

Research Paper

A comparative study to determine the level of occupational stress among teachers of private and government schools in Chennai

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ABSTRACT

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. A teacher needs to use a lot of energy in his daily chores in the classroom coupled with his personal and family commitments. This trend which is a routine for a teacher forwards a lot of stress to the teacher. More than ever before work is not seen as the root of infinite satisfaction and fulfillment, but rather a source of stress, discontentment and humiliation. Teaching related stress, commonly termed "teacher stress" is defined as a teacher's experience of "unpleasant, negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, or depression, resulting from some aspect of their work as a teacher". The present study aims to determine the level of occupational stress among teachers private and government schools in Chennai. A cross sectional quantitative research design was conducted among 50 private school teachers and 50 government school teachers. A random purposive sampling technique was used to select samples. Semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect demographic data and the occupational stress was assessed. The present study also shows that the demographic variable gender in private school teachers had shown statistically significant association with level of occupational stress among private school teachers at $p < 0.05$ level and the other demographic variables had not shown statistically significant association with level of occupational stress among private school teachers and that that none of the demographic variables had shown statistically significant association with level of occupational stress among government school teachers. The study thus indicates that there is a significant rise in the occupational stress among the private school teachers in comparison with the government school teachers.

Keywords: *Stress, Occupational stress, Private school, Government school, Teachers*

Stress is difficult to define precisely. The concept of stress was first introduced in the life sciences by Selye Hans in 1936. It was derived from the Latin word 'stringere'; it meant the experience of physical hardship, starvation, torture and pain. Selye Hans, 1936 defined stress as "the nonspecific response of the body to any demand placed upon it".

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Further, stress was defined as “any external event or internal drive which threatens to upset the organismic equilibrium”. Within the general area of occupational stress, teaching has been identified as one of the most stressful occupations in many countries. A vital assumption inherent in teacher stress definitions is that an important contributory factor in the experience of stress in teachers is not only the aspects of the job but also elements of the individual teacher emphasizing the individual subjective perception of work experience. Teaching related stress, commonly termed “teacher stress” is defined as a teacher’s experience of “unpleasant, negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, or depression, resulting from some aspect of their work as a teacher”. **WHO (1986)** had defined Work stress as “ A healthy job is likely to be one where the pressures on employees are appropriate in relation to their abilities and resources, to the amount of control they have over their work, and to the support they receive from people who matter to them. As health is not merely the absence of disease or infirmity but a positive state of complete physical, mental and social well-being”, a healthy working environment is one in which there is not only an absence of harmful conditions but an abundance of health-promoting ones.

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. Work-related stress is 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 has become increasingly common in teaching profession largely because of increased occupational complexities and increased economic pressure on individuals.

According to the 2015-16 National Mental Health Survey, undertaken by the **National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS)**, determined that 13.7 percent of Indians lived with mental illnesses, while 10.6 percent needed immediate intervention.

According to **NOISH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health)** 40% of workers reported their job was very or extremely stressful, 25% view their jobs as the number one stressor in their lives, 75% of employees believe that workers have more on-the-job stress than a generation ago, 29% of workers felt quite a bit or extremely stressed at work, 26% of workers said they were “often or very often burned out or stressed by their work and Job stress is more strongly associated with health complaints than financial or family problems.

According to **Sunanda (2017)** Higher secondary school teachers working in government schools have more stress than those working in private higher secondary schools because the government teachers have to fulfil the work and the task given to them time by time from the administration as well as from the government departments, hence they are more responsible to the government officials than the private school HSS teachers, hence a higher level of stress was evident in the government school teachers.

The Objectives of the study

1. To assess the level of occupational stress among teachers working in private schools and government schools.

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2. To compare the levels of occupational stress among teachers working in private and government schools
3. To associate the level of occupational stress amongst the teachers with private and government schools with demographic variables.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

A quantitative approach with cross sectional research design was used to conduct the study in Private and Government Schools, Chennai. Total sample size is 100, in that 50 teachers from the private school and 50 teachers from the government school were selected by using a random purposive sampling technique. The criteria for sample selection are those who are willing to participate in the study, those who were available during the time of data collection and both private and government school teachers in urban area. The exclusion criteria for the samples are those teachers who are not willing to participate, those who were not available during the period of data collection. Before commencing the data collection, authorized setting permission was obtained from the authorities of the private and government school authorities. The data was collected for a day in the month of February from the teachers working in Bosco Academy Matriculation Higher Secondary School and St. Anns Girls Government Higher Secondary School Chennai. The investigator introduced and explained the purpose of the study to the sample and obtained the written informed consent from the teachers. The demographic data was collected using semi structured questionnaire for the teachers and the level of occupational stress was also assessed. The level of occupational stress was assessed using the Occupational Stress Index Test amongst the teachers. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The sample characteristics were described using frequency and percentage. Pearson's co-relation coefficient was used to compare the level of occupational stress between private school and government school teachers. Chi square was used to associate the level of occupational stress among the private and government teachers with their selected demographic variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Regarding frequency and percentage distribution of demographic variables of teachers of private and government schools. Out of 50 teachers from the private school the demographic variable result of most of them is that 27(54%) were aged ≤ 35 years, 38(76%) were female, 35(70%) were married, 40(80%) had < 15 years of experience, 40(80%) earned a salary of $< 20,000$ per month and 38(76%) were temporarily employed. Among the 50 teachers from the government school the demographic variable result of most of them is that 39(78%) were aged > 35 years, 25(50%) were male and female respectively, 43(86%) were married, 37(74%) had ≥ 15 years of experience, all 50(100%) were earning a salary of Rs. $\geq 20,000$ per month and were permanent employees. The present study is supported by **Sahnaj Akhter et al, (2019)** conducted a comparative Study of Occupational Stress among Physical Education Teachers Working in State Government, Central Government and Private Schools. The study was conducted to compare occupational stress among physical education school teachers in West Bengal State Govt., Central Govt. and Private school teachers. Twenty (20) participants were selected (total 60) randomly from each type of school. Six factors of occupational stress (Work Dilemma, Professional Growth, Professional Misconception, Working Condition, On Job Relation and Personal Status) were assessed using Occupational Stress Scale. Significant difference was found among groups in all the variables except Work Dilemma. Results reveal that State Govt. teachers were significantly better than others in Working Conditions and Job Relation. Central Govt. teachers were significantly better than private teachers in personal status. Central Govt. teachers were

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weakest in personal growth as per self-report questionnaire. Private teachers were significantly poorer than Central Govt. teachers in Professional Misconception.

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of level of demographic variable among teachers of private and government schools.

SN	DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLE	PRIVATE TEACHERS		GOVT. TEACHERS	
		NO.	%	NO.	%
1	Age in years				
	≤35 years	27	54.0	11	22.0
	>35 years	23	46.0	39	78.0
2	Gender				
	Male	12	24.0	25	50.0
	Female	38	76.0	25	50.0
3	Marital status				
	Unmarried / Divorced/Widow	15	30.0	7	14.0
	Married	35	70.0	43	86.0
4	Years of experience				
	<15 yrs	40	80.0	13	26.0
	≥15 yrs	10	20.0	37	74.0
5	Salary				
	<20,000 per month	40	80.0	-	-
	≥20,000 per month	10	20.0	50	100.0
	Type of employment				
	Temporary	38	76.0	-	-
	Permanent	12	24.0	50	100.0

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of level of occupational stress among teachers of private and government schools. Results shows that out of 50 private school teachers, most of them 40(80%) had moderate level of occupational stress and 10(20%) had low level of occupational stress. Whereas among government school teachers, most of them 29(58%) had low occupational stress and 21(42%) had moderate level of occupational stress. The present study is supported by **Manpreet Kaur et al, (2019)** had done a study previously on Determinants of occupational stress among urban Indian school teachers. The present study also tends to identify demographic patterns of workplace stress as well as examine the role of correlates like socio-economic status and work experience on stress levels. It further explores specific workplace stressors reported by Indian teachers. The sample consisted of 398 teachers, 31.9% males and 68.1% females, from urban centre, New Delhi, India. The measures included the National Stress Awareness Day Stress Questionnaire and a self-report questionnaire designed for the purpose of the research. Results showed that with 52% public and rest private school employees, stress levels were found to be high among 28% (111 participants) of the sample.

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of level of occupational stress among teachers of private and government schools. N = 100(50+50)

S.NO	OCCUPATIONAL STRESS	Low (≤115%)		Moderate (116 – 161)		High (>161)	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
		1.	Private School Teachers	10	20.0	40	80.0
2.	Government School Teachers	29	58.0	21	42.0	0	0

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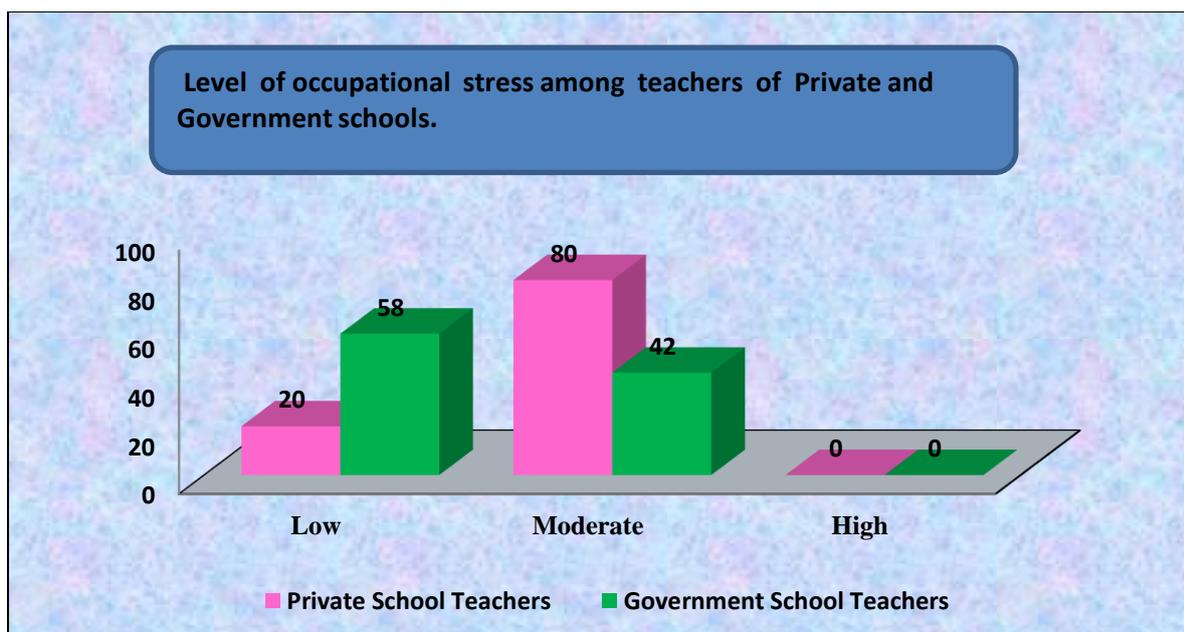


Fig 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of level of occupational stress among teachers of private and government schools

The third objective results show that the Comparison of level of occupational stress between private school and government school teachers. The table 3 depicts that the mean score of occupational stress among private school teachers was 135.62 ± 20.86 and the mean score of occupational stress among government school teachers was 107.80 ± 14.98 . The calculated student independent ‘t’ test value of $t = 7.661$ was found to be statistically significant at $p < 0.001$ level. This clearly indicates that there was significant difference in the level of occupational stress between the private and government school teachers in which private school teachers had more occupational stress than the government school teachers.

Table 3: Comparison of level of occupational stress between private school and government school teachers. N = 100(50+50)

S.NO	Occupational Stress	Mean	S. D	Student Independent ‘t’ test Value
1.	Private School Teachers	135.62	20.86	t = 7.661 p = 0.0001 S***
2.	Government school teachers	107.80	14.98	

The present study results show that the demographic variable gender had shown statistically significant association with level of occupational stress among private school teachers at $p < 0.05$ level and the other demographic variables had not shown statistically significant association with level of occupational stress among private school teachers. Whereas among the government school teachers none of the demographic variables had shown statistically significant association with the level of occupational stress. The findings of the present study depict that the mean score of occupational stress among private school teachers was 135.62 ± 20.86 and the mean score of occupational stress among government school teachers was 107.80 ± 14.98 . The calculated student independent ‘t’ test value of $t = 7.661$ was found to be statistically significant at $p < 0.001$ level. This clearly indicates that there was significant difference in the level of occupational stress between the private and government

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school teachers in which private school teachers had more occupational stress than the government school teachers.

The fourth objective this study association of level of occupational stress of private and government school teachers with their selected demographic variables. The study results show that the demographic variable gender had shown statistically significant association with level of occupational stress among private school teachers at $p < 0.05$ level and the other demographic variables had not shown statistically significant association with level of occupational stress among private school teachers. Whereas among the government school teachers none of the demographic variables had shown statistically significant association with the level of occupational stress.

Another study is supported by **Manpreet Kaur et al, (2019)** had done a study previously on Determinants of occupational stress among urban Indian school teachers. The present study also tends to identify demographic patterns of workplace stress as well as examine the role of correlates like socio-economic status and work experience on stress levels. It further explores specific workplace stressors reported by Indian teachers. The sample consisted of 398 teachers, 31.9% males and 68.1% females, from urban centre, New Delhi, India. The measures included the National Stress Awareness Day Stress Questionnaire and a self-report questionnaire designed for the purpose of the research. Results showed that with 52% public and rest private school employees, stress levels were found to be high among 28% (111 participants) of the sample. All demographic variables, Socio Economic Status (SES) categories, promotional and experience factors were contributing significantly to the stress prediction model but age group, work experience and promotion opportunities were reported as prime explanatory variables for the model ($B = 2$ approx.; $p < 0.05$). For every unit/category change in these variables, the stress score was seen to increase by 2.

Hence the hypothesis is proved that there was a significant rise among the private school teachers in comparison with the government school teachers.

CONCLUSION

Work-related stress is 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 an inevitable, even at times necessary, element of the work environment, but it does not have to translate into organizational dysfunction nor medical, psychological, or behavioral distress. From the result of the study it is concluded that women working in both private and public sector were found to be more stressful due to their dual role whereas women working in private sector were found to be higher stressed than women in government sector.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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