

Determinants of Occupational Stress among Secondary Teachers in Public and Private Sector School

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Abstract

In recent years there has been an increase rate of awareness about the occupational stress and its effects on work competencies. The teaching profession is one of the sensitive profession on which the future of any country depends. As far as Pakistan is concerned teachers and teaching both are unfortunately not enjoying very good and healthy social and financial status. Thus the study was designed to examine the determinants of occupational stress among secondary school teachers. Main objectives of the study were: to examine the occupational stress of teachers teaching at public and private secondary schools and to identify the reasons of occupational stress among teachers of secondary schools. In order to achieve the objectives of the study the researcher selected descriptive style. The population of the study was comprised of all the teachers teaching in the public and private secondary schools of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Random sampling was used to draw representative sample from the population. Four public and four private secondary schools for boys and girls were selected randomly. The sample size was comprised of two hundred teachers. David Fontana Professional Life Stress inventory and inventory used in UCU Health and Safety by John Bamford was adapted. Findings of the study revealed that private school teachers have significantly higher level of professional life stress as compare to the teachers of public schools, job is the major cause of occupational stress, and teachers were not satisfied with their role in schools which is one of the determinants of stress.

Key words: Occupational stress, teachers, secondary school

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Introduction

Stress as a phenomenon has been researched in various professions and the teaching profession is no exception. It has been a common finding that educators experience higher levels of stress than any other professional groups. A survey in 1933 revealed that 17 percent of educators were unusually nervous and that a further 11 percent had suffered a nervous breakdown (McEwen & Thompson, 1997). The word stress rooted from the Latin word ‘Stringer’ in 17th century it is commonly used to refer to difficulties in the face of adversity or pain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it was used to chew impulsive, stress, strain or strong, and reference object or a human. Psychologists use the term overload, and have identified two types: quantitative and qualitative overload. Quantitative overload is too much work to do in the condition of time available. It is a significant source of stress, and obviously stress-related illnesses. Qualitative overload involves not much work to do, but it is too difficult to be done which means not having the ability to perform the task which leads to work stress. Even those employees with the highest level of competence sometimes find themselves in situations that they cannot deal with the demands of that specific work. The most risky threats to the physical, emotional and intellectual wellbeing of teachers are the stressful and emotional situations they encounter almost every day. These threats create devastating effect on teachers’ professional health which unavoidably lead to burnout and dropout. Kyriacou (2001) definition of teacher stress indicates unpleasant, negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, depression that is experienced by teachers from their work (Margolis, Kroes, & Quinn, 1974).

The results of the different studies show that employees' mental health problems are now the focus of global attention at all times. As a result it becomes one of the target areas of mental health, which has stimulated the interest and attention of different research scholars. Therefore, the impact of occupational stress on workers' health, productivity and motivation has been a concern in recent decades. Similarly, the ongoing awareness of the impact of stress on the overall well-being of employees is decisive for developing effective coping strategies (Jackson, 2004). Mainly some of the common sources of stress include:

1. **Survival stress** – Many of us have heard the expression “fight or flight”, this is a general reaction towards danger in all animals and people. When a

person is frightened that someone or something may hurt him physically, body naturally answers with a burst of energy so that a person can survive the dangerous situation (fight) or escape from it (flight). This is generally named as survival stress.

2. **Internal stress** – Internal stress is when people make their own pressure. When people worry about things they cannot control or put themselves in this situation often they know the case will cause stress. Some people become obsessed with this kind of tense lifestyle that results from being remaining under stress, in some cases these types of people even look for stressful situations and experience stress about even those things that aren't stressful at all (Huebner, Gilligan, & Cobb, 2002).
3. **Environmental stress** – These are the things around us, causing stress, such as noise, congestion and pressure of work or family response.
4. **Fatigue and Overwork** – This pressure takes a very long time to build up, can be hard on the body. It can be because of too much work at job, school or home. Another reason for this type of stress is not knowing how to manage time properly or how to take time out for rest and relaxation (Griffith, Steptoe, & Copley, 1999).

Stress is result of a situation in which individuals perceive and process in response to certain events in his environment that he appraises as frightening or challenging towards him (Santrock, 2001). Teacher stress includes specific conditions that create negative effects such as frustration and anxiety due to various aspects jobs. There are various reasons why the teacher becomes greater target of occupational stress. Teachers are faced with so many different needs, whether it is from the school administration, or from parents and society, at the same time, requiring teachers to enhance creativity and innovation in terms of their quality and critical thinking in order to cope with the advances in science and technology. If they cannot provide knowledge and services for the community teachers will be criticized (Lath, 2010). Motseke (1998) investigated stress among 368 teachers teaching at secondary school. The study identified that organizational, personal, interpersonal and environmental stressors contributed to teachers stress. Jonas (2001) researched the relationship between social support, stress levels and the general health of teachers. Study found that there is a direct relationship between the stress experienced by educators and their general health.

The factors contributing to educator stress identified in the study are age, family size, gender, family income, and marital status and support.

Olivier and Venter's study (2003) focused on levels of stress and the extent of the relationship between certain identified stressors and stress among teachers in five secondary schools. The results reveal that teachers experience stress and 20 percent suffer from severe stress. The study identified stressors which includes work related stressors, discipline issues and increased teacher-learner ratio. Swapan Kumar Bishayee (2012) conducted a study of stress-private vocational college's teachers; found that most teachers are of the opinion that by concerning faculty members in decision making process is the most significant strategy undertaken by management to reduce stress level of teachers. Stress in school is the mostly result of work-load, that is, where there is more demand than an individual is able to fulfill the expectations of the situation. This overload of work includes issues related to curriculum, large classes and class issues, all of which have been identified as a major source of stress for teachers (Adams, 1999). Collaboration with others at workplace can support and pressure sources. Studies have shown that the negative impact of the difference between the pressure on the relationship between teachers and students learning motivation (Kinman & Jones, 2003).

In addition to pressure overload of work, educators reported role conflict, role ambiguity and lack of pressure as their main reason for occupational stress. When teachers do not have their own responsibilities clearly delivered, unclear roles based on the pressure of expectations or targets exist which leads to roles conflict, it includes teachers everyday professional life roles and responsibilities of information, which may include a lack of information required to perform a specific role (Motseke, 1998). Teachers often have complexity in performing their work effectively; they are expected not only to meet the needs of learners, but to follow strict teaching methods. Too many rules and requirements of a large school can be stressful; school culture has the potential to act as stress. It refers to the decision by the school to shape and practice share common norms, values and beliefs (Conley & Wooseley, 2000). Family and work are interdependent and interrelated to such extent that experiences in one area affect the other. Home - work interface can be called overlap between work and home, and in a two-way relationship between the stress related to work and family life vice versa will

affect each other. It asks about whether home problems are brought to work and work has a negative impact on home life (Alexandros, Matilyn, Cary, 2003).

Statement of the problem

The present study aimed to examine the determinants of occupational stress among secondary school teachers in Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

Objectives of the Study

- 1- To examine the occupational stress of teachers teaching at public and private secondary schools.
- 2- To identify the reasons of occupational stress among teachers of secondary schools.

Hypotheses

1. There is a significant difference between mean scores of public and private secondary school teachers on occupational stress scale.
2. Nature of job is the cause of occupational stress among secondary school teachers.
3. Nature of role is the cause of occupational stress among secondary school teachers.
4. Home – Work interface is the cause of occupational stress among secondary school teachers.

Methodology

The study was a descriptive type of research and was based on a survey technique. A quantitative approach was applied for the collection and interpretation of data. Population of the study was consisted of the teachers teaching in the public and private secondary schools of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Random sampling was used to draw representative sample from the population. Four public and four private secondary schools for boys and girls were selected randomly. The sample size was comprised of two hundred teachers (100 male and 100 female) teaching at secondary schools of Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

Instrument

Keeping in view the nature and need of the study two instruments were used: David Fontana Professional Life Stress inventory (1989) and inventory used in UCU Health and Safety by John Bamford was adapted. Pilot testing was done before actual data collection for the purpose of validity and reliability in Pakistani context. Gutman split half reliability was checked through split half method, so the total reliability of David Fontana Professional Life Stress inventory was .82, and the total reliability of John Bamford inventory was .78. In the light of the results and experts views the researcher did some changes and improvements in the questionnaires.

Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected through the personal visits to the sample schools. The researcher collected data with the help of personal meeting with the faculty members including in sample. The respondents were given enough time to answer all the questions. The subjects were assured that collected information would be kept confidential and anonymity would be maintained while revealing the research study. 130 questionnaires were distributed among teachers and rate of response was 77% that was 100 teachers out of 130. The instrument was based on three point Likert scale. Data was analyzed with the help of mean and t-test.

Results

Table 1

Difference among public and private secondary school teachers occupational stress (N= 100)

Variable	N	Mean	SD	t	Df	Sig
Public	50	98	14.21			
Private	50	120	15.06	6.743	98	.001

Table No. 1 indicate that t value is significant. There is a significant difference among occupational stress of public and private secondary school teachers. Private secondary school teachers have significantly higher level of occupational stress (120) as compare to the teachers of public secondary schools (98).

Table 2
Determinants of Occupational Stress (N=100)

S. No.	Determinants of Occupational Stress	N	Mean	SD
1.	Demands/Nature of Job	100	1.19	.224
2.	Role at Workplace	100	1.24	.311
3.	Home-Work Interference	100	1.25	.292

Table No. 2 indicate determinants of occupational stress which includes demands/nature of job, role at workplace and home-work interference. On first dimension respondents respond indicate that they are not satisfied with the demands and nature of their job which cause stress among them (Mean = 1.19), whereas on second dimension which deals with 'role at workplace' mean result indicate (Mean = 1.24) that teachers are not happy with their role at workplace and it is the reason of their stress. When inquired respondents view about their stress related with home-work interference majority feel that this is also cause of their occupational stress (Mean = 1.25).

Findings

1. Private secondary school teachers have significantly higher level of occupational stress as compare to the teachers of public secondary schools.
2. Job is the major cause of occupational stress.
3. Majority of teaching faculty were not satisfied with their role in school and it is the major cause of occupational stress.
4. Home – work interface was a cause of occupational stress for majority of teaching faculty of secondary schools.

Discussion

The present study aimed to examine the determinants of occupational stress among secondary school teachers in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Finding of the study indicated that private school teachers have significantly higher level of occupational stress as compare to the teachers of public schools. This finding is in

line with Ansaul (2014) study results which found that school teachers are being faced high stress in the private sector as compare to the teachers of government sector.

Results indicated that nature and demands of job is the major cause of occupational stress. Nayak (2008) conducted a study on factors and the impact of the stress on university teachers pointed out that the majority of teachers are always mixed up with the pressure and stress due to the complexity of the work.

Another finding of the study related with the determinants of occupational stress revealed that majority of teachers were not satisfied with their role in school and it is the major cause of occupational stress. Pandey and Tripathy (2001) found similar results from their research, results revealed that teaching is a stressful occupation and role ambiguity is a major source of job stress in this industry.

Finding of the present study revealed that home – work interface is a major cause of occupational stress for majority of teaching faculty of public and private secondary schools. A study by Ahsan and Abdullah (2009) identified homework interface as a major determinants of job stress among Malaysian teachers.

Recommendations

Following are some recommendations to cope with the stress and its causes:

1. Universities can offer some kind of time management program for their teachers by providing behavioral therapy program time to develop practical, positive attitude and good health.
2. Training and equal opportunities for quality training can be arranged through short courses, seminars and workshops, stress management skills, problem-solving teachers provided by the government and private colleges in their careers better development, interpersonal skills may be part of the service and pre-service training programs.
3. Colleges may provide facilities to staff for safety advice and information.
4. Organizations will therefore establish discipline of meditation, yoga and aromatherapy.

5. College can provide as normal rooms, a gym and a considerable area of activity corner from happy hour assignment like an important time where social teaching can have the opportunity to rest and have a snack or meal.

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