

Assessment of Occupation Related Stress among Male and Female Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Background: Stress experienced by teachers is a subject of intense interest in recent years. Various factors have been identified linked with teacher's occupational 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 present study was planned to assess the occupation related stress among male and female teachers. **Materials and methods:** The sample selected for the study consisted of 30 teachers teaching in a senior secondary school. The number of male and female teachers was 15 each. Mean Occupational stress was calculated for each group and sub-groups and analyzed. The measurement of Occupational stress level was done using Occupational Stress Index given by Srivastava & Singh in 1981. The index is standardized and consisted of 46 items which were to be rated by the subject on a 5 point scale. **Results:** The occupational stress scores for both the groups fall under the category of moderate stress which ranges from score 123-155. However, mean occupational stress scores of female group (146.35+6.78) are slightly higher as compared to male group (144.25+7.82). **Conclusion:** Male and female teachers in senior secondary school experience moderate stress. On comparing male and female teachers, we infer that on the basis of gender there is no difference in occupational stress level.

Keywords: Anxiety, Education, Occupational Stress, Teacher

The term stress is defined as an individual's state of mind in an encounter of a demanding situation or any constraint in the organization which she feels harmful or threatening for her/him. Stress, in an occupation too, has become an important issue however its level or degree may vary according to the professional and personal circumstances. Stress experienced by teachers is a subject of intense interest in recent years. Various factors have been identified linked with teacher's occupational stress. The most important of these factors are: business requirements, many different activities within the school environment, lack of professional

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Received: July 15 2017; Revision Received: August 3, 2017; Accepted: August 15, 2017

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recognition, discipline problems in the classroom, bureaucracy, lack of support, workload, time pressure, lack of benefits.

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. Hence, the present study was planned to assess the occupation related stress among male and female teachers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The sample selected for the study consisted of 30 teachers teaching in a senior secondary school. The number of male and female teachers was 15 each. An informed consent was obtained from the subjects regarding procedure of the study. Ethical clearance for the study was obtained from the ethical committee prior to starting the study procedure.

The measurement of Occupational stress level was done using Occupational Stress Index given by Srivastava & Singh in 1981. The index is standardized and consisted of 46 items which were to be rated by the subject on a 5 point scale. Out of 46, 28 were true keyed and 18 were false keyed. True keyed items were scored as 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for undecided, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree. The false keyed items were scored reversed to true keyed. The scoring for false keyed items was reversed. The split half and Cronbach's alpha co-efficient reliability was noted to be 0.93 and 0.90 respectively.

The statistical analysis of the data was done using SPSS version 11 for windows. Mean Occupational stress was calculated for each group and sub-groups and analyzed. T-tests were applied for the comparison of data between groups.

RESULTS

The study consisted of 15 male and 15 female senior secondary teachers. The scores of the aggregate sample were appropriated into different levels to evaluate respondents with high occupational stress (156-230), moderate stress (123-155) and low occupational stress (46-122). Table 1 shows mean occupation stress scores for both male and female groups. We observed that occupational stress scores for both the groups fall under the category of moderate stress which ranges from score 123-155. However, mean occupational stress scores of female group (146.35+6.78) are slightly higher as compared to male group (144.25+7.82). The t-test signifies that the difference between both groups is statistically insignificant ($t=0.332$) [Fig 1].

DISCUSSION

Stress issue has turned out to be contemporary, being a word related risk in education department, should be tended to immediately. Stress can make an individual gainful and

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valuable when it is recognized and well overseen. During anxiety or difficulty, it is constantly best to keep occupied, to furrow outrage and vitality into something positive. Uplifting state of mind and contemplation will be useful for adapting the anxiety. Having more extensive point of view of life will change the impression of stress. The present study was conducted to assess the occupation related stress in male and female teachers. We measured the stress level using Occupational Stress Index given by Srivastava & Singh in 1981. The mean occupation stress scores of both male and female groups were compared and analyzed. We observed that both male and female group have stress in the range of moderate stress whereas the stress scores of females were higher in contrast to males. The difference was statistically insignificant. Antoniou AS et al investigated the levels of occupational stress and professional burnout of teachers of primary and secondary education. It also aims to investigate the coping strategies that they adopt, and the relationship between them. The survey involved 388 teachers who teach in public schools in Attica. Three instruments were administered to teachers: "Teachers' Occupational Stress", the Maslach Burnout Inventory and the "Stress Coping Strategies Scale". The findings showed that teachers of Primary Education experience higher levels of stress compared to the teachers of Secondary Education. Female teachers experience more stress and lower personal accomplishment than men. Rational coping behaviors are a resource which help teachers overcome work-related stressors and burnout and achieve their valued outcomes with students, while avoidance coping predicted high level of stress and burnout. Borg MG et al conducted a questionnaire survey of 710 Maltese primary schoolteachers. It revealed that the level of teacher stress, job satisfaction and career commitment was constituted differently in some of the teacher demographic subgroups. A principal components analysis of the stress ratings of 20 items covering various aspects of the teacher's work environment yielded four factors described in terms of 'pupil misbehaviour', 'time/ resource difficulties', 'professional recognition needs' and 'poor relationships'. Teacher sex and ability-group taught interacted significantly with the stress factors. Results also showed that teachers who reported greater stress were less satisfied with their job and less committed to choose a teaching career were they to start life over again. Moreover, the association between the general measure of job stress and the stress due to each of the four stress factors was strongest for 'pupil misbehaviour' and 'time/resource difficulties'. Of the four factors, 'professional recognition needs' had the strongest inverse relationship with job satisfaction and career commitment.

Belcastro PA et al conducted a research to identify the relationship between reported levels of stress and somatic complaints and selected illnesses. The Maslach Burnout Inventory and the Teacher Somatic Complaints and Illness Inventory were distributed to 428 teachers in public schools in Southern Illinois. The MBI yields data allowing classification of teachers into two groups according to degrees of work related stress. A discriminant analysis was performed to examine the ability to discriminate between these groups based on their reported patterns of somatic complaints and illnesses. More than 11% of those responding to the study were classified as burned out according to conservative criteria for classification. The conclusion that burnout represents a health risk to teachers in this study has implications for school health personnel. Since school health personnel have experience in educating people about

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physiological and psychological factors that threaten health, and have experience in motivating individuals to take positive action regarding their health, they can provide teachers with information and skills to cope with occupational stress. Mearns J et al performed a study with cross-sectional self-report design, focusing on teachers' negative mood regulation (NMR) expectancies as predictors of their coping, burnout and distress, in response to occupational stress. Participants were 86 primary and secondary school teachers, who filled out questionnaire measures of teacher stress, NMR expectancies, coping, burnout, and distress. Simultaneous regression analyses showed that higher stress on the job did indeed predict greater burnout and distress. Additionally, stronger NMR expectancies predicted more active coping. NMR expectancies also predicted less burnout and distress, independent of stress level and coping. Believing one could control one's negative moods was associated with more adaptive outcomes for teachers.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of current study, we conclude that male and female teachers in senior secondary school experience moderate stress. On comparing male and female teachers, we infer that on the basis of gender there is no difference in occupational stress level.

Acknowledgments

The author appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interests: The author declared no conflict of interests.

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Table 1: Mean occupational stress scores for male and female groups

Group	No. of patients	Mean occupational stress scores	t-value
Male	15	144.25 \pm 7.82	0.332
Female	15	146.35 \pm 6.78	

Graphs:

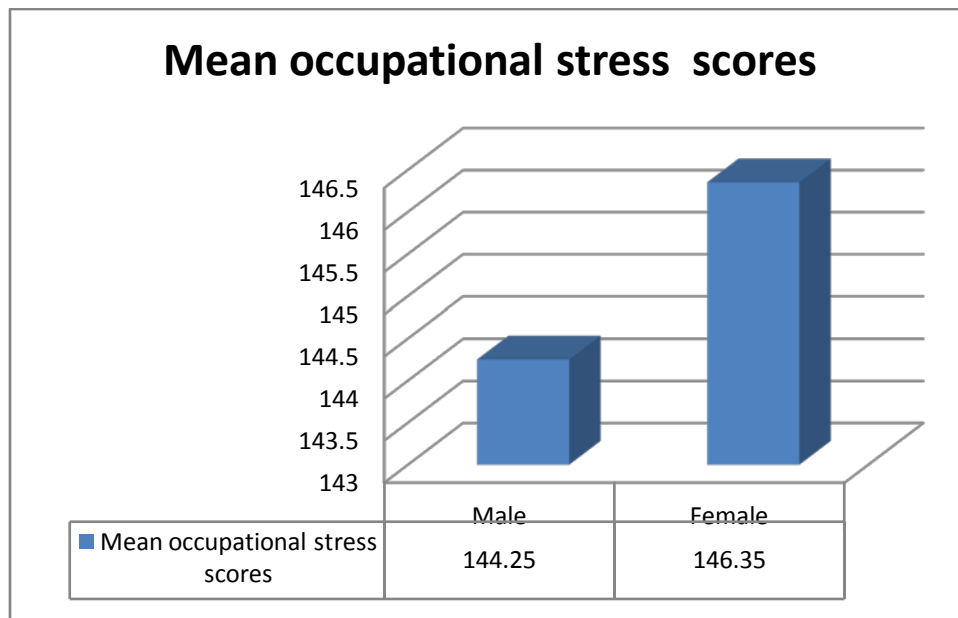


Fig 1: Showing comparison of mean occupational stress scores for male and female groups

How to cite this article: Patel V & Jain A (2017). Assessment of Occupation Related Stress among Male and Female Teachers. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, Vol. 4, (4), DIP:18.01.060/20170404, DOI:10.25215/0404.060