

## **Determinants of Occupational Stress among Secondary Teachers in Public and Private Sector Schools**

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### **Abstract**

In recent years there has been an increased rate of awareness about occupational stress and its effects on work competencies. The teaching profession is one of the sensitive profession on which the future of any country depends. As far as Pakistan is concerned teachers and teaching both are unfortunately not enjoying very good and healthy social and financial status. Thus, the study was designed to examine the determinants of occupational stress among secondary school teachers. The main objectives of the study were: to examine the occupational stress of teachers teaching at public and private secondary schools and to identify the reasons for occupational stress among teachers of secondary schools. To achieve the objectives of the study, the researchers selected descriptive research design. Population of the study included all public and private sector school teachers. The sample size was comprised of one hundred teachers (50 male and 50 female) through a stratified random sampling technique. David Fontana Professional Life Stress inventory (1989) and inventory used in UCU Health and Safety by John Bamford was adapted. Data were analyzed through mean, standard deviation, percentages, and t-test. Findings of the study revealed that private school teachers have a significantly higher level of professional life stress as compared to the teachers of public schools, a job is the primary cause of occupational stress, and teachers were not satisfied with their role in schools which is one of the determinants of stress. It is recommended that the administration of a private sector school may provide a tension-free environment for teachers.

**Keywords:** *Occupational stress, Teachers, Secondary school*

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## 1. Introduction

Stress is a complicated term to define because of its subjectivity and complexity. Stress has been a topic of interest to researchers in four quite different disciplines (medicine, sociology, management, and psychology), and they have come up with their concepts and methodologies that make this topic more complex and multifaceted (Cummings & Cooper, 1998; Fevre et al., 2003). Selye introduced the term “stress” and proposed the first and most general definition: “Stress is the body's non-specific response to any need” (Selye, 1976).

Psychologists use the term overload instead of stress and have identified two types: quantitative and qualitative overload. Quantitative overload is too much work to do in the condition of time available. It is a significant source of stress and stress-related illnesses. Qualitative overload involves not much work to do, but it is too difficult to be done, which means not having the ability to perform the task, which leads to work stress. Even those employees with the highest level of competence sometimes find themselves in situations that they cannot deal with the demands of that specific work. The riskiest threats to the physical, emotional, and intellectual well-being of teachers are the stressful and emotional situations they encounter almost every day. These threats create a devastating effect on teachers' professional health, which unavoidably leads to burnout and dropout. Kyriacou's (2001) definition of teacher stress indicates unpleasant, negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, depression that is experienced by teachers from their work (Margolis, Kroes & Quinn, 1974).

The topic of stress is vastly discussed and researched in different fields, including the teaching profession as well. The majority of researches in the field revealed that as compared to other professions, teachers experience a high level of stress because of the nature of the job. A survey revealed that seventeen percent of educators were unusually nervous and that a further 11 percent had suffered a nervous breakdown (McEwen & Thompson, 1997).

Occupational stress can be described as the harmful physical and emotional response that occurs when work desires do not match the worker's ability, resources, or needs (NIOSH, 1999). However, occupational stress can be tough to define the structure. This is stress on work, but work stress occurs on one person. This is where we encounter problems; because every worker brings a certain degree of stress to work (Greenberg, 1990). A record of work stress indicates that the pressure source can come from multiple sources. Some stressors are considered to be daily work stress, or the pressure inherent in work, some related to the role of employees in the organization (the role of personality pressure), some related to interpersonal stress, some related to career

development, and some work environment Stress-related, or climate and organization in the workplace (Steber, 1998).

Teachers often bear the burden of teaching. For all teachers, the unified workload may not be a satisfactory solution, but the difficult work will cause teachers' dissatisfaction, and professional satisfaction is a necessary condition for the healthy growth of teachers' personality. At present, teachers are in a weak position and low self-esteem, which is the main reason for psychological stress.

### **1.1 Objectives of the Study**

1. To identify the causes of occupational stress among teachers of secondary schools.
2. To examine the occupational stress of teachers teaching at public and private secondary schools.

### **1.2 Hypotheses of Study**

$H_{01}$ : There is no significant difference in the mean score of the nature of job among secondary school teachers.

$H_{02}$ : There is no significant difference in the mean score of the nature of role among secondary school teachers.

$H_{03}$ : There is no significant difference in the mean score of nature of home-work among Secondary school teachers.

$H_{04}$ : There would be no significant difference between mean scores of public and private secondary school teachers on the occupational stress scale.

## **2. Literature Review**

The word stress rooted from the Latin word "Stringere," in the 17th century it is commonly used to refer to difficulties in the face of adversity or pain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it was used to chew impulsive, stress, strain or reliable, and reference object or a human. Stress is a result of a situation in which individuals perceive and process in response to specific events in his environment that he appraises as frightening or challenging towards him (Santrock, 2001). Teacher stress includes specific conditions that create adverse effects such as frustration and anxiety due to various aspects of jobs. There are various reasons why the teacher becomes a higher target of occupational stress. Teachers are faced with so many different needs, whether it is from the school administration, or parents, and society, at the same time, requiring teachers to enhance creativity and innovation in terms of their quality and critical thinking to cope with the advances in science and technology. If they cannot provide knowledge and services for the community, teachers will be criticized (Lath, 2010).

Bańkowska (2016) stated that researchers Cooper and Marschalleminent six groups of work stressors at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to their

theory, the stress at work may be caused by work-related factors those are lousy working conditions, overwork, time pressure, the factors linked to the role of execution are responsibility to employees and role conflicts, factors at work caused by bad relationships (conflict with superiors, colleagues), factors related to career development (lack of job security, promotion or too fast-climbing career ladder), factors related to organizational structure and organizational climate, and pressure from unorganized sources (family and economic issues and life crisis of employees).

Mainly some of the familiar sources of stress include:

1. Many of us have heard the expression "fight or flight"; this is a general reaction towards danger in all animals and people. When a person is frightened that someone or something may hurt him physically, the body naturally answers with a burst of energy so that a person can survive the dangerous situation (fight) or escape from it (flight). This is generally named as survival stress.
2. Internal stress is when people make their pressure. When people worry about things, they cannot control or put themselves in this situation often; they know the case will cause stress. Some people become obsessed with this kind of tense lifestyle that results from being remaining under stress; in some cases, these types of people even look for stressful situations and experience stress about even those things that are not stressful at all (Huebner, Gilligan, & Cobb, 2002).
3. These are the things around us, causing stress, such as noise, congestion, and pressure of work or family response.
4. The pressure of fatigue and overwork takes a very long time to build up can be hard on the body. It can be because of too much work at a job, school, or home. Another reason for this type of stress is not knowing how to manage time properly or how to take time out for relaxation (Griffith, Steptoe, & Cropley, 1999)

Kenney (1999) used the Person-Environment theory as a way to understand the process of variation between employees and their work setting. The basis of this context, occupational stress is well-defined by job characteristics that are painful to individuals due to a lack of relationship between individual abilities and attributes and workplace needs. Caplan (1987) suggested recalling the past, current, and expected Person-Environment might affect happiness and performance.

In the work happiness equation, the function of individual differences shows a vital role. Warr (2007) and Warr and Clapperton (2010) gives an idea of how different personality attributes affect happiness, and how happiness changes

on the different types of individuals associated with others. They also raise questions about whether individuals have problems or not be consistent. However, the “general message” that comes out of this approach is that happiness – unhappiness comes not only from different sources of work, but also from within, and “must seek for possible improvements in both ways” (Warr & Clapperton, 2010).

Nelson and Simmons (2003, 2004) and Simmons and Nelson (2007) offer another approach that incorporates the overall stress model into the positive qualities of eustress and suggests that any encounter can produce positive or negative the meaning. The model "focuses on positive responses and their impact on performance and health." Stimulatingly, these authors continue to point to their concept of “taste positive” and how this provides a new perspective on how people respond. Similarly, when individual differences are considered to evoke positive beliefs, these authors point out how these beliefs can help individuals, create positive evaluations, develop resources for managing demanding encounters, and focus on those areas that help the work environment to be positive. The opportunity to create a background. Although it is now considered that it is time to incorporate positive and negative factors into our stress theory, these authors believe that research work pressure should be “best seen as a constellation of theory and model, and each theory and model the process or phenomenon of meaning" (Simmons & Nelson. 2007).

Motseke (1998) investigated stress among 368 teachers teaching at secondary school. The study identified that organizational, personal, interpersonal, and environmental stressors contributed to the teacher’s stress. Jonas (2001) researched the relationship between social support, stress levels, and the general health of teachers. The study found that there is a direct relationship between the stress experienced by educators and their general health. The factors contributing to educator stress identified in the study are age, family size, gender, family income, and marital status, and support.

Olivier and Venter’s study (2003) focused on levels of stress and the extent of the relationship between specific identified stressors and stress among teachers in five secondary schools. The results reveal that teachers experience stress, and 20 percent suffer from severe stress. The study identified stressors that include work-related stressors, discipline issues, and increased teacher-learner ratio. Kumar (2012) conducted a study of stress - private vocational college teachers; found that most teachers believe that by concerning faculty members in the decision-making process is the most crucial strategy undertaken by management to reduce the stress level of teachers. Stress in school is the most result of work-load; that is, where there is more demand than an individual can

fulfill the expectations of the situation. This overload of work includes issues related to curriculum, large classes, and class issues, all of which have been identified as a significant source of stress for teachers (Adams, 1999). Collaboration with others in the workplace can support and pressure sources. Studies have shown that the negative impact of the difference between the pressure on the relationship between teachers and students' learning motivation (Kinman & Jones, 2003).

In addition to pressure overload of work, educators reported role conflict, role ambiguity, and lack of pressure as their main reason for occupational stress (Motseke, 1998). Teachers often have complexity in performing their work effectively; they are expected not only to meet the needs of learners but to follow strict teaching methods. Too many rules and requirements of a large school can be stressful; school culture has the potential to act as stress. It refers to the decision by the school to shape and practice share prevailing norms, values, and beliefs (Conley & Wooseley, 2000). Family and work are interdependent and interrelated to such extent that experiences in one area affect the other. Homework interface can be called overlap between work and home, and in a two-way relationship between the stress related to work and family life, vice versa will affect each other. It asks about whether home problems are brought to work and work has harms home life (Alexandros, Matilyn & Cary, 2003).

Gebrekirstos (2015) inspected the level of occupational stress among teachers of secondary school; for that purpose, 321 graduate teachers were taken as a sample of the study. All teachers of the study were experiencing a high level of stress-related with different sources, which include administration of the institute, interpersonal issues, and students-parents related issues. Another research was conducted by Hatti, Aneelraj, Kalita, and Baruah (2016) which focuses on a comparison between stress among public and private sector teachers, findings revealed that there was no significant difference among teachers regarding their sector; all teachers were suffering through high occupational stress level.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study was descriptive in nature research, and it was based on a survey method. A quantitative approach was applied for the collection and interpretation of data.

#### **3.2 Population of Study**

The population of the study consisted of all teachers teaching in public and private secondary schools of Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

### **3.3 Sample & Sampling Technique**

Stratified Random sampling was used to draw a representative sample from the population. The researchers selected 50 public and 50 private secondary school teacher disproportionate random sampling technique from secondary schools of Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

### **3.4 Instrumentation**

Keeping in view the nature and needs of the study, two instruments were used: David Fontana Professional Life Stress inventory (1989) and inventory used in UCU Health and Safety by John Bamford was adapted. Reliability of being instrument measured by Gutman split-half reliability method, reliability of David Fontana Professional Life Stress inventory was .82 and the reliability of John Bamford inventory was .78.

### **3.5 Data Collection**

Data were collected through personal visits to the sample schools. The researcher collected data with the help of personal meetings with the teachers, including in the sample. The respondents were given enough time to answer all the questions. One hundred thirty questionnaires were distributed among teachers, and the rate of response was 77% that was 100 teachers out of 130.

## **4. Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The researcher scored the professional life stress inventory with the help of the key given on the scale by David Fontana. The response was categorized into four categories. Each category showed a specific level of stress. The categories of the score were as follow:

Score 0 – 15 showed that stress is not a problem,

Score 16 – 30 showed a moderate range of stress for a busy professional person,

Score 31 – 45 showed that stress was a problem,

Score 45 – 60 showed that stress was the primary problem, and something must be done without delay.

According to this given scale, the stress level of were respondents was analyzed. While the second inventory was meant to find out the factors that were causing occupational stress among the teachers. The instrument was based on a three-point Likert scale. Data were analyzed with the help of percentage, mean, and t-test.

Table 4.1  
*Determinants of Occupational stress related to job*

Q.No	Yes	Neutral	No	Total
1	59%	10%	31%	100%
2	44%	19%	37%	100%
3	32%	03%	65%	100%
4	40%	9%	50%	100%
5	37%	24%	39%	100%
6	59%	01%	40%	100%
7	67%	13%	20%	100%
8	49%	14%	37%	100%
9	30%	02%	68%	100%
10	39%	03%	58%	100%
11	35%	01%	64%	100%
12	38%	08%	54%	100%
13	7%	12%	51%	100%
14	35%	12%	53%	100%

Table 4.1 deals with the determinants of occupational stress. The above table shows that 59 percent of the teachers were satisfied with their job generally, 44 percent of the teachers felt that their skill, knowledge, and experiences were related with the requirements of the job, 65 percent of the teachers responded that their skills, knowledge, and experiences were not being used as much as they liked to use them, 50 percent teachers responded that class preparation time was not adequate for them. Given that 39 percent of the teachers' adequate resources were not available to do their job. Fifty-nine percent of the teachers responded that the workload was appropriate. Deadlines and targets were achievable for 67 percent of teachers. According to 49 percent, the respondent's health, safety, and welfare of staff were priority within the school environment. Sixty-eight percent of the teachers were not satisfied with the physical working environment. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents were not satisfied with the facilities available for food and drink at school. Sixty-four percent of the teachers reported that they do not have opportunities during working hours for rest, relaxation, and exercise. Fifty-four percent of the respondents were not satisfied with the facilities available to staff for counseling. Fifty-one percent of the teachers were not satisfied with the facilities available to staff for health advice and information.



Fifty-three percent of the teachers were not satisfied with the facilities available to staff for safety advice and information.

Table 4.2

*Determinants of occupational stress related to Role*

Q.No	Yes	Neutral	No	Total
15	31%	01%	68%	100%
16	40%	26%	34%	100%
17	39%	11%	50%	100%

Table 4.2 deals with the determinants of occupational stress related to the role. Sixty-eight percent of the teachers were not satisfied with the level of involvement in the decision-making process, 40 percent of the teachers responded that their work is appreciated and seen as valuable, while 50 percent of the teaching staff were of the view that they had not clearly defined job description and duties. Thus, results showed that the majority of the teachers were not much satisfied with their role at school.

Table 4.3

*Determinants of occupational stress related to Home – Work Interface*

Q.No	Yes	Neutral	No	Total
18	54%	00%	46%	100%
19	64%	00%	36%	100%
20	29%	06%	65%	100%
21	55%	10%	35%	100%
22	45%	13%	42%	100%
23	28%	10%	72%	100%

Table 3 deals with the determinants of occupational stress among secondary school teachers related to the homework interface, 54 percent of the teachers were of the view that their home/social life was affected detrimentally by the events that happen at work, 64 percent of the teachers reported that their work was affected detrimentally by the events that happen at home or in their social life, 65 percent of the respondents reported that during the last year they never take time off work because of their ill-health which was caused by stress at work, 55 percent of the teachers were of the view that their physical health was affected by their job, 45 percent of the respondents reported that their mental and emotional health was being affected by their job and 62 percent of the respondents reported that they were not habitual of smoking or using relaxing drugs to help them cope with problems at work.

Table 4.4

*Comparison of public and private secondary school teachers on occupational stress*

Variable	N	Mean	SD	T	Df	Sig
1. Public	50	98	14.21			
				6.743	98	.001
2. Private	50	120	15.06			

Table 4 indicates the results of an independent sample t-test.  $t(98) = 6.743$ ,  $p=.001$  shows that there is a significant difference found between public and private secondary school teachers on occupational stress. The mean score of public and private secondary school teachers also showed that private secondary school teachers had a higher level of occupational stress (120) as compared to the teachers of public secondary schools (98).

## 5. Discussion

The present study aimed to examine the determinants of occupational stress among secondary school teachers in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Results indicated that the nature and demands of a job are the primary cause of occupational stress. The reason may be that the fair amount of work that teachers have to do is the one factor that has had a definite impact on stress levels in the profession. Nayak (2008) conducted a study on factors, and the impact of the stress on university teachers pointed out that the majority of teachers are always mixed up with the pressure and stress due to the complexity of the work. In another study, a group of teachers Nwimo (2005) studied in a neighboring Enugu State had a low level of stress.

Another finding of the study related to the determinants of occupational stress revealed that the majority of teachers were not satisfied with their role in the school, and it is the primary cause of occupational stress. One possible reason may be that dealing with certain complexities of the teaching role may be more difficult if there is a lower level of professional education. This finding corroborates the findings of an earlier study on teacher stress (Tsai, Fung, & Chow, 2006; Nwimo, 2007). Pandey and Tripathy (2001) also found similar results from their research, results revealed that teaching is a stressful occupation and role ambiguity is a significant source of job stress in this industry.

The finding of the present study revealed that homework interface is a significant cause of occupational stress for the majority of teaching faculty of public and private secondary schools. A reason may be the sheer amount of work at home as well as at the workplace on teachers. A study by Ahsan and Abdullah (2009) identified homework interface as a major determinant of job stress among Malaysian teachers.

Finding of the study indicated that private school teachers have a significantly higher level of occupational stress as compared to the teachers of public schools. A possible reason may be that the private school teachers are very much sensitive and dissatisfied with the salary payment compared to government school sectors. This finding is in line with Ansaul's (2014) study results, which found that school teachers are being faced with high stress in the private sector as compared to the teachers of the government sector. Similarly, Harish & JeyaPrabha (2018) found the same results in their study.

### **6. Conclusions**

1. The majority of teachers were not satisfied with their job, and the job is the primary cause of occupational stress.
2. The majority of teaching faculty was not satisfied with their role in the school, and it is the primary cause of occupational stress.
3. The homework interface was a cause of occupational stress for the majority of teaching faculty of secondary schools.
4. Private secondary schoolteachers have a significantly higher level of occupational stress as compared to the teachers of public secondary schools.

### **7. Recommendations**

Following are some recommendations to cope with the stress and its causes:

1. To increase the level of job satisfaction among teacher's institutions may offer some kind of time management workshops and training so that teachers may cope with deadlines and workload.
2. A healthy and feasible working environment may be provided by improving the working conditions of offices by the provision of comfortable seating, temperature maintaining devices, and stationery to teachers.
3. It is suggested to the top management of institutions that teachers may be involved in significant decisions that were taken for the institutions so that they may feel more independent, responsible, and involved.
4. Training and equal opportunities for quality training can be arranged through short courses, seminars, and workshops, stress management skills, problem-solving teachers provided by the government and private colleges in their careers better development, interpersonal skills may be part of the service and pre-service training programs.
5. Institutions can provide as standard rooms, a gym, and a considerable area of activity corner from happy hour assignments like a valuable time where social teaching can have the opportunity to rest and have a snack or meal.

6. Collaboration between the public and private sectors may be established, so that faculty members of both sectors support each other and work together for the development of the education sector.

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