

A Psychological Study of Occupational Stress in School Teachers

Abstract

The article consist of a deep and thorough study of various aspects of occupational stress in teachers. Today's life is full of challenges. In everyday life we come across many situations. The work of a teacher is a physically and mentally challenging. Teaching profession occupies important and prestigious place in society. Occupational stress as the experiencing of unpleasant feelings such as depression, anger, worry, irritableness and tension which are formed as a result of working as a teacher Stress sources of teachers may be summarised as low motivation in students, discipline problems. Teaching profession occupies important and prestigious place in society. Teachers are considered as the creators of leaders, scientists, philosophers, advocates, politicians and administrators. Teachers not only have the stress of dealing with so many diverse children on a daily basis. They are also charged with educating and helping to mold these children into productive members of society. With rules, regulations, guidelines, and performance expectations all around teachers can have very high levels of stress.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Occupational Stress, Teachers

Introduction

Past research indicates that 'stress' is a useful concept in understanding the relationships and links between environmental and psychological events and physiological, behavioral and emotional costs to the individual. Hans Seyle (1956) introduced the term 'stress' to describe the phenomenon of strain experienced by an organism due to external pressures. He defined stress as "the nonspecific response of the body to any demand" or common result of exposing to anything. Stress in our society is not something that is invisible. Person whether a child, adult, men, women, employed, unemployed everyone is facing stress in his/her own way Today's life is full of challenges. In everyday life we come across many situations. It is the human nature to face the challenges boldly or to escape from it. All this varies from person to person.

Stress is derived from the Latin word "Stringere" which means to draw tight. Stress is a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, demand or resource related to what the individual desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important (Cooper et. al. 2002). Stress has been a focus of study in medical science where it has been defined as a perturbation of the body's homeostasis. This demand on mind-body occurs when it tries to cope with incessant changes in life. In the organizational context, stress has been found to be experienced by employees during job insecurity, performance expectations, technology changes, and personal and family problems. A more generalized description is provided by Caplan et. al. (1975) who suggest that stress is any characteristic of the job environment. Stress is believed to cause depression, irritation, anxiety, fatigue and thus lower self esteem and reduce job satisfaction. (Manivannan et. al. 2007). Stress is a term in psychology and biology, first coined in the biological context in the 1930s, which has in more recent decades become commonly used in popular parlance. It refers to the consequence of the failure of an organism – human or animal – to respond appropriately to emotional or physical threats, whether actual or imagined. Stress symptoms commonly include a state of alarm and adrenaline production, short-term resistance as a coping mechanism, and exhaustion, as well as irritability, muscular tension, inability to concentrate and a variety of physiological reactions such as headache and elevated heart rate. Stress is a feeling that's created when we react to particular events. It's the body's way of rising to a challenge and preparing to meet a tough situation with focus, strength, stamina, and heightened alertness.

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Good Stress and Bad Stress

Stress is a word that everyone avoids but it cannot be. Everyone has some stress with varying degree. The words 'Stress' is defined as the status of psychological upset or disequilibrium in the human being caused by frustration conflicted and other internal as well as external strain and pressures. Now a days, everyone seems to be talking about stress. You hear it not only in daily conversation but also through Television, Radio, the newspaper's and the ever increasing number of conferences, stress centres and university courses are devoted to the topic.

Stress is a non-specific response of the body to any demand. In some response very demand made on the body is unique, that is specific. The first thing one should then bear in mind about stress is that a variety of dissimilar situations are capable of producing stress; and hence that no single ones can, in itself be pinpointed as the cause of the reaction as such. In all forms of life, there are common pathways which must mediate any attempt to adapt to conditions and sustain life.

Man is ventured to study the stress in great detail since he is aware that his survival may depend on his ability to deal with it or get out of its way. On the other hand stress can cause fatal illness. Stress has also consigned rather large number of people to mental institutions, psychiatrists couch, prisons and hospitals.

Effects of Stress

Stress is considered as an involuntary response to a dangerous situation. When we face a situation which our brain is incapable of handling, it puts the body on alert by producing hormones which are required in fight or flight situation, which are:

- Increased blood pressure.
- Rapid heartbeat.
- Reduced blood supply to the skin.
- Cessation of digestive activities.
- Increase perspiration.
- Additional release of sugar and fat into the system to cope up with the additional energy requirement.
- Decrease in immune system's functions to preserve it for later action.

All these actions are a perfect requirement if we come across a physically stress full situation, like being attacked by a large predator, but most unbecoming in a classroom scenario.

All these actions which are mentioned above have a very long lasting negative effect if these stressful situations are to become frequently occurring feature. They may lead to the following serious and even fatal conditions:

- Depression and anxiety.
- Alcoholism.
- Drug dependency.
- Congenital heart diseases.
- Stress related Diabetes.

Occupational Stress

Job stress can be defined as the nonspecific response of the body to any demands made upon it (Selye, 1976). It is assumed to be an internal state or

reaction to anything we consciously or unconsciously perceive as a threat, either real or imagined (Clarke & Watson, 1991). Robbins(2001) defines stress as a dynamic condition in which the individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint, or demand related to what he or she desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important. Occupational stress is one of the concerning the working environment or their nature of work that causes each individual suffering stress (Rohany, 2003). Whereas, Leka, Griffiths and Cox (2004, p.3) refers to occupational stress as "the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope".

Occupational Stress is stress at work. It occurs when there is a discrepancy between the demands of the environment/workplace and an individual's ability to carry out and complete these demand. It can be defined as the physical and emotional response that occurs where worker perceives an imbalance between their work demands and their capability and/or resources to meet these demands or in simple words it is the harmful physical and emotional response that can happen when there is conflict between job demands on the employee and the amount of control and employee has over meeting these demands.

Occupational stress is a term used to define ongoing stress that is related to the workplace. The stress may have to do with the responsibilities associated with the work itself, or be caused by conditions that are based in the corporate culture or personality conflicts. As with other forms of tension, occupation stress can eventually affect both physical and emotional well being if not managed effectively. According to Margolis and Kores (1974) "Occupational stress is a condition worth interacting with worker characteristics is to disrupted psychological and physiological homeostasis

Profession of Teaching

The profession of teaching has a very prestigious place in all professions. A teacher is a kingpin in the entire system of education. Almost all cultures of the civilized world have considered their teachers in a very high esteem. They are very often been given names like "Master" "Mentor" and "Guru". To achieve this status teachers throughout the history of civilization have come up to the expectations of the world around them. Most thinkers and philosophers of the past who are still remembered are because they had their disciples and students. Times have changed and the societies and cultures have drastically diversified, but the tasks of a teacher are primarily the same, which is the transfer of knowledge to the next generation. With change in cultural norms and traditions in the societies there has been a drastic change in the expectations from a teacher. Some of these changes have limited the measures which a teacher in the past could exercise in disciplining a student and some have put additional burden on teachers in respect their preparation of lessons and adopting and maintaining their teaching styles. This is because most of the school systems prefer to

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Occupational Stress and Teacher

Occupational stress has become increasingly common in teaching profession largely because of increased occupational complexities and increased economic pressure on individuals. A major source of distress among teachers is result of failure of school to meet the social needs and jobs demands of the teachers. The teacher must be aware of his clear role to build up the nation. Teachers are over burdened with regular teaching load. Occupational satisfaction is a necessary condition for a healthy growth of teacher's personality. A teacher at present has a vulnerable position. College teachers protest that they are not paid enough. The importance of pay or a factor in occupational has been greatly over emphasized. In general, occupational stress arises from the working conditions/environment of a system, when we talk of stress among teachers. Many factors cause stress among teachers. School teachers face high amounts of stress during teaching and handling students; Classroom in developing countries remain overcrowded and teacher face intensive verbal communications, prolonged standing, high volume of work load.

Teachers are also over burdened with regular teaching work and non-teaching work as election duties, duty in census; populations counting etc. the teachers are often heard of complaining about. Teaching profession occupies important and prestigious place in society. Teachers are considered as the creators of leaders, scientists, philosophers, advocates, politicians and administrators. Teacher is the principle means for implementing all educational programmes of the organizations of educations. With the changing socio-economic scenario and increasing unemployment, the values of teacher and their professional concerns associated with the job have undergone a change, increasing stresses and hassles of teachers. According to Schwab and Iwanicki (1982), occupational stress in teachers can lead to a variety of negative outcomes including emotional exhaustion, feelings of depersonalization, and a sense of failure with one's personal accomplishment--a condition the authors refer to as "burnout." Burnout is one of the major reasons that teachers leave the teaching profession, a loss that results in added costs in training and hiring for the field of education (Niles & Anderson, 1993). In other words, the negative outcomes of teachers' occupational stress can be both internal and external. Because of the negative outcomes associated with occupational stress, many studies have attempted to better understand the phenomenon of occupational stress as it relates to education. These studies have found that degree of stress can differ as a function of several variables. For example, Mo (1991), in a study examining for relationships among secondary school teachers' levels of occupational stress, personality type, and social support, found that burnout was greater among teachers new to the profession, teachers with more personal (non-job related) stress in their lives, teachers who lacked strong social support systems, and teachers with Type A personalities. Similarly, in his study of occupational stress and teaching, Borg

maintain uniformity in all of their branches. Teachers not only have the stress of dealing with so many diverse children on a daily basis. They are also charged with educating and helping to mold these children into productive members of society. With rules, regulations, guidelines, and performance expectations all around teachers can have very high levels of stress. The job is very demanding in that it has hardly any end.

Overview of a Teacher's Responsibilities

Primarily the role and responsibility of a teacher is multitasked in the present day school system. This was altogether different just a few years ago. With the change in the type of teaching culture and added managerial responsibilities for teachers include planning and executing instructional lessons, assessing students based on specific objectives derived from a set curriculum, and communicating with parents. A teacher has to take on his responsibilities in the following capacities:

- Lesson planning and teaching.
- Accountability for student performance.
- Classroom management and discipline.
- Supervisory role.
- Extracurricular activity conducting and monitoring

Teachers and Stress

In relation to the profession of teaching, where a teacher is viewed as dispensers of knowledge; teachers are increasingly perceived as facilitators or managers of knowledge. They work in a constant socially isolated environments surrounded by hostile views and sometimes threat of physical abuse, and at the same time under a constant fear and threat of accountability for each and every action of both own self and that of the pupil. This alone can be a sufficient cause for stress for an individual. But in the case of a teacher it is multiplied by other factors as well Teaching has been identified as one of the most stressful professions today. The reasons for that are quite similar to other stressful occupations in the world. In a survey assessing the stress levels of various jobs by the Health and Safety Executive, teaching came out top. The report, The Scale of Occupational Stress: further analysis of the impact of demographic factors and type of job, published in 2000, found that 41.5% of teachers reported themselves 'highly stressed', while 58.5% came into a 'low stress' category, while 36% of teachers felt the effects of stress all or most of the time. This is indeed an alarming state and visibly also the biggest reason for school teachers quitting at a very high percentage or seeking professional help to fight back stress. The figures from teacher's support line, USA, show different reasons that cause distress to teachers

- Stress, Anxiety and Depression 27%
- Conflict with managers or colleagues 14%
- Pressure of workload and excessive changes 9%
- Loss of confidence and performance anxiety 9%
- Relationship, Marital and family problems 5%

This shows that the highest percentage is job related stress that can wreck a professional teacher personally while discharging his duties.

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(1991) identified four factors that contributed to teachers' level of occupational stress. Most people never realize the amount of stress that teachers deal with on a daily basis. They think, "Wow, my kids can be holy terrors. It's a good thing I can drop them off at school and get a break." What they never stop to consider is the poor teacher at the other end of that ride to school who has to deal with everyone else 'sholyterrors. They don't just have one or two problem children. They usually have an over sized classroom full of them. While a child may be relatively behaved at home they may become quite unruly while at school due to the lack of enforceable reprisal. So how about some stress management for teachers? Job stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. Job stress can lead to poor health and even injury. This will discuss the areas from which occupational stress originates. Next, the outcomes of stress will be discussed, followed by an examination of the classifications of stressors. The remainder of the discussion will be focused on the aspects of organizational communication and recommendations for prevention of occupational stress and stress management.

Causes of Stress for Teachers

From the outside teaching seems all together a different job with summer vacations, winter vacations and spring breaks. But considering everything that a teacher has to go through everyday all these days off do not do much to get a teacher back in the right frame of mind. According to a research the major causes of teacher stress are:

- Excessive working hours
- Excessive workload
- Rising class sizes
- Pressures due to OFSTED inspection
- Changes in curriculum & courses
- Changes to assessment & testing requirements
- Poor management
- Workplace bullying
- Crumbling schools
- Pupil misbehavior
- Risk of violence from pupils, parents and intruders
- Lack of support with bureaucracy, form filling and routine tasks
- Lack of job security due to redundancy and fixed term contracts
- Lack of control over the job
- Burden of providing cover
- Threat to early retirement arrangements
- Denigration of profession by politicians & media
- Lack of public esteem

Material and Methods

The main purpose of writing this research paper is to reconstruct the occupational stress in school teachers. The approach followed in this paper is purely textual information, gathered from books article research papers, research report have been gathered and presented in occupational stress in school

teachers. The method used is no theoretical work has been done.

Main Finding of the Study

The study of occupational stress will be standardized on the school teachers. Occupational stress is the result of individuals to know alarming issue in their work environments. Obviously, it is stress on the job that occurs in a person. The worker when involved in problem, bring occupational stress as result (Arnold and Feldman, 1986). Occupational stress, also known as job stress, has been defined as the experience of negative emotional states such as frustration, worry, anxiety and depression attributed to work related factors (Kyriacou, 2001). Education is most necessary part of our life. when teacher's occupational stress is low, productivity is high. Teachers not only have the stress of dealing with so many diverse children on a daily basis. They are also charged with educating and helping to mold these children into productive members of society. With rules, regulations, guidelines, and performance expectations all around teachers can have very high levels of stress. The job is very demanding in that it has hardly any end. Quite often teachers must take their work home overnight or on the weekends in order to be prepared for the next class section. The traditional summer break that so many teachers once looked forward to has begun to disappear as well with most schools beginning to adopt block schedules which require nearly year long school sessions with no more than one nine week vacation built in. If teachers have occupational stress as the experiencing of unpleasant feelings such as depression, anger, worry, irritableness and tension which are Formed as a result of working as a teacher stress source of teachers may be summarised as low motivation in students, discipline problems, the pressure of time and the work load, being assessed by others, colleagues relationship, conflict and indefiniteness of roles, bad working conditions and self-respect, students' discipline problems, the inadequate support of colleagues, family and friends (Detert, Derosia, Caravella and Duquette, 2006; Kyriacou, 2001). In addition, students' being late to school, their failure and students' not doing homework may cause stress in teachers (Adams 2001; Joseph, 2000). It is important for educational organizations to study and manage rationally the stress sources of teachers who have more depressed. The study has implications for prevention and reduction of stress for teachers. The responsibility for stress reduction lies with organizations/institutions with their family members. Today Indian organizations need to understand and focus on providing support for work-personal life balance. As Bruke (2002) has found that if employees perceive organizations values supportive of work-personal life balance, they experience greater job and career satisfaction, less stress and have less intention to quit, more positive emotional well-being. In order to maintain high performance of the employees, organizations may organize professional counseling programs to help the couples cope with work role stress, family role stress and work family conflict. The human resource policies should be

designed, keeping in mind the stress that an employee faces at work and due to work-family conflict.

Conclusion

These days educations are more important. If teachers are facing occupational stress and they are not giving full services of students their productivity is decreasing because of this students careers are effected, they are not giving attendance to the lack of less behavioral knowledge and less discipline. Student is not good in education filed as well as outer knowledgelf teacher's occupational stress is low then they are more productive and proactive and they give more time of students and student career will shine .In my opinion we can radial the effort of occupational stress with the help if less work load, giving the good environmental ,were they can work more efficiency and effectively. In my research will help to reduce the effect of occupational stress and giving job satisfaction. They can improve this productivity as well as they can more focus on student's career.

Suggestion for Reduce teacher's occupational stress: Adopting Healthy Habits

It is very important for a teacher to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Cutting back on bad habits like drinking and smoking will not just make you a healthy person, but will also make you a role model for your students and other faculty members as well. For a healthy living follow the following:

- Stop smoking as it will help you stay healthy.
- Reduce caffeine intake will help you stay focused and reduce stress
- Eat breakfast as it is the most important meal of the day as it will help you stay healthy
- Avoid junk snacks and eat right
- Don't let your life just roll by itself. Set realistic goals in life and then pursuethem.
- Make it a point to visit the guidance counselor, as it can help you identify any
- underlying psychological or behavior problem related to workplace stress. □ Worrying unnecessarily can be a big source of stress. So cut back on worryingas that will reduce your stress.
- Learn and practice anger management as it will help in managing

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