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OCCUPATIONAL STRESS IN TEACHERS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN HYDERABAD CITY

Abstract

Present research is a comparative study of difference between the level of occupational stress in Public and Private Schools female teachers of Hyderabad city. It was hypothesized that the Public School teachers are facing more occupational stress than private school teachers. The sample of the study comprises 180 female school teachers – 90 from public schools and 90 from private schools, occupational stress scale developed by (Sohail & Khanum 2000) was administered on them. For the analysis of scores statistical methods, mean, standard deviation, and t-test were computed. Statistical analysis revealed significant difference ($p < 0.001$) between the scores of two groups and confirms the hypothesis as public school teachers receives higher scores on occupational stress scale.

Key words: Occupational stress, Teachers, School system

Introduction

Occupation plays a pivotal role in an individual's life, it gives sense of identification, a chance to explore and actualize his or her potentials. On the contrary every profession has its own complexities and in today's challenging professional life stress is inevitable. However, highly reputable and professionally managed organizations are trying to provide stress free environment but they cannot completely secure their employees from the increasing occupational stress. In the words of Hans Seyle 1936, the first researcher who has done extensive research on stress & popularize the concept stress; "Stress is the common response to attack".

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Occupational stress which is synonymous with job stress or work related stress explored by Kyricon (2001) as the outcome of some negative feelings or experiences, like worries, depression, anxiety, negative emotional states resulted in response to factors which are related to occupation or work. There are bulks of studies which are conducted to find out the causes of occupational stress.

Khauray and Alexndros (2010) explored, most important causes of occupational stress: no appreciation from employers, no any support from management, no chance to participate in any organizational decision making, low or inadequate wages and benefits from organization, no guideline for stress management in case of heavy workload.

Other studies conducted in the field of occupational stress for example Jordon, Ashaunasy & Hartel, 2002 found Job insecurity as the cause of stress at work. Alexendros Stanatois etal, 2003, and Bheer, 1987; Yousif 2002, concluded that, the main reasons of occupational stress are role conflict and role ambiguity. Role conflict creates expectations that may be hard to reconcile or satisfying others whereas role ambiguity arises when role expectations are not clearly understood. Simply employees were not clear about what the organization is expecting from them to do at work. Slas & Klen 2001, identified pressure of time as the cause of stress at work place.

There is a growing concern in educators about teacher's mental health, occupational stress is an important factor in teacher's motivation and retention. Earlier, teaching was considered comparatively a relax profession, but in the last few decades it converted to a complex and demanding profession. In our society school teachers have less chances of promotion, no well-defined career path, less perks and privileges even insufficient recognition not only in society but also in there institutions. This profession requires continuous mental involvement in the academically challenging environment and all these factors contributes to development of occupational stress and this is the demand of time to conduct meticulous research on it.

Interest in the area of occupational stress among teachers increased in 1970s, since then considerable research has been conducted in many countries. It is an important area of research for educationists and researchers.

Teaching is not only an honorable profession, it has prime importance in nation building. Though there are some intrinsic and extrinsic rewards attached with this profession but unfortunately teachers are not at the place where they deserve to be... Hamann, D.L. (1990) By its nature teaching is a stressful occupation and its reasons are not difficult to find out.

Kaur (2011) in his study identified that, teachers stress is the outcome of School management's disability to fulfill teacher's needs and demands. According to A survey conducted by Health and Safety Executive report 2002, which explores levels of occupational stress among various occupational groups' reveals that teaching profession was on top of the stress prone occupation.

Other reasons of stress may include teachers' dilemma to face students, parents and school authorities demand which are almost impossible to satisfy. There is a need to give more attention to reducing the negative effects of occupational stress on teachers. (Bachkirova, 2005).

Rigorous research shows, that comparatively teaching in a private school has many advantages then the teaching in a public school. Private school system provides teachers a fiercely competitive teaching environment, moreover, mostly private school system is independent in decision making, even in case of hire and fire. Whereas, in public sector school system there is a large administrative and management hierarchy, therefore decision of hire and fire cannot be taken at one step. .

Though, private schools also have hierarchy which includes, staff, departmental heads, head of School and board of directors. But, mostly owners of the schools are also sitting in the same boundary therefore they can monitor the teachers every time in the school,

even they are free to take any decision they want. In these scenario private school teachers seems always attentive and responsible to students, management and parents. Moreover, private school teacher can easily focus every student due to small size of the class having 15-20 students. Conversely, in most of the public sector schools there are huge classrooms with 35 to 40 or even more students.

Private school teachers can easily recognize their students due to small number of students in the classroom and this is not possible for a teacher working in a public sector school..

Srivastav in 1982 and Gakhar in 1980 finds in their studies better job satisfaction and greater school achievement among Private Schools teachers as compared to public school teachers, Sachdeva 1987 also find the same results. Such types of studies revealed that private school systems have also proven to be better in school achievements as compared to public schools systems in their performance.

Another survey conducted in North Carolina revealed nearly 28% teachers resigned because their job was badly affecting their health. They want to change their occupation (Annual report teachers leave the profession 2007).

Present research is a comparative study about the difference between the level of occupational stress experienced by female teachers working in private and public sector schools in the Hyderabad city. It was hypothesized that overall score of public sector school teachers will be greater than the private school teachers on Occupational Stress Scale by (Sohail & Khanum 2000).

Method

Participants

The total sample of present study consisted of 180 female school teachers ,who were divided into two groups,90 female school

teachers working in private school and 90 female school teachers working in public schools, random sampling technique was used, data was collected from 6 schools of Hyderabad, private school teachers data was collected from three private schools, and for public schools teachers data was collected from three public schools. The range of their age was 25 to 55, and teaching experience ranged from 5 to 23 years. Data was collected after consent with the concerned authority.

Measure

The Urdu version of the Occupational stress scale (OSS) developed by Sohail & Khanum (2000) was used in present study to explore the difference between the level of occupational stress experienced by public and private schools female teachers. It is a likert type Occupational Stress scale.

The scale is highly reliable and valid research tool which can be used to assess the common Pakistani organizational stresses. OSS has ten subscales which has 90 items 9 items in each subscale, subscales are described as below,

1. Inter role distance (IRD)
2. Role stagnation (RS)
3. Role expectation conflict (REC)
4. Resource inadequacy (RIN)
5. Role overload (RO)
6. Role isolation (RI)
7. Personal inadequacy (PI)
8. Self-role distance (SRD)

9. Role Ambiguity(RA)

10. Role Erosion (RE)

It is proven to be high not only on the constructs validity but also has a high test and re- test reliability. OSS consists of 90 items, it has 9 subscales, scores extends from 0 to 4. The 0 on the scale means never, 1 means occasionally, 2 means sometimes, 3 represents frequently and 4 indicates always scores on the scales explores the level of stress experienced by the employees working in different organizations.

Results

To find out the level of stress among private and public schools female teachers, the mean scores on total and subscales of Occupational Stress Scale were computed. Result table show a significant difference in the scores of public and private female schools teachers. Mean of two groups indicate that, public schools teachers have scored higher on total scores of OSS, except on PI subscale and on SRD sub scales. Public schools teachers receive higher scores on REC, RIN and RO Subscales of OSS.

Table no 1 Means, S.D. and t-test of the scores of private and public schools teachers on Occupational Stress Scale.

Subscales	Public schools teachers		Private schools teachers		t	p
	N=90 Mean	S.D	N=90 Mean	S.D		
Inter role distance (IRD)	17.80	6.21	15.82	6.13	2.50	0.01
Role stagnation (RS)	24.56	5.18	20.92	4.28	2.80	0.01
Role expectation conflict (REC)	33.21	6.18	20.15	5.53	10.82	0.001
Resource inadequacy (RIN)	33.21	6.18	21.71	6.21	2.71	0.001
Role overload (RO)	32.72	9.46	20.13	8.50	9.88	0.001
Role isolation (R I)	20.85	6.40	18.97	6.07	2.61	0.01
Personal inadequacy (P I)	11.92	3.18	10.73	3.19	0.74	NS
Self-role distance (SRD)	13.06	4.13	12.56	3.92	0.92	NS
Role Ambiguity (RA)	25.72	6.37	21.71	6.21	2.71	0.01
Role Erosion (RE)	22.81	4.88	19.10	4.61	2.87	0.01
Over all O.S level	157.66	82.27	13.61	9.57	0.001	

$P < 0.001$

Discussion

The study was conducted to explore the differences between the level of occupational stress experienced by private and public schools female teachers of Hyderabad city.

Results revealed that public schools teachers receives higher scores on subscales of OSS, the overall scores of both groups of respondents reveals highest difference ($t=9.59$, $p<0.001$) .

Public schools teachers received highest mean scores on Role Expectation Conflict (33.21), Resource inadequacy (33.21) and on Role Over load (32.72) sub scales of OSS as compared to mean scores of private school teachers which are shown in Table-1.

Role expectation conflict is the condition which arises at work place when employee perceived himself/herself as low self-worthy to perform many roles at a time due to the differences in the requirements of the roles.

Decker 1986; in Mills Lage & Morlly, 2004)teaching by nature is a profession which demands lots of expectations and requirements from the parents of students , coworkers and even by teachers themselves (Figone, 1994,o"Connor & Macdonlds, 2002).

It is the right of every child to receive good quality education from school system in general and from their teachers in particular and legally teachers are responsible for that, in the words of O"conor & Macdonald 2002, teachers experience role expectation conflict in the case when they become failed to give quality education to their all students.

Public schools teachers received highest mean scores (33.21) on REC because public schools classes are over loaded with more than 50 students and it is not possible for the teacher to provide quality education for such a large number of students at a time.

When employees faces lack of external resources at work places it is called as resource inadequacy. According to Srivastiv (2007), stress and burnout is the outcome of the absence of external resources in the shape of resource inadequacy. As the major organizational role stressors Pareek (2002) finds resource inadequacy, role overload and role expectation conflict as the major cause of stress at work.

It is a fact that teachers working in public schools as compared to working in private schools lacking resources like advanced technologies e.g. Internet and variety of teaching methods are not available for them. Somehow, this could be considered contributing factor in their stress level.

Public school teachers having high mean scores (32.72) on RO reveal condition of over work or having too much work to do in the time available.

For the measurement of occupational stress experienced by public and private school teachers, Occupational Stress Scale Talat and Sohail (2000) were used. There was an assumption in the study that, public schools teachers are suffering from occupational stress more than private schools teachers at their work place.

This assumption was based on previous studies conducted on teachers stress, In a study conducted by Khursheed et al (2012) to explore the relationship between occupational stress and the supportive role of organization perceived by teachers working in private and public schools, finds that private schools teachers were receiving more support from their organization and as a result they were experiencing less occupational stress as compared to public schools teachers. Pervaz and Hanif (2003), also explored that public school teachers were suffering from more occupational stress than private schools teachers.

Though there are some similarities in the process of structure and process still there are lots of differences between the private and public schools administrative practices, both styles has different types of crises and problems.

Some studies suggest, that in School achievement private schools are better than public schools. Srivastava 1982, Gakher and Sachdeva 1987, inquired job satisfaction between public schools and private schools teachers finds private schools teachers receives greater scores on job satisfaction as public schools teachers.

In a study conducted to compare the teaching qualities between public and private schools teachers Liaqut (2009) finds that private schools teachers were more competent, having better teaching qualities than public schools teachers, they prepare their lesson plans before their classes.

In developing countries usually classrooms are overloaded with students. Prolonged standing and continuous verbal communication with students often turns to be laborious work and tiring.

Moreover, they are always target of school management and parents, facing criticism in case of student failure. It is the demand of time to sort out the solution of teachers stress. Teachers are the deprived community and their stress is the serious problem of country.

Recommendations

Findings of the study explored that, over crowded class rooms, lack of facilities and resources at work place, shortness of cleanliness were the main causes of stress among the female teachers of public schools.

Public school should adopt those strategies which bring positive changes in the personalities of female school teachers of Hyderabad city, and management of public schools take necessary steps to reduce stress among teachers by giving them stress management trainings, and workshops about stress reduction techniques.

Teachers stress is not a minor problem it also impairs the quality of work and in result organization will also suffer in the shape of absenteeism of employees .Public schools teachers will minimize their stress with the help of organizational support, supportive work environment, facilities by school authorities, positive attitude by parents of students and high authorities of organization.

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