

Influence of Profession related Variables on the Occupational Stress of Secondary School Teachers

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Abstract

The present study is an attempt to study the influence of profession related variables on the occupational stress of teachers working at secondary schools. The study was conducted in the Ananthapuram District of Rayalaseema Region of Andhra Pradesh State. The sample teachers consists of 760 selected randomly from the secondary schools of eight (08) madals in Ananthapuram district. The investigators adopted the Occupational stress rating scale developed Reddy (2006) and improved by Poornima (2010) and re-modified by vijaya Anuradha, (2012) and established the validity and reliability of the tool with appropriate methods. The statistical techniques such as mean, mean \pm 1SD, percentage, t/F test to analyze the data collected. The revealed that, 78.68 percentage of secondary school teachers are with moderate and high levels of occupational stress and, only 21.32 percentage of teachers are experiencing low level of stress. This specifies the need for intrusions in consolidate and fortifying teacher's self-confidence, positive assertiveness and weakening the stress generating factors. The study also reveals that the teachers working in private schools are experiencing more stress than the teachers working in government schools. Similarly, the variables salary and in-service training received are the significant factors contributing occupational stress in teachers. The professional variables location of the school, years of experience and subject of teaching are not the significant contributors to the occupational stress of the teachers. However, organisational structure and climate of the schools is the significant contributing factor with reference to the variable location of the school and years of experience. The above findings clearly indicate the need for improving the organisational structure and climate of the private schools and schools located in urban areas.

KEYWORDS: Occupational Stress, Organisational Structure and Climate, Personal and Professional Efficiency, Intra and Interpersonal Interactions, Home-Work Interface and Environmental Factors.

Concept of Occupational Stress

Occupational stress is the buzzing word pervading across the globe among the people working in academic institutions, industry and even in service sectors. The word stress is derived from the Latin word "*Stringere*" which means "to be drawn tight". The term was used to refer to hardship, strain, adversity or affliction.

Occupational stress, in particular, is the inadequacy to deal with the weights in an occupation and a poor fit between somebody's capacities and his/her work prerequisites and conditions. It is a mental and in addition physical condition that

impacts a person's efficiency, viability, individual well-being and nature of work (Comish and Swindle, 1994). The principle systems of the work-push process are likely wellsprings of stress (stressors), variables of individual contrasts (arbitrators/middle people), and implications of stress. Stressors (work related and additional authoritative) are target occasions, stretch is the subjective experience of the occasion, and strain is the poor reaction to pressure. As needs be, the nature and impacts of pressure may be finest thought by expressing that some ecological factors (stressors), when it is deciphered by the individual (cognitive interpretation), may prompt pressure (Dua, 1994). In short, occupational stress is the result of physical and mental stress of the individual caused in performing his/her job in the profession. The advanced technological interventions, organisational structure, intra and interpersonal relations and environmental factors etc. may cause occupational stress in employees. The personnel working in school, college and university education too are susceptible to occupational stress.

Need and Importance of the study:

There are different factors that are contributing for academic stress among the teachers. Sum of the profession related variables causing stress are type of school and location of the school the teachers working in, the experience of the teachers, the in-service training received to perform their job effectively, apart from the salary and the subject of teaching. The other variables that are connected with OS are isolation, role ambiguity in the organisation, loss of control, lack of administrative support, emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and lack of accomplishment in the job (Weiskopt, 1980; Maslsch and Jackson, 1981; Fimian, 1986).

Changes in organization suggests that it can create a number of potentially stressful conditions. Change can introduce new roles and performance expectations that conflict with other roles an individual is expected to perform (Brett, 1980; Latack, 1986; Louis, 1980). Change can also introduce new uncertainties and ambiguities about organizational goals, the roles of individual in the organization and the knowledge and skills that are required to perform new roles (McGrath, 1984). Principals play their instructional leadership roles to enhance the work performance of the teacher (Murphy, 1987; Shepherd, 1999; Enochme and Egwunyena, 2008). Conducive environment also enhances teachers work performance. Job satisfaction and role clarity leads to better job performance (Nhundu, 1992; Ololube, 2006). The temperament of a leader may be a gauge and predictor of the job performance in organizations (Staw and Barsade, 1993, Staw, Sutton, and Pelled, 1994).

Stress can be either helpful or harmful to perform a job, depending upon its level. Whenever stress is absent, it limits work challenges and performance develops at truncated level. As stress increases steadily, job performance also ascends towards enhancement, because stress helps a person to gather and use resources, to meet job requirements. Positive stress inculcates encouragement **among employees** and helps them to tackle various work challenges. Eventually, a time comes when stress reaches its maximum saturation point that corresponds approximately to the employee's day-to-day performance capability. Beyond this point, the stress indicates no signal of enhancement in job performance. At last, if **stress reaches its highest peaks**, it culminates into a destructive force. Job performance starts to decline at the same point because of the undue stress interfere with performance. A professional who loses his/her ability to deal with stress and fails to make a decision, exhibits his/her inconsistent behaviour. If stress endures to upsurge even further it touches a breaking point. At this breaking step, a professional may much upset and emotionally

devastated. Soon he/she utterly breaks down. Performance terminates at zero, no longer impressions like working for their employer, increased absenteeism, eventually resultant into leaving-off a job or getting fired. However, “the stress should neither be very high nor too low. It must be within the range and limits of employee’s capacity to tolerate and his performance level. A controlled stress which is within limits is always beneficial and productive than an uncontrolled one” (Akrani, 2011).

The variables like type and location the school the teacher working in may have their own impact on teachers OS. The schools with inadequate facilities and schools located in rural areas normally may have their own limitations to make the teacher to be more effective in teaching. Likewise, the teachers teaching science subjects require laboratories with adequate apparatus and materials. Similarly, the schools started in private sector with profit motivation and schools located in rural areas experience inadequate laboratory facilities. Further, most of the private schools salaries for the teachers are far less than the teachers working in government schools without job security, which causes naturally OS. On the other hand, the curriculum changes at school level and expected competencies that are to be developed in students needs in-service training facilities to the teachers, from time to time. In the absence of such training or not giving adequate relevant components in the in-service training to develop knowledge and skills in teachers leads to OS which in turn leads to low JS. Research studies that focus their attention on the influence of professional related variables on the OS of secondary school teachers is more warranted and such studies will provide better insights into the OS aspects to address the policy issues at state, district and local levels, thereby, to improve the quality of education at school level.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the number and percentage of secondary school teachers with low, moderate and high levels of occupational stress.
2. To find out the significant difference, if any, in the OS of teachers working at secondary level due to variations in the type of school they are working – in (govt./private), location of the school (rural/ urban), years of experience (up to 15 yrs/ 16 yrs and above), salary received (up to Rs.12,000/-/ Rs.12,001 to Rs.24,000/-/ Rs.24,001 to Rs.36,000/- Rs. 36,001 and above), in- service training received (received/ not received) and subject of teaching (language subject / biological science/ physical science/ mathematics/ social studies/ physical education).

Hypothesis of the Study

1. There exists a significant difference in the occupational stress of secondary school teachers due to variations in the type of school they are working- in (govt./private), location of the school (rural/ urban), years of experience (upto 15 yrs/ 16 yrs and above), salary received (up to Rs.12,000/-/ Rs.12,001 to Rs.24,000/-/ Rs.24,001 to Rs.36,000/- Rs. 36,001 and above), in- service training received (received/ not received) and subject of teaching (language subject / biological science/ physical science/ mathematics/ social studies/ physical education).

Methodology used in the study: Survey method is used in the study.

Tools used in the Study:

The occupational stress being a global aspect is affected by huge collection of variables - salary, promotion, experience, opportunities for advancement, working conditions, job security, competent and fair supervision. Earlier, the researchers used

questionnaires, observations, interviews, occupational stress index indicators and rating scales etc. are used to assess the occupational stress of different categories of people. After going through the different tools used for assessing of occupational stress, the investigator felt that the tool developed by Reddy (2006) and improved by Poornima, (2010) and re-modified by Vijaya Anuradha, (2012) is more suitable for the present study. Part-I of the occupational stress rating scale (OSRS) provides information on the professional related variables selected for the study. The occupational stress scale having 56 items falling under the 5 dimensions of occupational stress (OS) i.e. Organisational Structure and Climate (14 items), Personal and Professional Efficiency(12 items) , Intra and Interpersonal Interactions(12 items), Home-Work Interface(06 items) and Environmental Factors(12 items). To measure the OS of secondary school teachers against each statement five gradations are given namely - Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Undecided (UD), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA) having the scores 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

To find out the validity and reliability, the OSRS was administered to 76 teachers (10% of the sample) working at secondary school, randomly selected from the sample of the study. The obtained half-test reliability (0.63) and the whole test reliability (0.77) for the tool through Split-Half method is high and hence the rating scale possess high reliability for the investigation. The content validity, face validity, intrinsic validity and criterion validity are established through appropriate scientific procedures.

Sample of the Study: The locale of the study is the Ananthapuram district of Andhra Pradesh state. There are four educational divisions in Ananthapuram district namely Anantapur, Dharmavaram, Gotty and Penukonda. In each educational division, both government schools (ZPHS, municipal schools and government aided schools) and private schools recognized by the Government of Andhra Pradesh are functioning. Anantapuram educational division consists of 12 mandals, Dharmavaram with 20 mandals, Gotty having 16 mandals and Penukonda with 15 mandals. For the purpose of the study, the investigator selected 2 mandals randomly from each educational division by using simple random sampling technique. Thus, the total number of mandals selected from the 4 educational divisions are 8 mandals having the above said schools.

There are 111 government schools and 210 private schools are functioning in the 8 selected mandals of the 4 educational divisions. In the second stage, from each mandal, 30% of the government schools and 30% private schools were selected as the sample for this study by following simple random sampling technique. In each school, there are 8 teachers on an average are working put together 760 teachers of all the selected 96 schools. Thus the total sample of the study is 760 teachers working in the secondary schools of Anantapuram district.

Data Collection

Data were collected by the investigator from the sample of the study by administering the OSRS developed for the purpose. The collected data were analyzed by using mean, SD, mean \pm 1 SD and percentage.

Results and Discussion

The collected data was analysed by using appropriate statistical techniques such as, number and percentage, mean, and mean \pm 1 SD. To find out the number and percentage of secondary school teachers coming under low, moderate and high levels of occupational stress, mean and standard deviation of occupational stress scores have

been computed. By using mean \pm 1SD, the occupational stress scores of secondary school teachers have been divided into three levels i.e. low, moderate and high. Accordingly, the teachers coming under occupational stress scores of 3.61 and above are grouped as high, 2.32 to 3.60 are moderate and 2.30 and below are grouped as low. The number and percentage of teachers coming under each category has been worked out and is presented in table -1.

Number and Percentage of Teachers Working in Secondary Schools with Low Moderate & High Levels of Occupational Stress (OS)

Table-1 illustrates the number and percentage of teachers falling under low, moderate and high levels of Occupational Stress (OS).

Table-1: Number and Percentage of Teachers Working in Secondary Schools with Low Moderate & High Levels of Occupational Stress (OS)

OS Dimensions	Level of Occupational Stress					
	Low		Moderate		High	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
OS ₁	255	33.55	393	51.71	112	14.74
OS ₂	173	22.76	470	61.84	117	15.39
OS ₃	196	25.79	392	51.58	172	22.63
OS ₄	130	17.11	579	76.18	51	6.71
OS ₅	132	17.37	523	68.82	105	13.82
OSW	162	21.32	452	59.47	146	19.21

Note: 1) The number and percentage of teachers with low, moderate and high levels of Occupational Stress has been calculated based on mean \pm 1 SD

2) OS₁- Organisational Structure and Climate; OS₂- Personal and Professional Efficiency; OS₃- Intra and Inter Personal Interactions; OS₄- Home – Work Interface; OS₅- Environmental Factors; OSW-Occupational Stress as a Whole

From table-1, it is clear that the percentage analysis reveals that 80 percentage of the secondary school teachers have underwent moderate (59.47) and high (19.21) levels of occupational stress. Dimension wise figures reveals that 66.45 percentage of teachers are experiencing occupational stress due to organisational structure and climate of the schools, 77 per cent are with occupational stress owing to personal and professional efficiency of teachers, 73 per cent are with moderate and high level of occupational stress due to intra and inter personal interactions, 83 per cent of them are with stress due to home- work interface and 82 per cent are with moderate and high level of occupational stress due to environmental factors.

Influence of Profession related Variables on the Occupational Stress of Secondary School Teachers.

In order to find out the significant difference between two and more than two groups of samples, differential studies are made. One of the major objectives of the

study is to find out the significant differences, if any, in the secondary school teachers occupational stress dimensions due to variations in their profession related variables.

To know the significant differences, if any, in the dimensions of occupational stress of teachers due to variations in their type of school, location of the school, years of experience, salary per month, in service training received and subject teaching; mean and SD have been calculated for each group in a variable. Based on the mean and SD's, t/F-values have been worked out to know the significant differences if any, in the dimensions of occupational stress of secondary school teachers. The obtained results are presented in table-2.

Table-2 represents the mean and SD of the dimensions of occupational stress scores of secondary school teachers and the calculated t-values, based on their profession related variables - type of school, location of the school, years of experience, salary per month, in service training received and subject teaching.

From table-2, it is clear that the mean value variations in the type of school they are working- in i.e. government and private schools of secondary school teachers regarding their occupational stress with respect to the dimensions – the environmental factors (2.20) is significant at 0.05 level and for the remaining occupational stress dimensions – organizational structure and climate of the school (OS₁), personal and professional efficiency (OS₂), intra and interpersonal interactions (OS₃) home- work interface (OS₄) environmental factors (OS₅) and OS as a whole, the calculated t-values (2.62, 5.69, 8.27, 5.68 and 5.23) are significant at 0.01 level. Hence, the stated hypothesis *'there exist significant difference in the occupational stress of secondary school teachers due to variations in their type of school they are working in* is accepted. When the occupational stress between private and government school teachers is compared, the private school teachers face more OS owing to more working hours less number of staff and uneven work payment than their counterparts working in government schools. These results are in tune with the study findings of Tasleema Jan et al., (2000) that private female school teachers were found to have more stress as compared to Govt. female school teachers. Kumar (2007) observed that private school teachers expressed significant stress in all the factors compared to the public school teachers. AnsarulHasan (2014) also reported that the private primary school teachers found to be highly stressed compared to their government primary school teacher counterparts.

The variable location of the school has its impact only on the dimension-organizational structure and climate of the school as the calculated t-value (2.16) is significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the stated hypothesis *'there exist significant difference in the occupational stress of secondary school teachers due to variations in their location of the school, is* accepted for organizational structure and climate only. This result is supported by Naik (2011) who did a study on occupational stress of Anganawadi teachers and found that locality alone has a significant influence on the occupational stress of Anganawadi teachers. Similar findings are reported by Soyibo (1994) among Jamaican high school teachers.

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The variable years of experience has significant bearing on the dimension-organizational structure and climate of the schools, as the calculated t-value (2.00) is significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the stated hypothesis “*there exist significant difference in the occupational stress of secondary school teachers due to variations in their years of experience*” is accepted for organizational structure and climate dimension of occupational stress only. This result is in tune with the results of the studies by Jarrar Ahmad and Ahmad Khan (2016) and Maharana Nisha & Rathod Meena Budhisagar (2013). It is believed that despite of having considerable experience by the teachers they are experiencing occupational stress due to improper set up and work environment in the school organization. Here, the more experienced teachers almost fed up with the organisational aspects of the schools than the less experienced teachers and there is a need for tuning the school organisational climate of the schools.

The variable salary has not significant bearing on the OS of teachers owing to the environmental factors (2.26) as the calculated F- value is less than the table value at 0.05 level. Contrary to this, for the dimension organizational structure and climate of the school (3.18) is significant at 0.05 level and remaining occupational stress dimensions – personal and professional efficiency (11.56), intra and interpersonal interactions (23.24) home-work interface (10.19) and occupational stress as a whole (10.07) are significant at 0.01 level. Hence, the stated hypothesis ‘*there exist significant difference in the occupational stress of secondary school teachers due to variations in salary received*’ is accepted with respect to the above said dimensions. It is needless to say that the low income levels of teachers create more job stress in teachers. It is believed that income is the vital aspect in the survival of everyday life. If, income levels are low, the teachers will undergo low level of confidence and the job involvement will also decrease. The findings strongly supported by Balaswamy (2011), who found that teachers receiving more than Rs.10,000/- salary per month had more stress than teachers receiving less than Rs.10,000/- salary per month. Similarly, study by Poornima (2010) also showed that, the teachers receiving Rs.10,000/- to Rs. 20,000/- per month as salary have low occupational stress than the teachers receiving salary of Rs.20,001/- and above and Rs.10,000/- and below.

With respect to the variable in-service training received, the obtained t-values for the OS dimension- environmental factors (2.20) is significant at 0.05 level and the remaining dimensions – organizational structure and for the climate of the school (2.62), personal and professional efficiency (5.69), intra and interpersonal interactions (8.27) home-work interface (5.68), and OS as a whole (5.23) are significant at 0.01 level, accepting the stated hypothesis ‘*there exist significant difference in the occupational stress of secondary school teachers due to variations in in-service training received*’. The teachers who had received in- service training experience less stress than the teachers not received in-service training. The teachers working in private schools may rarely participate in training programs but the government teachers must participate several training programs within a stipulated time. Otherwise, they may not entitle for their fringe benefits. The training programs emphasize on teaching methodologies, lesson plans, coping mechanisms, question

paper setting, evaluation and conveying feedback to the students. The private teachers may rarely participate in the trainings programmes organized by the government and moreover in private schools the teachers frequently change their job. Thus, they are unable to cope up with various issues that are raised suddenly or frequently. This may be the probable reason that the teachers who are not receiving training experience more occupational stress than their counterparts.

With regard to the variable subject of teaching, the calculated F-values for organizational structure and climate (1.02), personal and professional efficiency (0.95), intra and inter personal interactions (0.74), home-work interface (0.21), environmental factors (0.69) and occupational stress as a whole (1.03) are not significant at 0.05 level. This indicates the non-influence of the variable subject of teaching of secondary school teachers on their occupational stress as a whole as well as its dimensions. The formulated hypotheses '*there exist significant difference in the occupational stress of secondary school teachers due to variations in the subject teaching*' is rejected. The Studies of Soyibo (1994) and Aftab & Khatoun (2012) also shows the non-impact of 'subject of teaching' on the stress of teachers.

Table-2: Influence of Type of School, Location of the School, Years of Experience, Salary per Month, In service Training Received and Subject Teaching on the Occupational Stress of Secondary School Teachers

Profession related Variables	Occupational Stress Dimensions											
	OS ₁		OS ₂		OS ₃		OS ₄		OS ₅		OSW	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Type of School												
Govt. (N=240)	44.94	8.19	33.03	4.17	33.01	5.20	15.16	2.51	34.05	5.44	160.02	20.83
Private (N=520)	46.74	8.89	34.74	3.71	35.97	4.04	16.15	2.08	34.99	5.44	168.59	20.01
<i>Calculated t-Values</i>	2.62**		5.69**		8.27**		5.68**		2.20*		5.23**	
Location of the School												
Rural (N=368)	45.43	3.93	34.32	3.89	35.99	4.49	15.78	2.24	34.93	5.47	165.50	20.45
Urban (N=392)	45.95	2.89	34.09	3.98	34.91	4.76	15.90	2.30	34.47	5.44	165.08	20.89
<i>Calculated t-Values</i>	2.16*		0.80[@]		0.91[@]		0.73[@]		1.76[@]		1.05[@]	
Years of Experience												
1-15 years(N=402)	45.80	9.01	34.16	3.91	35.17	4.47	15.79	2.29	34.64	5.58	165.56	21.05
16 years and above(N=358)	46.12	8.05	34.25	3.98	34.94	4.82	15.89	2.26	34.75	5.33	165.95	20.27
<i>Calculated t-Values</i>	2.00*		0.32[@]		0.70[@]		0.62[@]		0.28[@]		0.26[@]	

Salary Received													
Upto Rs. 12,000/- (N=172)	46.22	9.21	34.58	3.72	35.84	4.17	16.13	2.07	34.76	5.45	165.72	20.14	
Rs. 12,001 - 24,000 (N=220)	46.53	8.97	34.61	3.79	35.85	3.95	16.10	2.15	34.84	5.63	167.92	20.67	
Rs. 24,001 - 36,000 (N=128)	47.81	8.67	35.19	3.53	36.35	4.04	16.27	1.98	35.56	2.51	171.19	18.93	
Rs. 36,001 and above (N=240)	44.95	8.19	33.03	4.17	33.10	5.20	15.16	2.51	34.05	5.44	160.29	20.83	
Calculated t-Values	3.18*		11.56**		23.24**		10.19**		2.26[@]		10.07**		
In-service Training received													
Received (N=240)	44.95	8.91	33.03	4.17	33.10	5.20	15.16	2.51	34.05	5.44	160.29	20.83	
Not Received (N=520)	46.74	8.98	34.74	3.71	35.97	4.04	16.15	2.08	34.99	5.44	168.59	20.10	
Calculated t- Values	2.62**		5.69**		8.27**		5.68**		2.20*		5.23**		
Subjects of Teaching													
Languages (N=277)	46.72	8.60	34.40	3.85	35.40	4.64	15.91	2.16	35.01	5.50	167.43	20.04	
Bio-science (N=97)	44.76	8.81	33.53	4.11	34.65	4.72	15.89	2.41	33.87	5.90	162.67	21.59	
Physical science (N=96)	45.30	9.07	33.99	3.97	34.58	4.46	15.68	2.22	34.45	5.17	164.00	19.93	

Mathematics (N=99)	46.27	8.70	34.03	4.01	34.89	4.63	15.72	2.49	34.78	5.15	165.69	20.70
Social studies (N=101)	46.22	8.99	34.40	3.98	34.92	4.87	15.88	2.28	34.78	5.15	166.04	21.22
Physical Education (N=90)	46.84	8.79	34.51	3.86	35.32	4.47	15.84	2.30	34.86	5.69	167.38	20.68
<i>Calculated F-values</i>	1.02[@]		0.95[@]		0.74[@]		0.21[@]		0.69[@]		1.03[@]	

Note: * Significant at 0.05 level; ** Significant at 0.01 level; @ Not significant at 0.05 level

Conclusions

- a) 78.68 percentage of secondary school teachers are with moderate and high levels of occupational stress. On the other hand, only 21.32 percentage of teachers are experiencing low level of stress. This specifies the need for intrusions in consolidate and fortifying teacher's self-confidence, positive assertiveness and weakening the stress generating factors. There is a need to strengthen organizational structure and climate, organise professional development of programs to enhance the personal and professional efficiency of teachers, develop appropriate channels to facilitate better intra and interpersonal interactions among the stake holders at school level and opportunities for teachers families to interact with the school and vice versa.
- b) The study also reveals that the teachers working in private schools are experiencing more stress than the teachers working in government schools. Similarly, the variables salary and in-service training received are the significant factors contributing occupational stress in teachers. On the other hand, the professional variables location of the school, years of experience and subject of teaching are not the significant contributors to the occupational stress of the teachers. However, organisational structure and climate of the schools is the significant contributing factor with reference to the variable location of the school and years of experience. The above findings clearly indicate the need for improving the organisational structure and climate of the private schools and schools located in urban areas. Similarly, the experience teachers should be involved in school administration aspects to create positive atmosphere in the schools. Likewise, the private schools needs orientation in terms of professional related activities like deputing teachers to in-service training programs, giving reasonable workload and relevant work instead of allotting multiple works causing stress in teachers. Opportunities should be provided for frequent interactions among the teachers, creating channels of interaction between families of the teachers and the school. As salary is one of the major component causing OS in teachers, irrespective of the school they are working, teachers should be paid salary and other benefits on par with the teachers working in government schools.

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