



OCCUPATIONAL STRESS IN RELATION TO PERSONALITY HARDINESS AMONG GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHERS

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Abstract

The present study is an attempt to study occupational stress and personality hardiness in school teachers. Sample of the study consists of 50 government and 50 private school teachers of Ludhiana district. Occupational Stress Index by Srivastav and Singh and Personality Hardiness Scale for Teachers by R. Kaur, and H. Kaur was used to collect data. The results of the study showed significant difference in occupational stress between government and private school teachers. No significant difference was found for commitment and control dimensions of personality hardiness between government and private school teachers. But a significant difference was found in challenge dimension of personality hardiness between government and private school teachers. The results showed that occupational stress and personality hardiness in teachers is negatively correlated but the relationship was not significant.

Key Words: Occupational Stress, Personality Hardiness, Government and Private School Teachers.

Introduction

Education contributes a lot in the development of the country. The future of nation is being shaped in the classrooms. The most important factor of education is the teacher. It is the teacher, who shapes the personality and behaviour of students. To provide right direction and motivation, the teacher has to be physically, mentally emotionally and healthy with a positive attitude towards life and his profession as a whole. The work of a teacher is physically and mentally challenging. A teacher needs to use a lot of energy in his daily chores in the classroom coupled with personal and family commitments. Many factors like heavy workload, daily interaction with students, co-workers, demands of teaching often leads to various pressures & challenges which in turn leads to stress. This results in various negative physiological, psychological & behavior problems. So, the well-being of teacher is affected by stress which he perceives from his job.

Stress can arise from many sources viz. the family, the individual, social environment conditions and the organization. Stressors from these sources can work independently or collectively. Stress related with a job or occupation is called 'Occupational Stress'. Occupational stress can be defined as the physical and emotional response that occurs when 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 amount of control an employee has over meeting these demands.

Rees (1997) defined occupational stress as the inability to cope with pressure in the job because of the poor fit between someone's ability and his/her work requirements and conditions. Holmlund-Rytkomen and Strandvik (2005) defined occupational stress as the mental and physical condition which affects the individual's productivity, effectiveness, personal health and quality of work. According to Norman (2007) occupational or work-related stress is the response people may have when present with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope.

The stress related to the job has become a predominating feature of modern life, exerting effect on employees and their adjustment with the environment as well as the job. Hinger A, Parman M and Kumar P (2001) found that female professionals, lecturers, doctors, administrators experience different type of stresses and to different degrees. They found that balancing domestic roles with a career imposes a serious stress on the professional females.

Certain professional and jobs may involve conditions that create more stress than others. Teaching has been identified as a particular stress occupation. Ravichandran and Rejendran (2007) found that personal variables like sex, age, education levels, play a significant role in the perception of various sources of stress related to teaching profession. Rasul, Saikia and Devi (2012) found that family conflict is the strong source of occupational stress among secondary school teachers of lower Assam. Exposure to high level of occupational stress leads to deterioration in teacher's performance. Thus, it becomes necessary for the teachers to develop coping skills to reduce stress at workplace. The effects of stressors can be moderated by different factors such as demographic characteristics, personality features, social environment etc.



Hardiness is a personality construct which is assumed to protect the individual from stress including illness. Hardiness (psychological), alternatively referred to as psychological hardiness, personality hardiness, or cognitive hardiness in the literature, is a personality style first introduced by Suzanne C. Kobasa in 1979. Hardiness is often considered an important factor in psychological resilience or an individual-level pathway leading to resilient outcomes. Maddi (2006) has characterized hardiness as a combination of three attitudes (commitment, control and challenge) that together provide the courage and motivation needed to turn stressful circumstances from potential calamities into opportunities for personal growth.

Kobasa, Maddi and Kahn (1982) defined hardiness as a constellation of personality characteristics that function as a resistance resource in encounter with stressful life events. Bartone (2006) considers hardiness as something more global than mere attitudes. He conceives of hardiness as a broad personality style or generalized mode of functioning that includes cognitive, emotional and behavioural qualities. This generalized style of functioning, which incorporates commitment, control and challenge is believed to affect how one views oneself and interacts with the world. Thus hardiness personality style is a source of positive resistance to the debilitating effects of stressful life events on health. Hardy persons tend to have dedication to a purpose, a survival in the face of stress and also the enrichment of life. Hardiness has a buffering effect on stress in such a way that persons who have more psychological hardiness are in a better position to handle stress at work and can perform well especially their performance is good during tough times when the job demands are high.

Teachers are under immense pressure to meet the expectations of students, parents and employers and in the process of meeting these expectations the teachers are exposed to stressors that affect their abilities and lead to a decrease in their performance and efficiency. Teachers who are more hardy tend to put stressful circumstances into perspective and interpret them in a less threatening manner and have better coping strategies. They have a better understanding of self and are willing to act on influence events and are interested in new experiences and learning new things. Such teachers will cope better with the demands of their profession and turn the stressful events into an opportunity for growth and in the process achieve greater effectiveness. Sezgin (2009) in the study on teachers working at primary schools in Ankara, found that psychological hardiness is a meaningful construct predicting the perception of primary school teachers on organizational commitment. Chan (2003) in his study found that stress, positive hardiness, and negative hardiness all had a key, independent, and significant impact on emotional exhaustion and depersonalization dimensions of burnout and found no evidence to support that positive hardiness or negative hardiness had stress-buffering effects on teacher burnout.

Teacher's efforts and enthusiasm have a positive impact on student's learning. But teacher's stress reduces the enthusiasm and interest in teaching. Hardiness in teacher is important if teachers are expected to function in a stressful environment, and deal with new and on-going problems. Teachers with hardiness are more purposeful and tend to take control of events. They use difficult circumstances as opportunities for growth rather than as sources of stress. Hardiness is an important buffer in stressful situations and teachers who are hardy are better able to successfully cope with such situations. So, teachers must possess high abilities for personality hardiness and stress management to perform with maximum efficiency.

Objectives

1. To compare occupational stress in teachers of government and private schools.
2. To compare personality hardiness in teachers of government and private schools.
3. To study the relationship between occupational stress and personality hardiness of teachers.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There exists no significant difference in occupational stress between teachers of government and private schools.
2. There exists no significant difference in personality hardiness between teachers of government and private schools.
3. There exists no significant relationship between occupational stress and personality hardiness in teachers.

Sample: The sample of the present study consisted of 100 teachers of government and private schools of Ludhiana district.

Tools

- Occupational Stress Index (Srivastav and Singh, 1981)
- Personality Hardiness Scale for Teachers (Kaur, R. & Kaur H, 2012)

Statistical Techniques

1. t-value was calculated to see the significant difference between government and private teachers for occupational stress and personality hardiness.



- Person's co-efficient of correlation was used to find out the relationship between occupational stress and personality hardiness.

Results

Table 1 Significance of Difference in Occupational Stress between Teachers of Government and Private Schools

Category	N	Mean	S.D	S.ED	t-ratio
Govt.	50	125.76	14.55	3.15	2.79 *
Private	50	116.96	16.93		

*Significant at 0.01 level of confidence

Table 1 shows that the mean scores in occupational stress of teachers of government and private schools are 125.76 and 116.96 respectively. The t-ratio was found to be 2.79, which is significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels. This shows that there exists significant difference in occupational stress between teachers of government and private schools. Thus the hypothesis, no.1 "There exists no significant difference in occupational stress between teachers of government and private schools" is rejected. This means that teachers of government schools experience more stress than those of private schools. This may be due the reasons that teachers in government schools have to work under adverse conditions and face more stressful situations like poor infrastructure, inadequate resources, increased work load due to high pupil teacher ratio and also stress due to non academic duties.

Table.2 Significance of Difference in Dimensions of Personality Hardiness between Teachers of Government and Private Schools

Dimensions	Category	N	Mean	S.D	S.ED	t-ratio
Commitment	Govt.	50	94.24	6.15	1.49	0.60
	Private	50	95.14	8.54		
Control	Govt.	50	70.5	4.32	1.10	0.45
	Private	50	70.0	6.40		
Challenge	Govt.	50	39.94	3.20	0.75	2.51*
	Private	50	41.32	4.33		

* Significant at 0.05 level of confidence.

Table 2 shows that the mean scores in commitment dimension of personality hardiness of teachers of government and private schools are 94.24 and 95.14 respectively. The t-ratio is 0.60, which is not significant. The mean scores in control dimension of teachers of government and private schools are 70.5 and 70 respectively. The t-ratio is 0.45, which is not significant. The mean scores in challenge dimension of teachers of government and private schools are 39.94 and 41.32 respectively. The t-ratio is 2.51, which is significant at 0.05 level. The results obtained revealed that government and private school teachers do not differ significantly on commitment and control dimensions of personality hardiness. But in challenge dimension private school teachers had significantly higher mean scores than government school teachers. This may be due to the reason that teachers of private schools have better facilities in terms of infrastructure, type of students and also have better opportunities for professional growth. Hence, they have the capacity to turn the stressful situations into opportunities for growth. Therefore the hypothesis, no.2 "There exists no significant difference in challenge dimension of personality hardiness between teachers of government and private schools" is not retained on challenge dimension but is retained for commitment and control dimensions of personality hardiness.

Table 4.3 Coefficient of Correlation between Occupational Stress and Personality Hardiness and its Dimensions in Teachers (N=100)

Variables	r
Personality Hardiness	-0.13
Commitment	-0.26
Control	-0.12
Challenge	-0.11

Table 4.3 represents correlation between occupational stress and personality hardiness in teachers. The value of coefficient of correlation came out to be -0.13, which is not significant. The value of coefficient of correlation between occupational stress and commitment dimension of personality hardiness in teachers, came out to be -0.26, which is not significant. The value of



coefficient of correlation between occupational stress and control dimension of personality hardiness in teachers, came out to be -0.12, which is not significant. The value of coefficient of correlation between occupational stress and challenge dimension of personality hardiness in teachers came out to be -0.11, which is not significant. The results show that occupational stress and personality hardiness in teachers is negatively correlated but the relationship is not significant. This means that teachers having higher personality hardiness have less occupational stress. So it is important to guide teachers to enhance their personality hardiness as it will lead to less stress at work place, better adjustment and improved functioning. Thus the hypothesis, No.3 “There exists no relationship between occupational stress and personality hardiness in teachers” is accepted.

Implications

The present study centers around teachers who are more vulnerable to stress owing to high levels of personal interaction involved in their profession. Stress is the most common health ailment among teachers which leads to physical and mental problems. So it becomes necessary for teachers to develop coping skills to reduce stress at work place. Teachers need to be guided to enhance their personality hardiness to achieve desired level of performance. Having a stress hardy personality doesn't mean that a person never ever suffers stress. It means that their ability to deal with it, without it causing a problem, is greater. It's about learning to control how we react to the challenges we face in a more flexible, confident and less destructive way.

The present study reveals that there was negative significant difference and relationship between occupational stress and personality hardiness. It has an important influence on the way people perceive, cope and feel about managing stressful and demanding situations. Thus, a person's level of hardiness affects whether they embark on a constructive, adaptive path or a negative, potentially maladaptive one. Stressors have a less negative impact on individuals when they have more positive perceptions about themselves i.e. high level of personality hardiness. Personality hardiness can be improved among teachers through training programmes, involving mastery learning, vicarious experiences, specific positive feedback and psychological skills. This will help the teachers to cope with the stress they explore in their job and hence they will be more effective in discharging their duties.

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