higher level of occupational stress on sub – scales role over – load, role conflict, group and political pressures, responsibility for persons, Powerlessness, poor peer relations, strenuous working conditions and unprofitability are found.
6) The principals of education faculty are higher on sub – scales role over – load, role conflict, group and political pressures, responsibility for persons, under participation, Powerlessness, poor peer relations, low status, strenuous working conditions and unprofitability.

This result is on lines with the findings of Suleman , Hussain and Jumani (2018), who in their study revealed that both male and female secondary school heads were found occupationally stressed with respect to work overload, role conflict, strenuous working conditions, unreasonable political pressure, under participation and unprofitability. The study of Uma Maheswari G. (2018) also revealed Work overload and role stress as major sources of stress among faculty members.

B) The faculty wise comparison of occupational stress indicated following trends.

1) Faculty wise difference is significant for Occupational stress of principals. Principals from Arts faculty differ from principals of Science, Commerce, Pharmacy, and Education faculty in level of occupational stress. Art faculty Principals with higher mean is higher in Occupational Stress than all principals of foresaid faculties.
2) Science faculty Principals differ significantly with principals of Pharmacy and Education faculty. Science faculty principals have more occupational stress indicated by their higher mean. Only science and commerce faculty principals do not differ significantly.
3) In case of commerce faculty principal a significant mean difference in favor of commerce faculty indicates higher occupational stress than Pharmacy and Education faculty principals.

4) Principals from Law faculty differ significantly in their occupational stress from principals of Arts, Science, Commerce, Pharmacy and Education faculties. Mean difference in favor of Law faculty shows higher occupational stress for the principals. Principals of Law faculty have higher mean, this indicates higher level of occupational stress than occupational stress in principals of other faculties.
5) Pharmacy faculty principals are found to differ significantly with other faculties and lower mean level indicates that principals have lower level of occupational stress

Implications

The most potent stressors identified in the study are role over – load, role conflict, group and political pressures, under participation, poor peer relations, strenuous working conditions and intrinsic impoverishment. So adequate structural changes in the present system needs to be incorporated as an effort to reduce occupational stress. The result has also indicated training needs for effective human resource management by principals.

The law faculty with highest mean exhibit more occupational stress whereas the principals of pharmacy faculty has lowest mean indicating lessor level of occupational stress. The other faculties range in between these two extremes. The above trend clearly indicates an urgent need for implementing effective policies and strategies for reducing occupational stress among principals of colleges.

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