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Professional Stress of Secondary School Teachers in relation to Ego-Strength

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ABSTRACT

This paper intends to study the relation between the professional stress of secondary school teachers and ego-strength in relation to sex. Three hundred ninety four (Male = 233/ Female =161) randomly selected secondary school teachers of Tripura have been selected as sample for the study. Teacher Stress Scale (prepared and standardized by the investigator) and Biswas Ego-strength Scale were used to collect data. Data were analyzed through Product moment correlation. Study reveals that a secondary school teacher with higher ego-strength was in general lesser susceptible to experience of stress. Therefore it can be concluded that ego-strength would be negatively correlated with teacher stress and in effect, a teacher with stronger ego strength would experience lesser stress. Male and female secondary school teachers experience stress differently from different source of perceived teacher stress and from Teacher stress symptom in relation to Ego-strength. Therefore the essence of the study is that ego-strength of the teacher acted as one form of psychological mechanism to define vulnerability of stress.

Keywords: *Ego-strength, Perceived teacher stress, Teacher stress symptom, Psychological mechanism, Vulnerability of stress*

Introduction

It is commonly said, the social well-being and the future of any country depend to a large extent upon a small section of its population which is generally known as professionals (Dutta, 1970), who are distinguished from other vocational groups in its emphasis upon idea

of dedication to service to mankind, besides, its economic rewards. One such professional group is the teachers. But in majority of occasions, because of some limitations inherent in the system-design, System-operation or system-maintenance in one hand and of some limitations within the teacher as an active human component of this system, quality of teaching as well as consequent quality of pupil growth fails. As a result contemporary teacher is now under greater pressure and a subject of bitter criticism. This unhealthy condition sometimes give birth low morale among teachers and poor quality of pupil education simply because of a group of demoralized army of teachers. This type of criticism against the Indian teachers has also been voiced in the media in many occasions. Though this one-side criticism directed to teachers have been protested by Esteve (1989, p.12) in these words: "If everything goes well, parents think that their children are good, but if things go badly they think that the teacher is a bad teacher". The teacher is often blamed for low quality of pupil education, making the teacher personally responsible for all circumstances. The reality speaks otherwise. The teacher, often, finds himself faced by circumstances which force him to do his job badly. In many occasions the problems are of society and required social solutions (Esteve,1989). Under these unhappy situations the contemporary teachers are under stress and burnout which have been a new frontier in educational research since the second half of the seventies

The problem of teacher stress has now been a talking term and received increasing recognition as a research problem over recent years. Teacher professional stress referred to teacher's negative affect resulting from their interaction with the various aspects of their job, such as monetary and other facilities, human relations, work-ethos, security, recognition etc. and producing different psycho-social dynamics of reactions in the form of frustration, conflicts, anxiety and alienation.

The reported studies suggest that professional stress has marked negative impact on teachers and sometimes it is so serious that teacher often requires therapeutic intervention (Cox et al; 1988;). Ultimately the students and the society as a whole are bearing the burden of teachers stress.

Significance of the Study

The present investigator thinks that an amount of stress varies from one to another because of individual perception and this perceptual style can be describe by one's ego-strength,. It is the executive power of individual's dynamics of personality. Hence 'Ego-strength' would be a moderator of individual's response to stress. Practically it refers to personal effectiveness, how one responds to the vicissitudes and challenges of life: this also refers to individual's capacity to meet problems without being dismayed or overwhelmed, to endure suffering and face great loss without foundering (Barron,1968). Ego-strength also means capacity for personality integration. The findings of several studied (Bhasker, 1986; Block and Martin, 1955: Chakrapani,1995: Grinker and Spiegel, 1945: Lazarus, 1966: Srivastava and Sinha,(1983) have supported either directly or indirectly the assertions made by the present investigator. Srivastava and Sinha,(1983) have concluded that high ego-strength enables employees (managers, engineers,section-incharge, etc.) to cope effectively with excessive demands and conflicting expectations. Therefore this paper intends to study the relationship between ego-strength and professional stress of secondary school teachers. Here professional

stress of teacher has been measured with its two forms- (i) perceived teacher stress and (ii) teacher stress symptoms. Perceived teacher stress was measured from its fourteen broad areas namely Pupil Behaviour and Discipline (PBD), Working Conditions (WC), Workload (WL), Role Ambiguity (RA), Role Conflict (RC), Responsibility for People and Things (RPT), Relationships with Superiors (RWS), Relationship with Pupils and Subordinates (RWPS), Relationships with Colleagues (RWC), Job Security (JS), Status Incongruity (SI), Organizational Structure and Climate (OSC), Balance between Home and School (BHS) and Time Pressures (TP).

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the present study is as follows:

To study the relationship between ego-strength and professional stress of secondary school teachers with its two form i.e (i) perceived teacher stress and (ii) teacher stress symptom.

Research Questions

1. Do the ego strength of male secondary school teacher related to their professional stress?
2. Do the ego strength of female secondary school teacher related to their professional stress?

Hypotheses of the study

- H₀₁:** There will be no significant correlation between the measures of ego-strength and perceived teacher stress of male secondary school teachers.
- H₀₂:** There will be no significant correlation between the measures of ego-strength and perceived teacher stress of female secondary school teachers.
- H₀₃:** There will be no significant correlation between the measures of ego-strength and teacher stress symptoms of male secondary school teachers.
- H₀₄:** There will be no significant correlation between the measures of ego-strength and teacher stress symptoms of female secondary school teachers.

As per procedures followed in the study, each of the major null hypotheses H₀₁ and H₀₂ were reformulated into 15 minor null hypotheses and each of them was tested at .05 level of significance.

Methodology of the Study

Secondary school teachers of either sex, permanently employed in Bengali medium Government and Semi Government schools approved by the Tripura Board of Secondary Education but beyond the jurisdiction of Tripura Tribal Area Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) served as the population of the present study. Three hundred ninety four (Male = 233/ Female =161) randomly selected secondary school teachers, permanently employed in twenty four Bengali medium Government and Semi- Government secondary school approved by the Tripura Board of Secondary Education and located in urban and rural areas but beyond the jurisdiction of the TTAADC consisted the sample for the study.

Tools Used

1. Teacher Stress Scale developed and standardized by the investigator was used for collection of data for the study.
2. Biswas Ego-strength Scale was used to collect data to measure the Ego-strength of the teacher.

Techniques followed for Data Collection Procedure

Descriptive survey method and stratified random sampling technique on the basis of location of school (rural and urban), and types of school (boys', girls' and co-educational) were used for collection of data for the study.

Techniques of Data Analysis

Product moment correlation method was used to find out relationships of ego-strength with teachers' professional stress.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Objective: To study the relationship between ego-strength and professional stress of secondary school teachers with its two forms i.e. (i) perceived teacher stress and (ii) teacher stress symptom. The result of product moment correlation have been presented in the Table 1

Table-1: Product Moment Correlation between Ego-strength and Professional Stress of Teacher

Stress	'r' for male teachers (N=233)	'r' for female teachers (N=161)
Total Perceived Stress	- 0.2670**	- 0.2649**
Areas of Perceived S tress		
a) PBD	-0.1134	- 0.1219
b) W C	- 0.1537**	-0.0993
c) WL	0.1996**	-.0.1159
d) RA	- 0.1163	-0.1490
e) RC	- 0.1913**	- 0.1930*
f) RPT	- 0.1604*	- 0.1849*
g) RWS	- 0.1754**	- 0.1344
h) RWPS	- 0.1622**	- 0.1577*
i) RWC	- 0.2895**	- 0.1954*
j) JS	- 0.2493**	- 0.1823*
k) SI	- 0.2387**	- 0.1318
l) OSC	- 0.2542**	- 0.1951*
m) BHS	- 0.0746	- 0.1448
n) TP	- 0.0427	- 0.1790*
Teacher Stress Symptoms	-0.2989**	- 0.1595*

*Sig. at .05 level, **Sig. at .01 level.

The contents of the Table 1 revealed that product moment correlations were significant in case of:

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- a) Total perceived teacher stress, teacher stress symptoms as well as perceived teacher stress from the areas – WC, WL, RC, RPT, RWS, RWPS, RWC, JS, SI and OSC for the male secondary school teachers.
- b) Total perceived teacher stress, teacher stress symptoms as well as perceived teacher stress from the areas - RC, RPT, RWPS, JS, OSC and TP for the female secondary school teachers.
- c) In all occasions the directions of correlations were negative.

Thus the null hypotheses for PBD, RA, BHS and RA were rejected for the male subjects and null hypotheses for PBD, WC, WL, RA, RWS, SI and BHS were rejected for the female subjects.

Then the conclusions emerged.

- (a) For the male secondary school teachers ego-strength was found negatively and significantly correlated with total perceived teacher stress, perceived teacher stress related to Working Conditions (WC), Workload (WL), Role Conflict (RC), Responsibility for People and Things (RPT), Relationships with Superiors (RWS), Relationship with Pupils and Subordinates (RWPS), Relationships with Colleagues (RWC), Job Security (JS), Status Incongruity (SI), Organizational Structure and Climate (OSC) and teacher stress symptoms but perceived teacher stress from other areas were found independent of ego-strength.
- (b) For the female secondary school teachers ego-strength was found negatively and significantly correlated with total perceived teacher stress, perceived teacher stress from Role Conflict (RC), Responsibility for People and Things (RPT), Relationship with Pupils and Subordinates (RWPS), Relationships with Colleagues (RWC), Job Security (JS), Organizational Structure and Climate (OSC) and TIME Pressures (TP) and teacher stress symptoms but perceived teacher stress from other areas were found independent of ego-strength.

Thus, the above findings showed that a secondary school teacher with higher ego-strength was in general lesser susceptible to experience of stress. In this study ego-strength dictated that it would be negatively correlated with teacher stress and in effect, a teacher with stronger ego would experience lesser stress. Ego-strength of the teacher acted as one form of psychological mechanism to define vulnerability of stress. Findings of the present study were corroborated by findings of Srivastava and Sinha (1983) who found, employees with high ego-strength would experience mild stress pertaining to role overload, role ambiguity and role conflict. Singh and Mishra (1984) found that the employees with higher ego-strength had higher Job satisfaction than employee with low ego-strength. For both the groups of teachers correlation between ego-strength and total perceived teacher stress were nearly equal. Thus in general, ego-strength as a variable had some potentiality to decrease the quantum of teacher stress or professional stress of teacher. From the present study an important suggestion may be drawn that if teachers are recruited with good amount of ego-strength they would experience less stress

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