

“Suggestive Model for Special School Teachers to Cope Up their Occupational Stress”

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ABSTRACT

The present study was carried out with the main aim of measuring the occupational stress of teachers working in special schools and developing the Suggestive model for special school teachers to cope up the occupational stress. The data was collected by using **Teachers’ Job Stressor Scale,(TJSS)** constructed and standardized by **Rathod and Verma (2005)** with the help of purposive random cluster sampling. The findings of the research revealed that overall mild occupational Stress was found in special education teachers and Mild overloadedness, role conflict, powerlessness, role ambiguity, motivelessness and frail interpersonal relationship were also found among this group of teachers. On the basis of the stressors found in the present study and the stressors as well as coping strategies determined in past studies, a suggestive model was proposed for special school teachers to cope up their occupational stress.

Key Words: *Occupational Stress, Suggestive Model, Coping Strategies and Special School Teachers*

1.0.0 INTRODUCTION

Education is what, gives confidence, enrich knowledge, and develop skills to face the challenges, hassles and hurdles come the way of journey of life. There are various means of ways of getting education. One of the important means of education is Formal education receive in schools. It is important, because a child spends his 7-8 hours in school. Child most of the time interacts with his teachers. Teacher is one, whose impact remains on child’s mind throughout his life. It can be said that students are the reflection of their teachers. In such a condition teachers must be mentally healthy and should be free from any kind of stress so that a healthy impact can be placed on students. Teaching in special schools is considered a highly stressful occupation. Special school teachers have to face diverse

students, diverse conditions diverse nature of The sample consisted of 200 special school job. Consequences of occupational stress can teachers from selected from 15 schools of Delhi be determined by number of factors as - City. Purposive random cluster sampling reflecting burnout , physical and emotional technique was used. Researcher decided to adopt distress, stress-related health problems, Quantitative approach as best suited for this kind inability to cope with work stress ,lowered of study. For developing the research work, work productivity and choosing to leave the Descriptive Survey Methodology was adopted. profession.

Although a great deal of research on teachers' stress has been carried out since the late 1970s, studies on the stress experienced by teachers of children with special educational needs remain rather scarce despite the specific factors acting as stressors for teachers in special education schools or classes (*Fore, Martin, and Bender, 2002;*).

2.0.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To study the Occupational Stress of special education teachers.
2. To develop the suggestive model for special school teachers to cope up their occupational stress.

3.0.0 SAMPLE SELECTION

4.0.0 TOOLS

TEACHER'S JOB STRESSORS

SCALE (TJSS): This tool was used in the present study to measure the Occupational Stress of Special School Teachers. This tool is developed by *Rathod and Verma in 2005*. It includes six dimensions of stress faced by the school teachers as Overloadedness, Role conflict, Powerlessness, Role ambiguity, Motivelessness and Frail interpersonal relationship. Total 49 items are included under six dimensions.

5.0.0 ANALYSIS OF DATA AND RESULTS

The overall occupational stress of special school teachers was measured. The mean and S.D of scores of occupational stress and its sub dimensions of special school teachers were computed as shown in the following table:

Table 4.1.1 Descriptive Statistics of scores of Special School Teachers on TJSS

Dimensions of O.S.	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Overloadedness (OL)	200	106	5	54	24.06	8.916
Role Conflict (RC)	200	22	12	34	21.87	5.586
Powerlessness (PL)	200	49	13	37	23.22	3.707
Role ambiguity(RA)	200	24	11	39	25.61	5.969
Motivelessness(ML)	200	28	10	35	21.23	6.286
Frail I.P.Relationship (FIR)	200	25	9	38	21.49	5.437
Overall Occupational Stress(OL)	200	29	87	193	137.50	24.603

From the above table, it is clear that the range frail interpersonal relationship in their of scores for over all stress is 87-193 as the occupation. minimum and maximum scores for occupational stress is given 87 and 193 respectively. There is overall mild occupational stress found in special education teachers, because total mean value on job stressor scale was found **(137.50)**. As the manual shows that the range of scores for over all stress is 91-187. Mean value for special education teachers lies in the column of 128-154 i.e., above 50th percentile. Hence, it can be said that special school teachers feel overall mild stress in their occupation. The mean value for the sub dimension Overloadedness **(24.06)**, Role conflict **(21.87)**, powerlessness **(23.22)**, Role Ambiguity **(25.61)**, Motivelessness **(21.23)** and Frail interpersonal relationship is **(21.49)** Which lies on or above around 50th percentile. Therefore, it can be concluded that special school teachers feel mild Overloadedness, mild role conflict, feel mild powerlessness, mild role ambiguity, feel mild motivelessness and mild

Overall mild occupational stress was found in special education teachers. Mild overloadedness, role conflict, powerlessness, role ambiguity, motivelessness and frail interpersonal relationship were also found among this group of teachers. The causes for this finding may be that these teachers have to do lots of challenging task in their occupation .They have to deal with children and youth who have variety of disabilities. They have to develop individualized Education Programs (IEP) and to do lots of paperwork. They also make such special need students learn routine activities and skills required for day to day life. Teachers also have to interact frequently with parents, social worker, psychologist and therapist. In this way their diverse nature of job might make them stressed. In the past the similar results were found by many researchers that Special School teachers are found

experiencing moderate stress (**Maolin and Powelessness (PL)**): Powerlessness is *Xiaoxin ,2008; Male and May ,1997*). This the cause of stress when individual is result is also in tune with the result of not in position to control the outcome *Chakrawarti (1989) and Prasad (1990)*. They and do not perceive sufficient power to claim that teachers in special schools and act according to his/ her wish/ need. classes may be *particularly* prone to stress related illness.

6.0.0 SUGGESTIVE MODEL FOR SPECIAL SCHOOL TEACHERS TO COPE UP THE OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Stress has a major impact on mental and physical health. Evidence suggests that prolonged occupational stress can lead to physical, mental and emotional ill-health (*Borg, 2003; Kelsa, French and Fernande , 2005; Male and May, 1997; Travers and Cooper, 1996*). Work stress is believed to be one of the most important factors affecting productivity (*Berhem et al, 2004*). Furthermore, high levels of occupational stress are also associated with job dissatisfaction, absenteeism and work turnover

The stressors emerged out in the study are: Overloadedness, Role Conflict, Powerlessness, Role Ambiguity, Motivelessness and Frail inter-personal relationship. The details of stressors are as given below:

Overloadedness (OL): It refers to condition/ situation of increased level of work than a person has to do or forced to do according to rules and regulation for prescribed job.

Role Conflict (RC): Role Conflict refers to a situation in which an individual perceives disagreement, interference, or Incompatible work demand in his/her job.

Role ambiguity (RA): Role ambiguity refers to the role when it is uncertain, not clearly expressed or state of indefinite in nature or not distinct/ clear with reference to the particular job/ duties / work.

Motivelessness (ML): Motivelessness refers to a situation when an individual perceive obstacle in attaining/ obtaining the desired goal or do not have any goal which moves leads / motivates him/ her to do something.

Frail interpersonal relationship (FIR): Frail interpersonal relationship refers to a situation in which an individual perceives a stress due to existing unhealthy / un conductive relationship with colleague, officer, or subordinates.

From the review of empirical researches and the results of the present studies, researcher identified some stressors, which are generally experienced by the teachers who deal with special children at their work place. Researcher has listed all the stressors under major five domains as:

Administrative: Role overload and role conflict, Role ambiguity, Powerlessness, Motivelessness, Time/resource difficulties, Lack of resources, Inadequate facilities, Poor work place ethos, Conflict with demand and pressure.

Workload Based: Excessive work, prolonged work, Additional work and responsibilities, and long hour's task.

Classroom-based: Classroom climate, High ratio between teacher-pupils, Limited progress of pupils with an emphasis on pupils, Disruptive behaviours, Physical and emotional demands of job, too many responsibilities etc.

Personal Relationship Based: Lack of organizational support, Lack of supervisor support, Lack of support from colleagues, Lack of parents support and poor collaboration with colleagues

Social Status based: Insufficient salary, low social status, Lack of recognition and Lack of awareness of society.

6.0.0 COPING STRATEGIES FOR SPECIAL SCHOOL TEACHERS

Coping refers to the thoughts and actions people use to deal with a threatening situation. It is the cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands of the individual.

In other words it can be said that the tactics used to reduce the actual amount of stress experienced by a potential stressor are referred to as coping mechanisms. Coping can be seen as the process through which the stressor is managed.

As a process, *Lazarus (1966)* defined coping as an individual's efforts to change the stressor or the meaning of the stressor to the individual, thus lessening the impacts of the stress on the emotional, physical or psychological well-being of the individual.

Reddy and Anuradha (2013) suggested some measures to overcome occupational stress, which could prove beneficial to teachers in coping with stress are: improve self esteem, build self confidence, work on building emotional intelligence competencies, develop a good sense of humour, practice yoga and meditation, exercise regularly, foster a supportive friend circle, cultivate hobbies, develop effective communication skills, and seek professional help, if necessary. *Antoniou, Polychroni and Kotroni (2009)* furthermore, listed out a number of key coping strategies, that contributed to reducing stress of special school teachers as: Social support, Time Involvement, Logic, Task strategies and Separating Home-work relationships. The most popular coping strategy used by teachers is problem solving followed by seek for support, (*Maolin and Xiaoxin, 2008*). Self-knowledge as the main coping strategy to overcome work stress identified by *Berhem et al, 2004* identified a number of coping strategies used by special education teachers, also proposed in an earlier study by *Lazarus and Folkman (1984)* as general approaches for coping with demanding circumstances. These fell into three major categories as: **problem-focused, emotion-focused and avoidance coping strategies.**

On the basis of the review of empirical literature and researcher's own experience, a list of some coping strategies is prepared which may be helpful for Special School Teachers to overcome them from their occupational stress so that they could make the best use of their potential, knowledge and skills in such demanding and challenging occupation. They are categorized under major five categories.

Problem-focused strategy: This strategy relies on using active ways to directly tackle the situation that caused the stress. In this person must concentrate on the problem. Here are some examples: Analyze the situation and effective planning, Effective supervision, Congenial work climate, Use of motivational techniques, Increment in Salary, Healthy and fascinating work climate, Apply what you have already learned to your daily life, Talk to a person that has a direct impact on the situation, Social support, incentives Participation in decision making and Professional support.

There are some strategies which can be used by special school teachers to reduce their stress level at their work place. It includes basically two types of coping strategies:

1. Emotion-focused strategy: Emotion-focused coping strategies are used to handle feelings of distress, rather than the actual problem situation. Here, stressful teachers have to focus on their emotions: Imagine/Magic thinking, Avoidance, Develop a good sense of humour, Develop Self esteem, self confidence, Build emotional intelligence competency and Opting Rational coping behaviour

2. Efficiency Focussed coping strategies: These are also known as Active coping strategies. Active coping strategies look for ways to make the work more interesting by reorganizing the work and setting the priorities. They are as follows: Task Strategies, Time structure, Reorganise work, Be positive, Develop effective Communication skills, Accept yourself (and others), Make connections with people, Accept the condition and deal effectively, Develop self-

discipline and control, Problem solving and Practice, practice, practice for a long life.

3. Life Style Focussed Coping Strategies: Having the balanced and nutritious meal, Get adequate sleep, Practice Yoga, Meditation and Exercise, Engage in creative activities and Cultivate hobbies

4. Problem-focused strategy: This strategy relies on using active ways to directly tackle the situation that caused the stress. In this person must concentrate on the problem. Here are some examples: Analyze the situation and effective planning, Effective supervision, Congenial work climate, Use of motivational techniques, Increment in Salary, Healthy and fascinating work climate, Apply what you have already learned to your daily life, Talk to a person that has a direct impact on the situation, Social support, incentives Participation in decision making and Professional support.

Also there are some strategies suggested by researchers in their studies, which could prove beneficial to teachers in coping up with their stress. They are as follows: to improve self esteem, build self confidence, building emotional intelligence competencies, fostering a supportive friends circle, having the self knowledge, avoiding the source of stress and relaxation techniques etc.

In suggestive model, various stressors that cause stress in Special School Teachers are identified and effective coping strategies depending on different situation and person are given. on the basis of above identified occupational stressors and given coping strategies, a figurative picture of suggestive model is given in following figure:

SUGGESTIVE MODEL



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