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EXAMINING OCCUPATIONAL STRESS DIFFERENCES AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN SIKKIM

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ABSTRACT

Occupational stress has become a popular challenge in the teaching profession all over the globe. It is one of those factors which effects the overall performance and the overall wellbeing of teachers. The present study aims to examine stress among secondary school teachers of Sikkim in terms of variables like gender, type of management, educational qualification, professional qualification, and locale. The desired data was collected from 504 teachers of Sikkim from all the six districts using random sampling technique through an Occupational Stress Scale developed by Sajid Jamal and Abdul Raheem. The data was analysed using statistical tools like percentage and t-test. The study revealed no significant difference in occupational stress between male and female, government and private, graduate and post graduate, and trained and untrained secondary school teachers in Sikkim. Interestingly, a significant difference in occupational stress was observed between urban and rural secondary school teachers. Therefore, findings indicate that locale plays an important role in determining the stress level of secondary school teachers of Sikkim.

KEYWORDS: *Occupational stress, Secondary school teachers, Gender, Type of management, Educational qualification, Professional qualification and Locale*

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is one of the most highly respected professions in all societies. This respect has developed over time, as teachers are the backbone of the education system. To maintain quality in education, their well-being is an essential concern. However, due to the growing complexities in the education system, teachers are increasingly exposed to occupational stress (Paroi, 2024). Workload and job insecurity have been found are common stressors amongst teachers (Shridevi and Hebbar, 2021). Some other common factors causing occupational stress are excess work load, managerial demands, organisational atmosphere, and professional and academic discord. These stressors can have a negative impact in their performance and their physical wellbeing (Pei and Guoli, 2007). Overall, stress at work results in affecting the teachers physically, mentally, and emotionally reducing efficiency in their performance. Thus, understanding and managing stress amongst teachers is essential to maintain quality education (Mustafa et al., 2015).

The diversified geographic, economic, and social conditions of Sikkim have had varying influences on the teaching population of the state. Areas with better access, amenities, and growth opportunities, have a higher concentration of schools, exposing teachers to a larger student population and increasing their workload. On the other hand, some areas experience challenging landscape, has fewer schools, a reduced workload, and limited access to educational facilities, infrastructure, and growth opportunities. Therefore, the level of stress varies notably across the state. (Choudhury, 2006). Thus, the present study aims to compare the stress phenomena amongst the secondary school teachers of Sikkim.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Zhang (2024) in his study on The Relationship between Occupational Stress and Mental Health of Rural Teachers: The Role of Psychological Resilience and Social Support, found a significant positive association between job stress and mental health issues faced by rural school teachers.

Kaur and Kumar (2017) conducted a study on occupational stress among urban school teachers in New Delhi and highlighted important contributing factors of stress such as socio-economic status, work experience, and limited promotional opportunities. The study found that high stress levels significantly impacted teacher performance and recommended regular stress evaluation and counselling for teachers.

Sharma (2019) did a cross-cultural study on occupational stress, depression, and psychological wellbeing among school teachers of Sikkim. A notable difference was observed between male and female teachers regarding occupational stress. Female teachers were more depressed as compared to male teachers.

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Rai (2018) conducted A study on the job satisfaction and job stress of secondary school teachers of east and south districts of Sikkim and found no significant difference between gender and type of management with regard to job stress.

Sambasivarao (2017) conducted a study of job stress of secondary school teachers of west Godavari and found no significant difference between teachers above 35 years and those below 35 years of age and teachers with experience above 15 years and below 15 years in relation to stress in West Godavari district. Besides, significant difference was found between graduate and post teachers, and Government and private school teachers, in relation to stress in West Godavari district.

Pokhrel (2017) performed a study of occupational stress among secondary school of Sikkim.
The study explored a significant difference in occupational stress comparing government and private institutions as well as male and female teachers. Moreover, no significant difference in occupational stress level existed owing to gender variation, management variation, arts and science stream, 10 years and 10 years and more years of experience and trained an untrained teacher of secondary schools of Sikkim with reference to poor colleague relations, student's behaviour, lack of recognition, lack of resources, and poor relationship with colleagues.

Pei and Guoli (2007) carried out a survey of occupational stress of secondary and elementary school teachers and the lessons learned. The study resulted in finding a significant difference based on gender and length of service in terms of occupational stress amongst the teachers at secondary and elementary level.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the level of occupational stress among secondary school teachers in Sikkim.
2. To compare the occupational stress between male and female secondary school teachers in Sikkim.
3. To compare the occupational stress between government and private secondary school teachers in Sikkim.
4. To compare the occupational stress between graduate and post graduate secondary school teachers in Sikkim.
5. To compare the occupational stress between trained and untrained secondary school teachers in Sikkim based on professional qualification.
6. To compare the occupational stress levels between urban and rural secondary school teachers in Sikkim.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

H_o1: There is no significant difference in occupational stress between male and female secondary school teachers in Sikkim.
H_o2: There is no significant difference in occupational stress between government and private secondary school teachers in Sikkim.
H_o3: There is no significant difference in occupational stress between graduate and post graduate secondary school teachers in Sikkim.
H_o4: There is no significant difference in occupational stress between trained and untrained secondary school teachers in Sikkim.
H05: There is no significant difference in occupational stress between urban and rural secondary school teachers in Sikkim.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Method: Descriptive survey method was adopted to investigate occupational stress level among the secondary school teachers in Sikkim.

Population: The population of the study consisted of Government and Private secondary school teachers of Sikkim.
Sample: A proportionate random sampling method was adopted for selecting the sample.
The sample comprised 200 secondary school teachers from Sikkim, including 100 male and 100 female teachers. Among them, 100 were from government schools and 100 were from private schools.

Table 1.1
Details of the samples collected

Total No. of Samples collected	Gender		Type of Management	
	Male	Female	Government	Private
200	100	100	100	100

Tool
Teachers' Occupational Stress Scale, developed by Sajid Jamal and Abdul Raheem, was used as a tool for data collection.

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Statistical Techniques

The data collected were analysed using statistical tools such as percentage, and the t-test to draw comparisons and derive meaningful interpretations.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Objective No: 1: To assess the level of occupational stress among secondary school teachers in Sikkim.

Table 2.1

Occupational Stress level among Secondary School Teachers of Sikkim

Category	Ranges of Scores	Number of Teachers	Percentage %
High Stress	87 and above	48	24
Moderate Stress	86-68	122	61
Low Stress	67 and below	30	15
Total		**200**	**100**

As presented in Table 2.1, out of the 200 secondary school teachers in Sikkim. However, 24% showed high stress, 61% showed Moderate Stress, and 15% showed very low stress. The overall finding showed that the majority of the secondary school teachers had moderate stress.

Objective No: 2: To compare the occupational stress between male and female secondary school teachers in Sikkim.

Table 2.2

Comparison of Occupational Stress levels in terms of gender

Groups	Number	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig. level
Male	100	77.06	11.37			
Female	100	80.98	10.76	198	2.505	*

** means significant at 0.05 level*

In the findings displayed in Table 2.2, the calculated "t" value which is 2.505 is higher than the critical "t" value. Therefore, the hypothesis, stating that there is no significant difference in occupational stress between male and female secondary school teachers in Sikkim, is not accepted.

Objective No: 3: To compare the occupational stress between government and private secondary school teachers in Sikkim.

Table 2.3

Comparison of Occupational Stress levels between government and private secondary school teachers in Sikkim

Groups	Number	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig. level
Government	100	80.45	10.45			
Private	100	77.59	11.80	198	1.814	*NS*

NS means not significant

The calculated "t" value as shown in Table 2.3 is 1.814. Since the obtained value of "t" is lower than the critical "t" value, no significant difference has been observed between these two groups concerning occupational stress. Therefore, the hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference in occupational stress between government and private secondary school teachers in Sikkim, is not rejected.

Objective No: 4: To compare the occupational stress among secondary school teachers in Sikkim based on professional qualification.

Table 2.4

Comparison of Occupational Stress levels among secondary school teachers in Sikkim based on their educational qualification

Groups	Number	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig. level
Graduate	94	78.90	11.49	198	.137	*NS*
Post-graduate	106	79.12	11.01			

NS means not significant

As presented in Table 2.4, the calculated "t" value is .137. Since the calculated "t" value is lower than the critical "t" value, there is no significant difference observed between these two groups concerning occupational stress. Thus, the hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference in occupational stress between graduate and post-graduate secondary school teachers in Sikkim, is not rejected.

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Objective No: 5: To compare the occupational stress levels between urban and rural secondary school teachers in Sikkim.

Table 2.5

Comparison of Occupational Stress levels among secondary school teachers in Sikkim based on their professional qualification

Groups	Number	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig. level
Trained	182	79.13	11.21	198	.448	*NS*
Untrained	18	77.89	11.48			

NS means not significant

According to the findings presented in Table 2.5, the calculated "t" value is .448. Since the calculated "t" value is lower than the critical "t" value, there is no significant difference observed between these two groups concerning occupational stress. Hence, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in occupational stress between trained and untrained secondary school teachers in Sikkim, is accepted.

Objective No: 6: There is no significant difference in occupational stress between urban and rural secondary school teachers in Sikkim.

Table 2.6

Comparison of Occupational Stress levels between urban and rural secondary school teachers in Sikkim

Groups	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig level
Urban	85	80.66	10.30	198	1.79	NS
Rural	115	77.80	11.73			

NS means not significant

According to the findings presented in Table 2.6, the calculated "t" value is 1.79. Since the calculated "t" value is lower than the critical "t" value, there is no significant difference observed between these two groups concerning occupational stress. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in occupational stress between urban and rural secondary school teachers in Sikkim, is not rejected.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The present study intended to examine occupational stress levels among secondary school teachers in Sikkim based on various demographic variables viz. gender, type of management, educational qualification, professional qualification, and locale. The results of the study revealed that majority of the teachers of Sikkim experienced average/moderate stress. It was also found that there was no significant difference in occupational stress levels amongst secondary school teachers in terms type of management, educational qualification, professional qualification, and locale. However, a significant difference in occupational stress was reported in terms of gender. The female secondary school teachers of Sikkim demonstrated a higher level of stress as compared to male secondary school teachers of Sikkim.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study is limited to secondary school teachers teaching in government and private secondary schools of Sikkim.

CONCLUSION

Teaching has been considered as one of the most gratifying professions. Yet, like all purposeful endeavours, it comes with its own challenges. This study aims to highlight occupational stress, one of the most prevalent challenges associated with teaching. The findings revealed that secondary school teachers in Sikkim experienced moderate stress. Also, the secondary school teachers in Sikkim did not exhibit any significant differences in occupational stress in terms of type of management, educational qualification, professional qualification, or locale. However, a significant difference was observed in the occupational stress levels regarding gender. Female teachers of Sikkim experienced a greater level of stress as compared to the male teachers. However, these findings contradict Aku, H. (2015), who reported no significant gender differences, and Aftab, M., & Khatoon, T. (2012), who found that males experienced higher job-related occupational stress than females.

Considering the findings of this study adequate steps can be taken to manage stress among teachers. Stress management seminars and workshop can be organized to address and manage this issue (Agyapong, Obuobi-Donkor, Burback, & Wei, 2022). Identifying and managing occupational stress is vital to improve the improving the education system (Ali, Ishtiaq, and Ahmad, 2013).

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