



Occupational Stress, Mental Health and Self-Efficacy among Higher Secondary School Teachers

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Abstract

Education is a powerful instrument that can develop human and empowerment for achievement of a better and high quality of life. The role of a teacher is very important in improving the knowledge and students' mental health. But in the present era of growing complexities the teacher is one of the most exposed people to stress and strain. It is an established fact that the performance of a teacher mainly depends upon his/her psychological state of mind. The stress of teachers that affects teacher's physical and mental illness. High school teachers while performing and working in high schools face various psychological and social problems. So, teachers should be mentally strong enough to deal with all the challenges related to professionally and mentally. Hence, it is obvious that the teachers having strong self-efficacy and Mental health

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Introduction

The whole advancement of our civilizations is in fact, based on the advancement of our education. The aims, processes and valuation of education are primarily associated with teaching. Sharma (2018) points out that national development and a society prosperous with knowledge all begins from its teachers. Teaching is one of the most significant professions in the world. For the qualitative improvement of education, there is a need for effective teachers as the edict of education depends on effective teaching. The most important factor of education

is a teacher, his personal qualities, his educational qualifications, his mental health and the place that he occupies in school as well as in the community. Hence it is important for the teacher's life to be satisfied. But in the present era of growing complexities the teacher is one of the most exposed people to stress and strain. It has been found that teaching is one of the jobs which is full of stress (Borg & Riding, 1991; Brouwers & Tomic, 1999; Sharma & Marwaha, 2020).

Occupational Stress

Occupational stress is the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope. Stress occurs in a wide range of work circumstances but is often made worse when employees feel they have little support from other teachers and staffs, as well as little control over work processes. There is often confusion between pressure or challenge and stress, and sometimes this is used to excuse bad management practice.

Individuals working in school settings are particularly vulnerable to Work related stress. Data from the 2013 *Gallup-Health-ways Well-Being Index* found that 46% of teachers in K-12 settings report high levels of daily stress during the school year. This level of stress is similar to that of nurses (46%) and physicians (45%) and is the highest (along with nurses) among the 14 professional categories included in the study ([Gallup, 2014](#)).

There are a multiple of factors contributing to the high rates of stress and burnout in the education field. Studies suggest that some of the most common sources of teacher stress include:

- High-stakes testing;
- Large class sizes;
- Student behavioral challenges;
- Inadequate resources;
- Poor physical space;
- Bureaucracy;
- Workload;
- Paperwork;
- High responsibility for others;
- Perceived inadequate recognition or advancement; and

Teachers who experience high stress related to their work are likely to have a number of negative physical and psychological symptoms and consequences, including:

- Emotional numbing
- Feeling “shut down”
- Loss of enjoyment
- Lack of energy
- A sense of cynicism or pessimism
- Increased illness or fatigue
- Aches and pains
- Increased absenteeism and “sick days”
- Greater problems with boundaries and
- Difficulty making decisions or making poor decisions

Mental Health

As it is obvious from aforementioned views that in order for a teacher to be mentally healthy that teacher has to ensure that all of the important factors of mental health such as Self efficacy, emotional intelligence, balanced self concept, adjustment, realistic perception are in equilibrium as they are equally important to keep in mind. In one of the study investigated by Bray-Clark and Bates (2003), they conclude that one of the important element for teacher effectiveness is teachers self efficacy and further articulated that teachers with high efficacy levels can produce student achievements across a range of academic disciplines as it helps and facilitates in delivery of course information, regulating student learning and in supporting teacher/student healthy interactions (Bandura, 1993; Barnes, 1998). Podell and Soodark (1993) supported this view that teachers with low self efficacy are less effective compared to their counterparts. Emotional intelligence of teachers too has a role play in teaching and learning process, as it has been investigated by researchers that it is correlated with a positive attitude toward work and with satisfaction with life and with work itself (Ignat & Clipa, 2012). Chan (2004) revealed that persons who possess low levels of self efficacy are low in the level of emotional quotient and consequently can jam important functions a teacher is expected serve in school in the form of creation of healthy climate suitable for smooth functioning of teaching-learning process in the school & rest of activities outside classroom. Penrose et al. (2007) in his research revealed that emotional intelligence can help teachers in identifying and regulating emotions of all kinds and then using reflective approach in dealing with them, using emotions for motivating themselves (Stein & Book, 2000), showing appropriate reactions to students (Brackett et al., 2009) and increasing their ability to respond constructively to students’ social-emotional needs.

Thus, it is concluded that mental health of teachers is necessary, both for their well being and effectiveness and quality in carrying out teaching-learning processes in the classroom in general, and in particular, for the all round development of students. Teaching is a human service profession; in order to teach effectively the teacher must possess sound mental health. A teacher of high mental health is able to modify his/her teaching methodology as

per the requirement or what situation demands and knows how & when to change from one instructional delivery to another and balances his teaching kite without any interference of external calls. A teacher with sound mental health is not only a prerequisite for classroom teaching but is an important construct that has to deal with the external life of school in terms of dealing with his or her school to taking the issues that are part and parcel of day to day school events. He has to prove himself not just inside the class room but his influence should be so pervasive that it can hug the whole atmosphere of school with positive results. Better conditions are needed to increase the mental health of teachers, as the teacher is a crucial figure in our society. Only when the teacher is functioning on a high level of mental health can he be sensitive to the needs of the children. Then we have a good teacher. Otherwise he is likely to project his own tensions just as any other person would do in a similar situation.

Some of the suggestions for promoting good mental health of teachers are as: Discuss mental health issues regularly with the other teachers. Incorporate more exercise including yoga, meditation. Encourage honest dialogue between teaching staff and school administrators on issues that can trouble individual's mental or psyche from any possible angle. Developing a conducive climate at school that can help each and every teacher to freely express himself without any fear or hesitation. Celebrating government's mental health policies in schools regularly

Self-Efficacy

Self-Efficacy is a person's particular set of beliefs that determine how well one can execute a plan of action in prospective situations (Bandura, 1977). To put it in more simple terms, self-efficacy is a person's belief in their ability to succeed in a particular situation. Self-efficacy also involves determination and perseverance – seeing as how it helps one overcome obstacles that would interfere with utilizing those innate abilities to achieve goals.

Teacher Self - Efficacy

Teacher self-efficacy is an important application of Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory to educational settings (Sharma, 2018). Teachers having efficacious engrossment in teaching activities such teachers holding high condense in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than to be avoided as threats. They set challenging goals and maintain strong commitment to the fact that the higher sense of self-efficacy in human beings includes great effort Persistence and resilience. So, the modern system needs teachers having strong self-efficacy and mental health. A teacher with high efficacy exhibits less anger, less stress, use of fewer control tactics, use of cooperative learning and more enthusiasm towards teaching (Sharma & Kaur, 2015; Sharma,2020). Teachers with high self-efficacy teach well due to their self- confidence and quality of motivating students (Khurshid,Quasism and Ashraf (2012).

Teachers with high self-efficacy are more motivated than the teachers with low self-efficacy. This motivation enhances their work. Such teachers provide an opportunity for student having low self-efficacy to learn a lesson from them. Akram and Khuwaja (2014) compared 100 working and 98 non working women of Pakistan and found that non -working women have higher level of depression and compared to working women. But married women working as manager, lawyers have more stress as compared to teachers, lecturers and doctors. A study was carried out with an objective to find out the contribution of emotional intelligence, occupational stress and self efficacy to job satisfaction.

Conclusion:

This positive way of thinking – believing that one is capable of achieving tasks they set out for themselves – is a boon because part of the struggle of getting better at anything or learning something new is making sure the person believes they are capable of carrying out said task successfully.

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