



ISSN (E): 2277- 7695
ISSN (P): 2349-8242
NAAS Rating: 5.23
TPI 2022; SP-11(4): 1053-1056
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www.thepharmajournal.com
Received: 22-02-2022
Accepted: 24-03-2022

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Impact of occupational stress on high school principals

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Abstract

Occupational stress occurs when workers perceive an imbalance between their capability and resources to meet these demands. A study conducted to examine the impact of occupational stress on high school principals. Sample comprised of 60 principals from Belagavi District and 60 principals from Kalaburagi District who attended training at SISLEP Dharwad. Occupational Stress Index and Aggarwal scale of SES were used to know the condition of job related stress and Socio Economic Status of the principals. Results revealed that, majority of principals from both Government and Aided high schools had moderate level of occupational stress. Government principals experienced occupational stress in the dimensions of role overload, role ambiguity, powerlessness, peer group relations, intrinsic impoverishment and unprofitability. Where as, Aided high school principals had high level of occupational stress in the dimensions of role overload, under participation and unprofitability. Principals who belonged to 46-50 years in government school and 51-55 years in aided schools had more of occupational stress. Female principals from both the school and rural locality had more of occupational stress as compared to male principals.

Keywords: Occupational stress, socio economic status, high school principals

Introduction

Principals play a vital role in the society by helping students acquire knowledge. Principal should create an environment conducive for the teaching staff, non teaching staffs and students through his leadership style, managing people, data processes for foster school improvement. A principal of the school must use managerial skills as well as general intelligence to accomplish responsibilities and fulfill the mission of the school. Due to workload pressures, few principals express anger and frustration that adversely impact on educational outcome and work related stress. Lack of resource for teaching, delay in promotion, teaching a large class and poor attitude of students towards work were the major sources of occupational stress.

Occupational stress occurs when workers perceive an imbalance between their capability and resources to meet these demands. Its inability to cope with the pressures in a job. Due to stressful situation in job affects an individual's productivity, effectiveness, personal health and quality of work. Rees (1997) ^[5] stated, Occupational stress is the inability to cope with the pressures in a job. Principals undergo occupational stress as experienced by unpleasant emotions such as tension, frustration, anger and depression. Occupational Stress affects the personal and psychological well-being by resulting in decreased job satisfaction. There are several factors which leads to occupational stress among school principals. Looking at the everyday increasing work and life complexities stress has now become a major concern. There are many sources responsible for occupational stress among principals but heavy work load or job overload found to be the most prominent causal factor of stress.

In view of the challenges associated with the occupational stress, it is important to study the impact of occupational stress on high school principals. Hence the study has been taken up with the objectives,

1. To study the occupational stress among government and aided high school principals.
2. To know the influence of age, gender, locality on occupational stress among government and aided high school principals.

Materials and Methods

The population for the study comprised of 60 principals from Belagavi District and 60 principals from Kalaburagi District who attended State Institute of School Leadership and Educational Planning (SISLEP) training at Dharwad were selected purposively. At the time of survey a five days training on "Vruthi shrestatha tarabethi" was going on for principals from Belagavi and Kalaburagi District at SISLEP training center, Dharwad. Totally 80 principals.

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from Belagavi and 70 principals of Kalaburagi from both Government and Aided high schools were attended the training. But out of which 60 principals from Government schools and 60 principals from Aided schools were selected. The schedules were distributed to the principals at the training hall and filled questionnaire was collected. It took around 50-60 minute to complete the questionnaire and the doubts regarding the questions were clarified by the researcher.

Tools used for assessment

The occupational stress index scale by Srivastav and Singh (1981) ^[7] describes the nature and condition of ones job experience and feeling about various aspects of job stress was used for assessment of occupational stress. The scale consists of 46 items with 12 dimensions with five alternative answers on four point scale with the scoring is 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 for positive statements and reverse scoring for negative statement. The Score ranged between 46 to 230. The higher the score indicates high level of occupational stress and vice versa. Based on the total scores respondents were categories as low stress (46-115), moderate stress (116-161) and high stress level (161-230) respectively. General information schedule and SES scale by Aggarwal *et al.* (2005) ^[2] were used for collecting into personal information and socio economic status of the principals. Based on scores SES categorized into upper higher (>76), high (61-75), upper middle (45-60), lower middle (31-45), poor middle (16-30) and very poor (<15).

Results and Discussion

Results pertaining to occupational stress of government and aided high school principals are depicted in Fig 1. It was observed that 45 percentage of government principals and 44.20 percentage of aided principals belonged to moderate level of occupational stress. Whereas, an equal percentage (5%) of government and aided high school principals belonged to high level of occupational stress and none of them belonged to low level of occupational stress.

Results pertaining to dimensions of occupational stress were presented in table 1. With respect to the dimensions of occupational stress of government and aided high school principals. It was found that many of government high school principals experienced high level of occupational stress in the dimensions of role overload, role ambiguity, powerlessness, intrinsic impoverishment and unprofitability. Where as, in case of aided high school principals few had high level of occupational stress in the dimensions of role overload, under participation, peer group relations and unprofitability. The reason may be due to heavy work load, in time completion of syllabus / timely report sending, poor working conditions, poor internet facility, less number of teaching staff and handling of two to three sessions at a time resulted in occupational stress. The results are consistent with the findings of Krittika (2015) ^[3] reported that dimensions of occupational stress such as role overload, role ambiguity, role conflict, unreasonable political pressure, under-participation and powerlessness are positively correlated with occupational stress.

Table 2 depicts the comparison of government and aided high school principals by occupational stress. It clearly indicate that there was a significant difference between occupational stress of government and aided high school principals in the dimensions of role ambiguity ($t=2.823$), role conflict ($t=2.651$), under participation ($t=2.234$) and strenuous working condition ($t=2.867$) except role overload, unreasonable group and political pressure, responsibility for persons, powerlessness, peer group relations,, intrinsic impoverishment, low status and unprofitability dimension. Where, in the entire dimensions government high school principals had better mean value compared to aided high school principals. Similarly Yaacob *et al.* (2015) ^[9] findings revealed that the majority of respondents experienced high level of occupational stress mainly due to role ambiguity and role overload.

The results of table 3 represents association and comparison between age and occupational stress of government and aided high school principals. There was significant association ($\chi^2=13.71$) and difference between age and occupational stress among government high school principals. However, principals who belonged to age group of 46-50 years had more occupational stress as compared to others. There was significant association and difference between age and occupational stress among aided high school principals. However, who belonged to age group of 51-55 years had high occupational stress than other age groups. The reason might be that principals during middle adulthood period (40-60 years) often reached a stage of higher position in their job, that leads to more of responsibilities such as disciplining, spending more time for planning of educational program and management of getting work done from teachers might have created job related stress. Similar results also reported by Aftab and Kahtoon (2012) ^[1] reported that principals at the age between 31-50 years experienced more of job stress compared to the younger (20-30 years) and older age (51-60 years) group. Sumanta *et al.* (2016) ^[8] revealed that principals between 40-50 years suffer from high level of occupational stress compared to older staff.

Table 4 depicts the influence of gender on occupational stress of government and aided principals. There was significant association and difference between gender and occupational stress of both government and aided high school principals. Where female principals experienced higher level of occupational stress as compared to male counterparts. The plausible reason could be that female principals are taking care of children and parents and their responsibility cooking responsibilities, household cores along with office work and management of the school responsibilities, inconvenient transport facility, overtime work and attending paper work evaluation might have created stressful situation. Similar results also found that Nagra and Sarita (2013) ^[4] found that female principals were more stressed out than male counterparts because they had lots of family responsibilities and hardly get support from neighbours and relatives. Similarly, Singh (2012) ^[6] found that there was significant difference in the occupational stress of the secondary school principals in relation to gender.

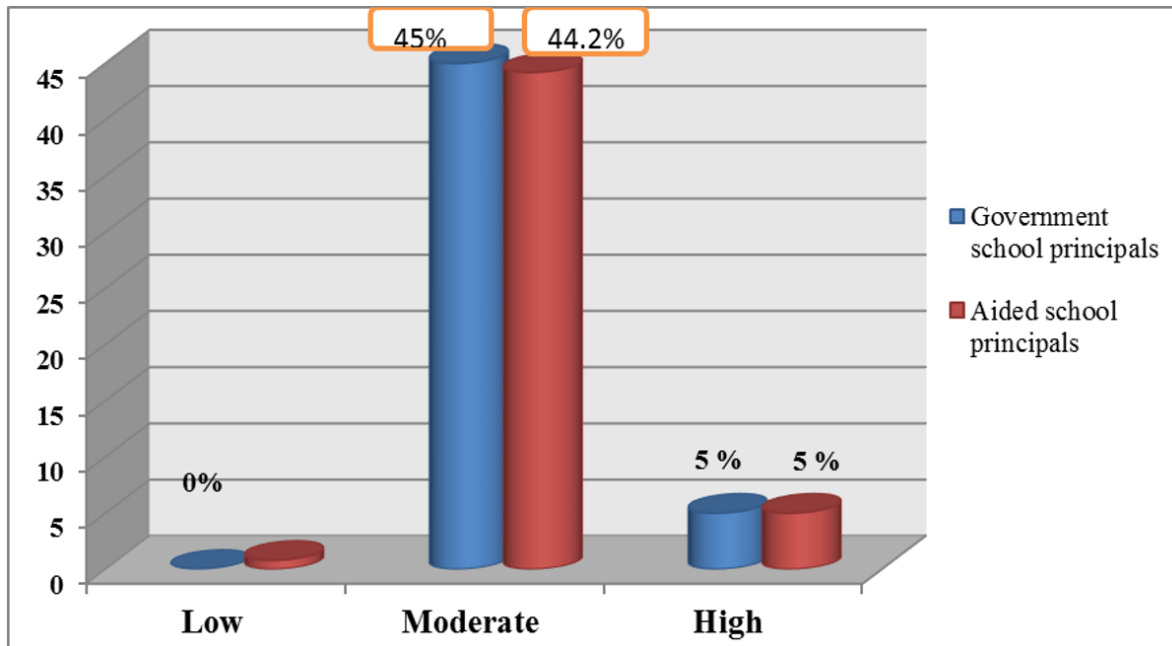


Fig 1: Percentage distribution of level of occupational stress among government and aided high school principals

Table 1: Percentage distribution of government and aided high school principals by dimensions of occupational stress

N=120

Dimensions of occupational stress	Levels	Government principals (n=60) (%)	Aided principals (n=60) (%)
Role overload	High	33(54.00)	34(55.70)
	Moderate	24(39.30)	23(37.60)
	Low	3(5.00)	3(5.00)
Role ambiguity	High	43(71.70)	18(30.00)
	Moderate	16(26.70)	33(55.00)
	Low	1(1.70)	9(15.00)
Role conflict	High	21(35.00)	21(35.00)
	Moderate	31(51.00)	35(58.00)
	Low	8(14.00)	4(7.00)
Unreasonable group and political pressure	High	19(31.00)	19(31.70)
	Moderate	24(40.00)	25(41.70)
	Low	17(29.00)	16(26.70)
Responsibility for persons	High	27(45.00)	21(35.00)
	Moderate	25(41.70)	24(40.00)
	Low	19(31.30)	15(25.00)
Under participation	High	8(13.00)	32(53.30)
	Moderate	33(55.00)	14(23.30)
	Low	8(14.00)	14(23.30)
Powerlessness	High	34(56.00)	23(38.30)
	Moderate	24(40.00)	35(58.30)
	Low	2(4.00)	2(3.30)
Peer group relations	High	30(50.00)	29(48.00)
	Moderate	20(33.00)	24(40.00)
	Low	10(17.00)	7(12.00)
Intrinsic impoverishment	High	27(45.00)	23(38.00)
	Moderate	27(45.00)	31(52.00)
	Low	6(10.00)	6(10.00)
Low status	High	15(25.00)	15(25.00)
	Moderate	38(63.00)	32(53.00)
	Low	7(12.00)	13(22.00)
Strenuous working condition	High	18(30.00)	23(38.00)
	Moderate	32(53.00)	27(45.00)
	Low	10(17.00)	10(17.00)
Unprofitability	High	23(38.00)	26(43.00)
	Moderate	22(37.00)	15(25.00)
	Low	15(25.00)	19(32.00)

Figures in the parenthesis indicates percentage.

Table 2: Comparison of Government and Aided school principals by dimensions of occupational stress

Dimensions	Government principals	Aided principals	t-value
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD	
Role overload	20.31±2.86	20.20±2.99	0.579
Role ambiguity	10.73±2.07	12.81±2.37	2.823*
Role conflict	20.31±2.86	13.20±1.95	2.651*
Unreasonable group and political pressure	11.93±2.31	12.26±2.29	0.320
Responsibility for persons	14.93±2.13	14.40±2.38	0.862
Under participation	9.45±1.81	14.06±1.71	2.234*
Powerlessness	7.21±1.65	7.80±1.41	0.797
Peer group relations	9.11±2.12	9.15±2.27	1.349
Intrinsic impoverishment	9.75±1.91	9.91±2.30	1.140
Low status	4.23±1.01	4.15±1.13	0.390
Strenuous working condition	10.63±2.30	15.86±2.63	2.867*
Unprofitability	6.05±1.43	6.16±1.47	0.177

*Significant at 0.05 level, NS Non significance

Table 3: Association and comparison between age and occupational stress among high school principals

Age (years)	Levels of occupational stress			Modified χ^2	Mean ± SD	F- value
	High	Moderate	Total			
Government school principals (n=60)						
40 -45	1(17.00)	5(83.00)	6(100.00)	13.71*	126.56±10.59 ^a	2.75*
46-50	6(18.00)	29(82.00)	35(100.00)		132.75±14.97 ^b	
51 -55	-	19(100)	19(100.00)		127.80±11.72 ^{ac}	
Aided school principals (n=60)						
40-45	1 (12.00)	8(88.00)	9(100.00)	0.920 ^{NS}	129.02±11.33 ^a	3.987*
46-50	4(13.00)	27(87.00)	31(100.00)		120.85±16.42 ^{ab}	
51-55	1(6.00)	19(94.00)	20(100.00)		130.72±12.81 ^c	

Figure in the parenthesis indicates percentage, * Significant at 0.05 level, NS Indicates non significance, a, b, c Tukey values

Table 4: Association and comparison between gender and occupational stress among high school principals

Gender	Level of occupational stress			Mean ± SD	t-value
	High	Moderate	Total		
Government school principals(n=60)					
Male	6(12.50)	42(87.50)	48(100.00)	126.56±10.59	2.659*
Female	1(9)	11(91.00)	12(100.00)		
Aided school principals(n=60)					
Male	3(6.40)	44(93.60)	47(100.00)	129.02±11.33	2.023*
Female	1(7.70)	12(92.30)	13(100.00)	136.85±16.24	

Figures in the parenthesis indicates percentage,*Significant at 0.05 level, NS non significance

Conclusion

Majority of principals working at Government as well as and Aided high school had moderate level of occupational stress. Principals experienced occupational stress in the dimensions of role overload, role ambiguity, peer group relations and unprofitability. Principals who belonged to 46-50 years in government school and 51-55 years in aided schools had more of occupational stress. Female principals from both high school principals had high level of occupational stress as compared to male principals. So there is need to provide guidance and counseling on job stress management at work place to overcome the occupational stress can be managed by understanding what the stressful condition at work place and taking steps to remediate those conditions.

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