

Original Research Article

Perceived Occupational Stress among Male and Female Teachers Working in +2 Private Schools in Darbhanga District, India

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Abstract: The present study was aimed at studying the perceived occupational stress among male and female teachers working in +2 private schools with special reference to Darbhanga district, India. It is undoubtedly fact that in recent years our private educator's organizations and other groups have sought to improve the public image of the teaching occupation so as to attract more people in to the occupation. Hence, the present piece of research work is of immense value on the problem mentioned above. For the present investigation, total sample consisted of one hundred sixty (N=160) comprising male (n=80) and female (n=80) teachers working in +2 Private Schools were randomly selected from different private schools of Darbhanga district. Data were collected through questionnaire schedules on the sample. Having obtained the data on the items of the schedules, individual scores were summed up and tabulated according to procedure of the scales for giving statistical treatment. Results indicated the fact that there is a significant difference between male and female teachers working in +2 private Schools of Darbhanga district in their degree of perceived reactions on occupational stress as t-value has been found statistically significant at .05 but all the teachers reported more or less moderate level of occupational stress. On the other hand, no significant difference has been found between the groups of males and females in terms of their degree of the dimensions of occupational stress, viz. unreasonable groups and political pressures, under participation, intrinsic impoverishment, low status, and unprofitability. although few dimensions of occupational stress out of twelve dimensions viz., role overload, role ambiguity, responsibility for persons, poor peer relations and strenuous working conditions have been found as the predictors between male and female teachers as these dimensions has been found statistically significant at .01 and .05 level of confidence although both the group have indicated moderate level of stress. It is interesting to note that female group of teachers were found more stressful with their work in +2 private schools than male teachers comparatively. Finally, obtained results were discussed in detail by highlighting the probable reasons in the light of research diary as prepared during investigation.

Keywords: Occupational Stress, male, female, teachers, Darbhanga, India.

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INTRODUCTION

The present study is aimed at studying the perceived occupational stress among male and female teachers working in +2 private schools of Darbhanga, India as it is often observed that in the present day modern world working life has become probably the most significant aspect of one's life based on their hi-tech society because people keep themselves engaged in

some job where they spend much more time than in any activity but sleeping. Those who are working in any industry or organization may develop apprehensions and indistinguishable as a result of various unpleasant stressful and threatening work situations. Therefore, the phenomenon of stress, in general, and occupational stress in particular, is more important to be studied, especially in the work situation to understand the employees' job

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satisfaction. It is because of the fact that resistance to change may be the cause of stressors which plays an important role as the factor of job satisfaction.

The term 'stress' emanating from Latin literature, it was first used in English during 17th century and the term means distress, oppressions, and hardships. During the 18th and 19th century the meaning of stress shifted to natural sciences and engineering to represent force, pressure or strain, and or strong influence acting on a physical object or person which an individual resists in an attempt to maintain his original state.

Stress has become a part of life. Nowadays, everyone seems to be talking about stress. We also hear it not only in daily conversation but also through television, radio, the news papers, conferences, stress centers, and School and College courses devoted to the topic. Remarkably, few people define the concept the same way and hardly bother to attempt for a clear-cut definition. In general, stress occurs when biological and physiological needs, as well as external demands and pressures are greater than the ability of the individual to adapt. According to Basowitz, *et al.*, (1955) stressful situations do not always produce responses in individuals. In the light of this view Panchanathan and Shanmugaganesan (1992) have inferred that stress is a reaction to something that is happening to an individual. Moreover, it is one's way of coping with environment and threatening situations that he faces daily.

Selye (1956) in his pioneering work used the concept of stress in a manner relevant in social sciences. Selye expounded his biological concept of stress as the 'General Adaptation Syndrome' (GAS):- a three phase response to stress that begins with an alarm, continues with resistance, and terminates with exhaustion. This three phase response to stress incorporates the orchestrated set of physical and chemical changes which prepare an individual to fight or flee. This fight or flight label grows out of an evolutionary analysis of the origins of the stress response when our cave dwelling ancestors had only two options for dealing with the stress or "fight or flight response". The major concerns of our ancestors were found protecting themselves from environmental hazards and wild animals. It is a centuries old programmed-response to threat that is a master piece of survival engineering, and yet is tragically flawed in the sense that while the human nervous system is still responding the same way to environmental stressors, the stressors are not the same and the environment is radically different. The present day world abounds with uncertainties, which include natural calamities as well as unpredictable events and incidents.

It has been, in all times, a universal truth that the world is changing which is very much evident in the present era. Thus, the change and its effects have become the dominant features as the various authors have written on the Age of discontinuity (Drucker, 1968), the Age of

Uncertainty (Galbraith, 1977) and the Age of Anxiety (Albrecht, 1979). However, the change is a continuous process which in itself is a great stressor in human life. In view of Lazarus (1966) stress is a universal human and animal phenomenon.

A review of definition on stress reveals that stress has been one of the important aspects that everyone has experienced but few could define, Lazarus (1966) stated that stress results in intense and distressing experience that appears to have tremendous influence on behavior.

Job related stress is inevitable in working life today. It occurs whenever a person has inadequate stress management and need frustrating work environment. In many job situations, particularly in human services, high levels of stress are an integral and largely unavoidable component of the work (Cooper & Payne, 1978).

Literature on occupational stress has revealed many different classes of job related stressors and related them to such issues as job satisfaction and worker productivity (Beehr & Bhagat, 1985). One of the major sources of occupational stress is whether the person is satisfied with the job or not.

These days research interest in occupational stress coping and health has grown considerably. It is because of the fact that job related stressors are unavoidable in working life. In many job situations, particularly in human services, one of the major sources of stress is whether the person is satisfied with the job or not.

It is because of the fact that occupational stress has been defined as the degree to which employees have a positive affective orientation towards employment by the organization (Price, 1997). It results when there is a misfit between job requirements and the wants and the expectations of employees. Many researchers found that job related stress factors are related to variables like role ambiguity, role conflict, employee performance and satisfaction, work overload, need for achievement and organizational effectiveness (Dunnette, 1976; Ghosh, 1981; and Mohanty, 1986).

In addition to the above context it is important to point out that, there is a general assumption that the teachers do not have satisfaction in their jobs. It seems to be a growing discontentment towards their job as a result of which standards of education are falling. It is generally observed that teachers are dissatisfied in spite of different plans and programs which have been implemented to improve their job, although occupational stress consists of the total body of feelings about the nature of the job promotion, nature of supervision etc. that an individual has about his job. If the sum total of influence of these factors gives rise to feelings of satisfaction, the

individual has a moderate level of occupational stress towards their job assigned.

Apart from the above context it is important to point out that moderate level of occupational stress is related to working conditions and level of professionalism is a key factor in successfully recruiting and retaining teachers (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000).

Moreover, educators believe that recognizing teaching as a profession and developing professional teachers is a possible solution to teachers' lack of motivation and satisfaction, professionalism and empowerment as well as teacher stress (Pearson & Moomaw, 2006). According to National Center for Education Statistics (1997) near about 20 % of government school teachers and 28% of private school teachers left because they wanted to pursue other career opportunities, they were dissatisfied with the profession, or because they desired better salaries or benefits, of the teachers who reported being dissatisfied with teaching as a career, the majority specified concerns with inadequate support from the administration and poor student motivation to learn. In addition to it, Kaur (2002) reported that teachers working under private management were found more stressful than those in government school.

Most of the Western studies demonstrated the effects of stressors or burnout in relation to job anxiety and satisfaction (Bateman & Strasser, 1983; Cohen, 1984; Powell, 1972). Studies on different occupational groups have shown that different organizational stressors are positively related to general or job anxiety. It is important to point out that in India empirical studies have dealt with organizational role stress and job satisfaction (Pestonjee & Singh, 1982). Available research also suggests that investigators concentrated their studies either on role conflict or role ambiguity as stressors with other organizational variables (Singh, *et al.*, 1986; Tharakan, 1988 & 1989). These studies have not been probed into with relation to working women and their job related stress factors.

It is generally seen that working women teacher suffer from more stress than men teacher in many respects. Various studies indicate that women at work frequently suffer more stress than the male because they have to combine their jobs with running a home, caring for their husbands and coping with children's ailments (Singh, *et al.*, 1986; Stefly, *et al.*, 1986).

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PRESENT STUDY:

After reviewing the literature available on the phenomenon various studies have been found as mentioned above but has not been covered the area chosen by the present investigators, i.e. Darbhanga district, India. Thus, the present investigation is aimed to study the perceived occupational stress among male and

female teachers working in +2 private schools located in and around Darbhanga district of India. Moreover, it is important to mention that very few studies are available in the Indian context but none of the studies have been found with reference to +2 private school teachers with particular reference to Darbhanga district of India. It is still an unexplored area and needs special attention to be studied. Thus the present study is of utmost value and it will fill the void of knowledge in the area chosen by the present investigator. It is also important to mention that the role of women is radically changing because a large number of women have began to work full time and, they are aspiring to the same organizational ladder as their male counterparts. Consequently, it is often observed that working women are exposed to the dual role of homemaker and career person, encountering daily stress.

Hypotheses:

On the basis of the broad aims and objectives of the present study mentioned above the following hypotheses were formulated.

1. There will be no significant difference between the group of male and female teachers working in +2 private schools of Darbhanga district, India in terms of perceived occupational stress.
2. None of the dimensions of occupational stress will emerge as the predictor between the group of male and female teachers working in private schools.
3. Male teachers will have a greater degree of occupational stress than female teachers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample:

For the present piece of research work, total sample consisted of one hundred eighty (N=180) comprising Male (n=80) and female (n=80) which were randomly selected from different +2 private schools located in and around Darbhanga district of North India. All respondents' age were ranged between 22 – 53 years.

Tools Used:

To achieve the objective of the present enquiry the following tools were used:

1. **Occupational Stress Index:** For measuring levels of occupational stress and its dimensions or stressors, an occupational stress index developed by Srivastava and Singh (1981) was used which consisted of 46 items covering 12 dimensions of occupational stress. These dimensions have been stated by the authors as sub-scales (or occupational stressors) are - (1) role overload, (2) role ambiguity, (3) role conflict, (4) unreasonable group and political pressures, (5) responsibility for persons, (6) under participation, (7) powerlessness, (8) poor peer-relations, (9) intrinsic impoverishment, (10) low status, (11) strenuous working conditions, and (12) unprofitability. Covering above stated 12 – sub-dimensions as stressors, in all, occupational stress index consisted of 46 items as stated above

which had to be rated on a 5-point scale “ranging from” strongly agree to strongly disagree out of 46 items, 28 are true-keyed items and the remaining 18 items are false-keyed items. The reported split-half reliability of the scale is .94; hence, it confirms the efficacy of the scale. The brief description of the stressors of occupational stress used by the present investigator in the context of present study is stated below:

Role Overload: A state in which the work responsibility given to a person needs more time and resources than is available to him.

Role Ambiguity: A state in which the person has inadequate information to perform his role (information about work objectives, scope and responsibility of the job, expectation of significant others and scope of jurisdiction and authorities.

Role Conflict: A situation where the demands made on a person are contradictory or are in conflict with his own expectations and working style.

Unreasonable Group and Political Pressure: A situation in which one is required to take a lot of decisions against his will or against formal rules and procedures under pressure.

Responsibility for Persons: A person has the responsibility for the work, productivity and development of many employees.

Under participation: Lack of one’s influence on decision making process of the organization

Powerlessness: A situation in which authority given does not commensurate with the responsibilities of the Job.

Poor Peer-Relations: A situation in which relationships with coworkers are characterized by low trust, low supportiveness and low interest in listening to and trying to deal with the problems confronting the other.

Intrinsic Impoverishment: Lack of opportunity to realize one’s potential abilities and develop one’s aptitude.

Low Status: A state of insignificance in the organizational network as well as in the social system.

Strenuous Working Conditions: Lack of comfort and safety on the job.

Unprofitability: Poor compensation and reward for the work done.

2. **Biographical Information Blank:** For tapping information pertaining to biographical variables self-made biographical information blank was prepared for interpreting the results.

Procedure:

The above questionnaire schedules along with biographical information blanks were administered on one hundred sixty teachers from the populations of working teachers of +2 private schools located in and around the Darbhanga district of North India. The scoring was done on the basis of norms prepared by the authors for the items of the scales. The obtained individual scores for occupational stress were summed up separately according to its dimension and the obtained individual scores were analyzed with descriptive statistical techniques.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In quest of obtaining the results table – 1 revealed the clear cut picture regarding the differences between male and female teachers working in +2 private school in terms of their perceived reactions towards their perceived reactions to occupational stress. From the table – 1, it can be observed that there is a significant difference between the group of male and female +2 private school teachers in terms of their degree of occupational stress. The obtained results seem to be logical that the male group of teachers working in +2 private schools scored low mean score on occupational stress index i.e. 127.86 with a standard deviation (SD) of 32.46 and at the same time private school female teachers obtained a mean score on occupational stress index i.e. 138.68 with SD of 33.89 comparatively. Thus, a significant difference between the two groups of male and female teachers on occupational stress index has been found significant as the obtained t – value 2.04 has been found significant at .05 level of confidence. Hence the proposed hypothesis i.e. “there will be no significant difference between the group of male and female teachers working in +2 private schools in terms of their degree of perceived reactions on occupational stress stands rejected. From the table, it could be understood that the mean value of the female group of +2 school teachers is higher than their male counterparts.

Table 1: Showing Significant Difference between the Groups of Male and Female Teacher Working in +2 Private Schools on Occupational Stress Index

Groups	N=160	Mean	SD	t - value	Level of significance
Male Pvt. School Teachers	n =80	127.86	32.46	2.04	Significant at 0.05level
Female Pvt. School Teachers	n = 80	138.68	33.89		

Results of the table – 1. it can be summed up that the female group of +2 private school teachers are more stressful with their jobs and they feel much more stress than male group of +2 private school teachers

especially from where the present piece of research work has been completed. Discussing the table – 1, it is important to point out that these days people are much more interested in getting a job in the government sector

rather than private, because of security needs as our union and state government have announced several programs for the benefit of the teaching profession and by getting handsome salaries. Therefore, male group of

+2 school teachers reported a lower degree of occupational stress than a female group of teachers working in +2 private schools of Darbhanga district.

Table 2: Showing Comparative Levels of Perceived Reactions on Occupational Stress Index among Male and Female Teachers Working in +2 Private Schools of Darbhanga District, India

Levels	GROUP			
	Pvt. School Male Teachers		Pvt. School Female Teachers	
	n=80	Percentage %	n=80	Percentage %
High	40	50 %	46	57.5 %
Moderate	24	30 %	26	32.5%
Low	16	20 %	08	10 %

Table – 2 is the extension of table – 1 which clearly revealed the picture regarding the comparative levels of perceived reactions on occupational stress between male and female +2 private school teachers working in Darbhanga district. From the table - 2, it can be observed that 57.5 percent of female teachers have shown higher degree of occupational stress in comparison to male teachers i.e. 50 percent which is low comparatively. 30 percent of male +2 school teachers reported moderate levels of perceived occupational stress in comparison to female teachers i.e. 32.5 percent comparatively which is high than male +2 school teachers. So far as the low levels of perceived occupational stress, only 10 percent of female school teachers are found to have low levels of perceived reactions on their degree of occupational stress in comparison to male group of teachers i.e. 20 percent which is higher than female group of teachers working in

+2 private schools. Thus, the hypothesis i.e. “male teachers will have more degree of perceived occupational stress than female teachers in +2 private schools of Darbhanga district, India” also stands rejected. The obtained results seem to be logical especially in the context of Darbhanga district of India in the sense that females are enjoying much more with the school teaching jobs than male group of teachers, although still females have their dual roles especially from where the present piece of research work has been carried out. It is because of the fact that in addition to the household works all women in this area from where the present study has been carried out, they want to contribute something in catering the needs of the family. Hence, the significance of difference has been found. Above discussed results can also be observed by the following chart.

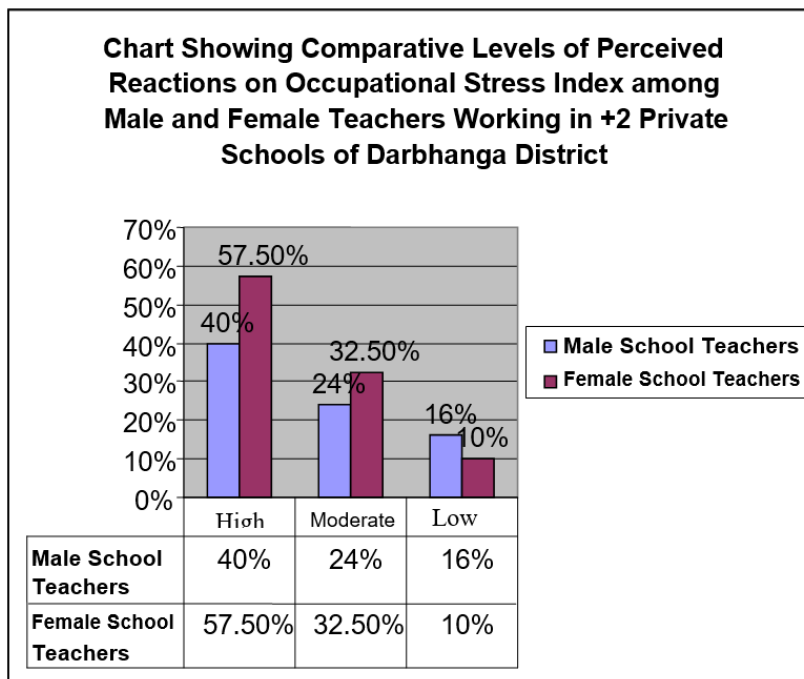


Table – 3 of the results depict the clear cut picture pertaining to the significance of difference on different dimensions of Occupational Stress between the

Group of Male and Female Teachers working in +2 private Schools in North Bihar, India. From the table - 3 it can also be observed that out of 12 dimensions of

occupational stress, only five dimensions viz., role overload, role ambiguity, responsibility for persons, poor peer relations, and strenuous working conditions have been emerged as the predictors between male and female teachers working in +2 private schools of Darbhanga district of Northern India. Thus, the proposed hypothesis i.e. “none of the dimensions of occupational stress will emerge as the predictor between the group of males and females teacher working in +2 private schools” also stands rejected. In fact, private schools located in Darbhanga district of Northern India, are neglecting the personal needs of the teachers for catering the needs and

demands of the family, hence, most of the teachers reported unhappiness especially male teachers during the present investigation. Really its amazing as the results obtained but instead of this both the groups of male and female reported moderate levels of perceived occupational stress, although female teachers have been found more prone to their degree of perceived reactions of occupational stress than male teachers group. It is because of the fact that full time working female hold more conservative values and more traditional view of women’s roles, reported experiencing a more supportive family life.

Table 3: Showing Means, SDs and t-values on different Dimensions of Occupational Stress between the Group of Male and Female Teachers working in +2 private Schools in North Bihar, India

Sl. No.	Dimensions of Occupational Stress	Male Pvt. School Teachers (n=80)		Female Pvt. School Teachers (n=80)		t-values
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1	Role overload	17.38	4.67	14.31	3.02	4.87*
2	Role ambiguity	11.24	3.01	12.24	2.76	2.39**
3	Role conflict	8.78	3.29	9.03	2.78	2.08 ^{NS}
4	Unreasonable group and political pressure	8.78	2.16	9.02	2.68	0.85 ^{NS}
5	Responsibility for persons	11.67	3.02	9.21	2.17	5.86*
6	Under participation	11.23	2.48	11.26	2.42	0.08 ^{NS}
7	Powerlessness	8.17	2.27	8.45	2.31	2 ^{**}
8	Poor peer-relations	9.15	2.81	8.56	2.13	3.68 ^{NS}
9	Intrinsic impoverishment	12.57	2.84	12.59	2.79	0.11 ^{NS}
10	Low status	8.32	2.33	8.45	2.37	0.35 ^{NS}
11	Strenuous working conditions	17.43	4.34	15.21	3.10	4.28*
12	Unprofitability	6.06	2.11	6.53	2.15	1.34 ^{NS}

Note: NS Indicates not significant and * indicates significance level at 0.01 Level and ** indicates 0.05 level of confidence

The above obtained results seem to be logical and can be interpreted that +2 private school teachers have shown better score on occupational stress from where the present piece of research work has been completed. All the teachers of +2 private schools in North Bihar have unique work culture in the schools but instead of this there is a need of provision of better physical facilities in private schools for both the group of male and female and also some incentives such as job security, financial benefits, etc should be given as on the line of Government policies.

CONCLUSIONS

In the light of the obtained results and its interpretations the following conclusions have been summed up:

1. Significance of difference has been found between the group of male and female +2 private school teachers in Darbhanga district of Northern India in terms of their perceived occupational stress.
2. Female group of +2 private school teachers have shown a higher degree of occupational stress in comparison to their male counterparts.
3. Out of 12 dimensions of Occupational Stress, only five dimensions viz., role overload, role

ambiguity, responsibility for persons, poor peer relations, and strenuous working conditions have been found as the predictors between male and female teachers working in +2 private schools of Darbhanga district of Northern India.

4. Female teachers have been found to have greater degree of occupational stress than male teachers in +2 private schools of Darbhanga district of Northern India.
5. Observations have revealed the fact that there is a need of provision of better physical facilities such as job security, financial benefits, etc for maintaining the congenial environment in +2 private schools of Darbhanga district of Northern India.

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