

Study to Assess Association of School Environment with Professional Stress in Secondary School Teachers in Fazilka

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ABSTRACT

Professional stress can be due to an imbalance between the individual and the work environment. The teaching can be considered as a stress related professional. The aim of the present study was to find out the impact of school environment on the professional stress in the secondary school teachers in the Fazilka city in Punjab. The study comprised of total 203 secondary school teachers which were selected through two stage random and cluster sampling method. The primary data was collected with the help of pre-structure questionnaires. The present study described highly significant ($p < 0.0001$) association between factors of school environment namely school policy, autonomy, interpersonal relation, job security, teacher workload, and professional stress in secondary school teachers in the Fazilka city in Punjab.

Key Words: School environment, Professional stress, Job security, Teacher workload

Introduction

The education has been the inherent tool in shaping the human civilization since ancient time. Indian civilization is one of the oldest in the world and has rich resources of knowledge to impart to the world. Education and education system are closely linked to define the behavior of the human beings. Due to increasing competition in the world, education system has undergone a revolutionary change. Every society requires well developed system of education to impart to its members. The members of a society must be educated in the civilized world. It can be achieved through the effective education and able teachers. In India, huge growth in the education has taken place after the independence period. This has been achieved through setting up commissions and committees the educational reforms.

Secondary school education offers the link between primary school education and higher education. It is the indispensable connectivity in the education system. The quality of secondary school education provides a mirror for the whole education system of the country. Secondary school teachers play a center stage in the education system. They are the backbone of the whole education either at primary or secondary or higher education level. The secondary school teachers have the key position. With their efforts, the entire education system is controlled and the objectives of education are fulfilled. The secondary school teachers have the more important role to play in comparison to the teachers in other levels of organization. In the contemporary society, there is a fierce competition in every sphere of life and education system is also involved in the competition. This put a high professional stress among the secondary school teachers.

It was the Selye Hans in the field of life sciences in year (1936)¹ who coined the word 'stress'. The word has its root in the Latin word 'stringere' that connotes the meaning as 'experience of robustness. The scientist community is not unanimous over the universal definition of stress. Hans Selye postulated that either stress is overemphasized or hardly understood by the scientists in the world. The Beehr and Newman (1978)² mentioned about 'Stress' as the environmental factors which affiliate the psychological or physiological conditions of the persons and catalyze the change in the psychological and or physiological well-being of the persons. The Sarason, Johnson and Siegel (1978)³ postulated 'Stress' as the disagreeable response of the individual in specific situation. Authors Farmer, Monahan and Hekeler (1984)⁴ described 'Stress' as any condition where external and or internal demands of the person exceed the adaptive response of the person. Author Lazarus (1984)⁵ described 'Stress' as the pleasing association between the person and the environment where the resources of the person enable him to compete and cope with the situation.

School policy

Punch and Tuetteman (1996)⁶ described the relation between school policy and level of stress in teachers. The study was conducted in Western Australia in secondary schools. The authors asserted that few factors in school policy raise the level of stress in teachers, while other factors are supportive and decrease the stress level of teachers. It was found that factors like social expectations, school workload in the free time, poor support from administration and inadequate facilities in school environment increase the level of stress in teachers.

Teaching Resources

The texts, online videos, books, monographs are considered as teaching resources and are helpful for the school students to grasp the curriculum. These are approved by the management of the school. The Ofoegbu and Nwadiani (2006)⁷ described the important variables that have effect on the professional stress of the academic staff in the schools. The factors like poor accommodation, inadequate research facility, and poor administration in the school are linked with the main sources of stress in the teachers.

Students conduct

Pierce and Molloy (1990)⁸ described the association between student conduct and professional stress in teachers. The authors mentioned factors as student behavior, work load, salary which favour high stress level in teachers. In the study, factors namely interaction with colleagues and teaching resources were also described as stressors for teachers.

Teachers Workload

Smith and Bourke (1991)⁹ described the influence of job satisfaction and workload on the professional stress among secondary school teachers in Australia in the Hunter region of New South Wales. The authors conducted survey in 204 schools. The questionnaires were used as tool. The study described association between workload, job satisfaction, personality of teacher and teaching methodology on one side and factors like stress in teachers, conflict, time, and classroom environment, and reward. The factors like job satisfaction, workload, and personality of teachers were directly related to professional stress in teachers.

Job security

Forcella et al (2007)¹⁰ identified stress among 336 teachers who had temporary and permanent jobs in Central Italy schools in Pescara town. It was described that female teachers and teachers with temporary jobs suffered from high stress level than the male teachers and teachers with permanent jobs. The job insecurity led to anxiety in teachers.

Aim

The aim of the present study was to assess association of school environment with professional stress in secondary school teachers in Fazilka

Objectives

1. To assess association of school environment with the professional stress in secondary school teachers in Fazilka
2. To assess association of teaching resources with the professional stress in secondary school teachers in Fazilka
3. To assess association of students conduct with the professional stress in secondary school teachers in Fazilka.
4. To assess association of teacher workload with the professional stress in secondary school teachers in Fazilka.
5. To assess association of job security with the professional stress in secondary school teachers in Fazilka.

Hypotheses

1. There would not be significant association of school policy with the professional stress in secondary school teachers in Fazilka.
2. There would not be significant association of teaching resources with the professional stress in secondary school teachers in Fazilka.
3. There would not be significant association of student conduct with the professional stress in secondary school teachers in Fazilka.
4. There would not be significant association of teacher workload with the professional stress in secondary school teachers in Fazilka.
5. There would not be significant association of job security with the professional stress in secondary school teachers in Fazilka.

Limitations of Study

Present study was limited to the schools in the city Fazilka in Punjab state and the schools in the tehsil Fazilka. The study involved only the secondary school teachers.

Research Methodology

Research Design

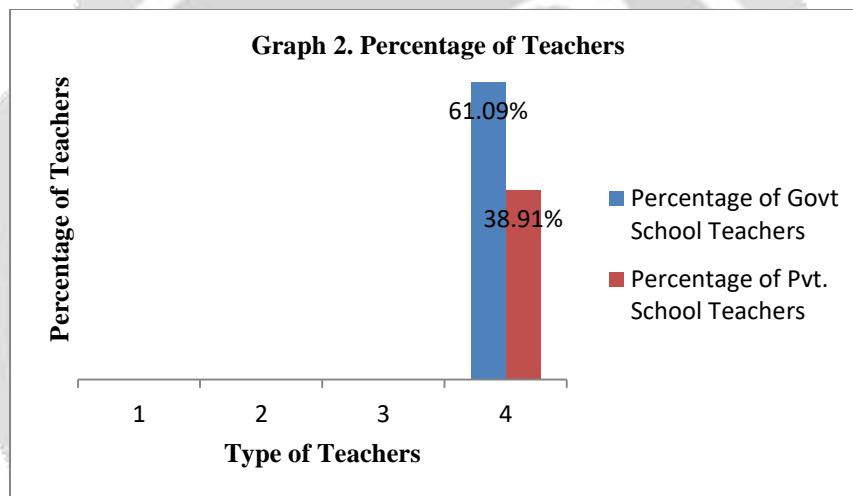
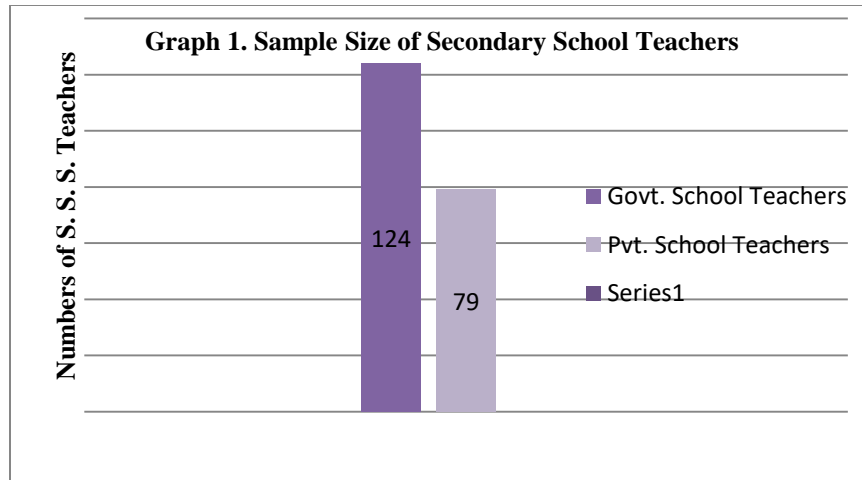
Present study was based on the descriptive research design. The descriptive research describes the characteristics the given population or an event which is under study.

Sampling Design

Present study was based on the two stage random sampling method. In the first stage, secondary schools were randomized and a sample of secondary schools (n=31) were selected which constituted about 30% of the sample frame. In the second stage, cluster of secondary school teachers (n=203) were selected for the study.

Table1. Sample Size of Secondary School Teachers

Category	Secondary School Teachers	Total
Government Schools	124 (61.09%)	124
Private Schools	79 (38.91%)	79
Total	203 (100%)	203



The sample size consisted of total 203 secondary school teachers which was comprised of government secondary school teachers (n=124/203) with a prevalence of 61.09%, while the sample was comprised of private secondary school teachers (n=79/203) with a prevalence of 38.91% as given in table1, graph1 and graph 2.

Data Design

The present study was comprised of primary data that was collected with the help of pre-structured questionnaires. These were labeled as professional stress questionnaire and school environment questionnaire. Each questionnaire was consisted of 50 question items. The questionnaires were administered to the teachers with the help of researcher. The questionnaires were attempted by the participants with the help of three points scale.

Results

Table-1 Analysis of school policy and professional stress

Professional stress \ School policy	High	Low	Total	(χ^2) Df=2	P value
Poor	38	6	44	70.22	<0.0001
Average	30	55	85		
Good	7	67	73		
Total	75	128	203		

The hypothesis was tested by Chi-square test of independence. The test statistics value of Chi square ($\chi^2=70.22$) at degree of freedom (df=2), highly significant ($p<0.0001$) exceeded the table value of Chi-square ($\chi^2=5.99$) at degree of freedom (df=2) at 5% significance level as in table2 and hence, null hypothesis was rejected. Present study depicts highly significant indirect relation between school policy and professional stress in secondary school teachers. High professional stress was associated significantly ($p<0.0001$) with poor school policy. The findings in the present study are in conformity with the outcomes in the previous study conducted by Punch and Tuetteman (1996)⁶ in the secondary schools in the Western Australia where a link among the school administration, support and level of stress in teachers was established.

Table-2 Teaching resources and professional stress

Professional stress \ Teaching Resources	High	Low	Total	(χ^2) Df=2	P value
Poor	43	6	49	72.18	<0.0001
Average	19	83	102		
Good	13	39	52		
Total	75	128	203		

The hypothesis was tested by Chi-square test of independence. The test statistics value of Chi square ($\chi^2=72.18$) at degree of freedom (df=2), highly significant ($p<0.0001$) and exceeded the table value of Chi-square ($\chi^2=5.99$) at degree of freedom (df=2) at 5% significance level as in table2 and hence, null hypothesis was rejected. Present study depicts highly significant indirect relation between teaching resources and professional stress in secondary school teachers. High professional stress was associated significantly ($p<0.0001$) with poor teaching resources. The findings in the present study are in conformity with the outcomes in the previous work by the Brown et al. (2002)¹¹

who described factors for stress in the teaching profession. These were poor teaching resources, inadequate facility in the classrooms, poor salary, and work load.

Table-3 Students conduct and professional stress

Professional stress \ students conduct	High	Low	Total	(χ^2) Df=2	P value
Poor	50	7	57	87.79	<0.0001
Average	19	96	115		
Good	6	25	31		
Total	75	128	203		

The hypothesis was tested by Chi-square test of independence. The test statistics value of Chi square ($\chi^2=87.79$) at degree of freedom (df=2), highly significant ($p<0.0001$) exceeded the table value of Chi-square ($\chi^2=5.99$) at degree of freedom (df=2) at 5% significance level as in table3 and hence, null hypothesis was rejected.

Present study shows highly significant indirect relation between students conduct and professional stress in secondary school teachers. Good students conduct was linked with the low professional stress significantly ($p<0.0001$). The outcome in the present study synchronizes with the findings in the previous study by Lewis R. (1999)¹² where it was observed that class room indiscipline among the students was the cause of stress in teachers.

Table-4 Teachers workload and professional stress

Professional stress \ Teachers workload	High	Low	Total	(χ^2) Df=2	P value
Low	6	62	68	70.48	<0.0001
Average	29	59	88		
High	40	7	47		
Total	75	128	203		

The hypothesis was tested by Chi-square test of independence. The test statistics value of Chi square ($\chi^2=70.48$) at degree of freedom (df=2), highly significant ($p<0.0001$) exceeded the table value of Chi-square ($\chi^2=5.99$) at degree of freedom (df=2) at 5% significance level as in table4 and hence, null hypothesis was rejected. Present study depicts a highly significant direct relation between teacher workload and professional stress. The high teacher workload is significantly ($p<0.0001$) related to high professional stress among secondary school teachers. The findings in the present study are in direct line with the outcome in the previous study by Chan, Chen and Chong

(2010)¹³ where study was conducted on 6000 teachers and almost 95% of teachers confirmed the rise of stress due to increase in workload in secondary schools in Hong Kong.

Table-5 Job security and professional stress

Professional stress \ Job security	High	Low	Total	(χ^2) Df=2	P value
Poor	42	9	51	76.59	<0.0001
Average	26	39	65		
Good	7	80	87		
Total	75	128	203		

The hypothesis was tested by Chi-square test of independence. The test statistics value of Chi square ($\chi^2=76.59$) at degree of freedom (df=2), highly significant ($p<0.0001$) exceeded the table value of Chi-square ($\chi^2=5.99$) at degree of freedom (df=2) at 5% significance level as in table5 and hence, null hypothesis was rejected. Present study describes highly significant reverse relation between job security and professional stress. The poor job security is indirectly related significantly ($p<0.0001$) to the high professional stress in secondary school teachers. Similar findings have been described in the previous study by Donato et al. (2007)¹⁴ who conducted a study on professional stress and job security in teachers in the university. The teachers and other staff members who were on in temporary job duties had higher level of stress than the counterparts who had permanent jobs.

Conclusion

Study provides descriptive information about the factors that enhance professional stress in secondary school teachers in the Fazilka city in Punjab. School environment definitely influences the psychological and physiological internal environment of the teachers and non-teaching staff in the schools. Factors like job security, teaching resources, poor students conduct, high teacher workload and poor school policy are indicated as stressors.

Professional stress reduction initiatives should be taken in secondary schools. It would enhance the productivity of the teachers. Additionally, stress reduction would provide a congenial and cordial school environment for the staff, teachers and students. It would reduce the drop-out rate and absenteeism in students.

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