“A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS OF THE
TEACHERS WITH REFERENCE TO SPECIAL AND NORMAL
SCHOOLS”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT

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Introduction

Occupational stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirement of the job do not match the capabilities and resources of the needs of the worker. Occupational stress can be defined as the effect of task demands that the teacher face in the performance of their professional roles and responsibilities. Stress in universal human experience. Teacher usually accompanied by psychological and biological changes (such as increase heart beats, palpitation rate etc.) resulting from the aspect of teachers job.

Research studies in Indian context proved that the role performance of the special education teacher is low with regard to the guidance, counseling and organization of teaching. Low salaries, temporary nature of the job are the common features of special education programme in India. (Reddy 2000) In western contest research studies by Brown Well and Smith in (1992), Dedrick and Roschke (1990) and Singer (1993) reveal that special education and those who provide services for students with special need have high occupational stress compared to the teachers who are providing services for the students of the normal schools.

Review of Literature:

Research studies in Indian context proved that the role performance of the special education teachers is low with regard to the guidance and counseling and organization of teaching & training roles, low salaries, and temporary nature of the job are the common feature of special education programs in India (Reddy 2000). In western context, research studies by Brownwell & smith (1992), Dedrick & Raschke (1990) & singer (1993) revealed that special educators and those who provided related services for students with special needs also have occupational stress. In abord , studies by Sutcliffe revealed that unpleasant emotions, tension, frustration, anxiety, anger and depression are the causes for occupational stress. Apart from this, Lech Wisniswski & Richard M.Garguilo(1997), Cherniss(1980), Greenberg & Valettu(1980) conducted studies on occupational stress. Dunham(1978) identified three common stress situations as: reorganization of schools into comprehensive types, role conflict and role ambiguity and poor working conditions like inadequate building and high noise levels.

Maslach and Jackson(1981) stated that occupational stress is the effect of task demands that the teacher face in the performance of their professional roles and
responsibilities. Frequent and intense period of stress are antecedents to attribution, behavioral, physiological and psychological response. Kyriacou and Sutcliffe(1977) identified that though many possible sources of teacher stress were identified but research on stress was still in early stage.

1. **Bosnia and Herzegovina** studied that to determine common occupational or specific work-place organizational and individual key factors, which are most troublesome stressors for occupations in the field of special education (teachers, nurses, special education teachers). The study included 224 participants who were employed as special education teaching staff at each five Montenegro public institutions for persons who have a variety of disabilities. The response rate was 75% (n = 162). Data were collected using the Occupational Stress Questionnaire, short version, developed in Finish Occupational Institute. Seventy two special education teaching staffs (44%) in Montenegro have reported that they had experienced chronic job distress. The common perceived environmental factors which may significantly correlate to distress among special education staff between three occupations were: low level of control over the work (p=0.001), lack of support from superior (p=0.018), lack of support from colleagues (p=0.001), work have phases that are very difficult (p=0.001), work is mentally strenuous (p=0.001) and work is physically strenuous (p=0.001). Results were interpreted and implications for special education teachers were suggested.

2. **Cynthia l. Beck & Richard m. Gargiulo** studied A three-part self-report questionnaire, which incorporated portions of the Maslach Burnout Inventory, was used to assess the degree of burnout among 111 instructors of moderately retarded children, 133 teachers of mildly retarded students and 218 regular educators. Contrary to expectations, teachers of nonretarded students reported significantly fewer and weaker feelings of success and competence accompanied by more frequent and stronger impersonal attitudes toward their students. Demographic variables were found to be significant but weak predictors of teacher burnout. The teachers also reported a low incidence of chronic or serious health problems. Comparisons were presented between regular and special educators in addition to suggestions for stress reduction.

3. **Michelle Williams** compared whether teaching in a mainstream or special school is perceived as more stressful and whether there are different stresses in both types of school.
The authors designed a questionnaire to measure teacher stress and collected data from 41 teachers in three mainstream and two special schools. Their results reveal no significant difference in the overall level of stress experienced between mainstream and special school teachers, but five factors do emerge indicating that different types of stress are experienced in the different school settings studied.

4. Trendall (1989) found that teachers in special schools reported being less stressed in their working environment than their mainstream school colleagues. Gender differences, level of qualifications and length of teaching influenced the amount of stress experienced. More females and teachers with lower qualifications tended to suffer from extreme stress levels, while teachers with five to ten years’ experience felt more highly stressed than male teachers and older teachers with more experience. The majority of teachers in their study rated teaching as either very stressful or stressful. The results from this questionnaire survey also indicated signs of mental and physical strain affecting more mainstream schoolteachers as compared to teachers in special schools.

This clearly indicates that special education teachers are the people serving in more stressful situations. Also, such studies revealed that emotional exhaustion, poor intra and interpersonal relationships, organizational and motivational climate are the factors and the need for better motivation in the working environment, organizational facilities, interpersonal relationships etc would help to overcome the occupational stress. In other words, all these reflect in the form of poor service to the children with disabilities at school level. Research studies that explore the occupational stress of teachers working in the schools for the visually impaired children facilitate for reducing the stress situations, providing conducive work environments and better organizational environment in the schools for visually impaired children, healthy intra and interpersonal professional interactions, strengthening of the professional training components in special education and the ways and means of equipping teachers with better instructional assignments and arrangements in special schools.

**Objectives:**
- To know the level of Occupational stress among Normal and special school teachers
- To compare the occupational stress of male and female of normal and special school teachers
- To compare the significance of occupational stress of normal and special school teachers in respect to their salary, age and experience.
To compare the significance of occupational stress of Male and female among normal and special school teachers in respect to their salary, age and experience.

**Hypothesis:**

**Ha.1:** There is significant difference between the level of occupational stress of normal and special school teachers

**Ha.2:** There is significant difference between the level of the occupational stress of male and female of normal school teachers

**Ha.3:** There is significant difference between the level of the occupational stress of male and female of special school teachers.

**Ha.4:** There is significant difference between the level of the occupational stress in respect to their salary, age and experience among normal and special school teachers.

**Ha.5:** There is significant difference between the level of the occupational stress in respect to their salary, age and experience of male and female among normal and special school teachers.

**Tools:**

The present study is field study with Occupational Stress Questionnaire as dependant variable, the professional group of teachers from special and normal school teachers are independent variables.

**Sample:**

The present study involves two groups of professional i.e special and normal school teachers. Each group is consisting of 30 teachers. Thus the total sample of study comprises of 60 teachers.

Random sampling technique is adopted while selecting the sample for the study. The sampling groups are selected from Belgaum city schools.

**Discussion:**

To know the number and percentage of the teachers falling under low, moderate and high occupational stress, Mean and SD of occupational stress has been calculated by dividing the scores into low and high occupational stress. The percentage of the teachers falling under each group has been worked out.
The teachers who are working in special school experiencing high level of occupational stress compare to normal school teachers. The trend indicates that there schools need to look into the nature of occupational stress, that are leading to professional burnout which in term causing low job involvement of the teacher working with normal and special school. The major object of the study is to find out the occupational stress of the teachers working in different schools. The attempt facilitates not only assessing the level of occupational stress but also potential sources in teachers. The potential sources may be due to the years of experience, age, and salary what teachers are drawing.

To identify the level of occupational stress of the teachers Mean and SD of occupational stress and ratting scale has been calculated for the sample of teachers by using mean and SD. We have identified comparative level of stress. In this study we have discussed the level of occupational stress of male and female teachers separately and male and female together in respect of schools separately. Again we discussed the result of teachers to their age, salary and years of experience.

To find out the significant difference of the school teachers working in special and normal school are due to in their special work load and personal variables mean and SD is calculated for each group variables. Accordingly t-test has been applied to find the significance difference between means in Table no 1.

In Table no 2 it is found out that there is significance difference between the level of occupational stress of male and female of normal school teachers with mean, SD and t- value. In table no 3 it has been discussed about the level of occupational stress of male and female of special school teachers with mean, SD and t-value. Table no 4 discuss the occupational stress of male teachers of special school and normal school teachers with mean and SD. In table no 5 it has been discussed about the level of occupational stress of special and normal school teachers. Table no 6 discussed the effect of age, salary and year of experience on the level of occupational stress of the teachers of both the schools with mean, SD and F ratio.

**Conclusion:**

1. There is significance difference between occupational stress of normal and special school teachers which is highly significance.
2. There is significance difference between occupational stress of male teacher of normal and special school.
3. There is significance difference between occupational stress of female teacher of normal and special school.
Implication of the study:

1. The study reveals that 70% of the teachers working in special school experience high and moderate level of occupational stress. It is also noted that the sources of stress are related to organizational structure of the school, professional training and instructional assignment and other arrangements are causing high stress. This indicates the need for better organizational supportive system and other instructional material and resources to be created for the individual needs of every child. Payment salary on par with regular school teachers opportunities for promotion, reasonable school hours, giving time for preparation to meet the need of special children similarly with regard to professional training and need to develop curriculum innovations and material, provision of better resources keeping in mind the professional responsibilities of teachers need for giving better assistant in terms of assessment and diagnosis of special children. As the teachers need to put individual attention on the special student it is very difficult to do job related other work even after hours. Keeping this in mind there is need to give job intuitive to the teachers working with special schools. Unfortunately most of the special schools either run by voluntary organization or government bodies. The nature of job is temporary in most of the case and even the payment is not on par with regular school teachers. Lack of job security is also one of the sources of the stress and this should be address immediately.

2. While selecting the teaching personal and giving training programs, as far as possible, there is a need for appointment of more women teachers as they possess more patience and empathetic outlook towards the children with disabilities. Further, there is a need to develop such qualities through teacher training programs. In fact, the selection of the personal for the training programs (both pre and in service training) should be not only based on academic performance but also on the empathetic outlook or the emotional/social intelligence aspects of the individual.

3. As inclusive education is gaining momentum across the globe and India is also moving on the same lines, the regular school teachers will also face the same or even more stress as faced by special school teachers. Hence there is a greater need to provide better infrastructure facilities and supportive systems in the normal schools for inclusion of special children. Such provisions facilities for Universalisation of primary and secondary education apart from providing Rights Based Education than Charity Oriented Educational Services to the children with special needs.
References:


