

Teachers' Occupational Stress: An Assessment Study with Self-Regulation, Self-Efficacy and Mental Health

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Abstract: The thrust of the current research is on occupational stress of higher secondary teachers in the schools in Chennai. All the teachers of higher secondary schools in Chennai form the population. Altogether a sample of 450 that is about 5% of the population drawn by stratified random sampling form the sample of the study. The Researcher has developed the data collecting instrument along with her research supervisor. The newly developed tool has passed through all scientific processes and established its validity and reliability. The analysis revealed that target population was moderate in overall level of occupational stress. In the 7 dimensions of occupational stress, 5 of them were moderate while 2 of them – lack of professional recognition and lack of neutrality in administration were found to be high. In the case of their psychological resources – self regulation has struck high, the self efficacy has reported moderate as with mental health. A theoretical exposure regarding the role of personal resources in controlling occupational stress of teachers was also attempted. At the end, the Researcher has furnished concrete recommendations.

Keywords: Occupational stress, Self regulation, Self efficacy, Mental health, Personal resources.

INTRODUCTION

Much is said about teachers, only less is understood about them. It is the truth of the world that the nations in dark can see the light only with the works of teachers. Everybody on the planet earth appreciates the achievement of teachers, but no one is ready to vouch for their normal, happy life. Because teacher occupation appears externally as a job of imparting knowledge and skills to the younger generation, without much physical exertion, the common people in general view at teaching as a 'risk free' job. But the literature on teacher occupation bluntly as well as abundantly puts forth the reality of teaching profession as a highly stressful profession (Johnson, et al, 2005; Newberry; Allsop, 2017). It is not in one or two countries, almost in all the developed countries, teacher burnout and teacher attrition have become acute problems (Hooftmen, et al, 2015). A recent study in the U.S has reported that one quarter of the beginning teachers are at risk for stress (Fitchett, et al, 2018). Another study published recently has shown that the beginning teachers are confronted with negative pupil acts which trigger stress, tension, discontent and negative emotions, likely to reflect in teaching behaviour. As a result of it the irksome problem of teacher attrition starts showing its ugly face in the otherwise calm and pleasant school environment (Michelle, Helonslorenz; Ridwan, Maulana; Khaasvan Veen, 2018).

CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

The importance of education has been recognized worldwide. It is education that demands the major part of budget to be allotted to bring about changes and innovations in the system for updating and improving its quality and standard. Therefore, the teachers have to play a vital role for the success of educational institutions. However, as the teachers are bound to earn stress in the course of performing their job, it starts impeding the quality of teachers as well as the institutional productivity. When the teacher's job stress causes so much of sufferings internally, the negative effect of stress can also be seen externally in the form of low morale, poor teaching quality, less students satisfaction, increased absenteeism, and towered overall teaching performance (Akhlaq, et al, 2010; Bakker, et al, 2004; Tahir, 2011). One can don the robe of a teacher only after prolonged years of academic education followed by professional education, accompanied by series of field trainings under the mentors of high profile experts and thereafter successfully completing the established evaluation processes. The teachers thus prepared, under these processes would have acquired certain factors, otherwise called resources, both personal and job oriented, capable of buffering the negative impacts of stress on their performance. These factors can be also termed as moderators. In the same way factors like personality traits / characteristics can also intervene and slowdown the effect of stress on performance. Many of such resources and personality traits have been studied by researchers and brought out factors that could act as moderators to minimize the effect of job stress on teacher performance (Backer, Bel, 2010; Brackett, et al, 2010; Salanova, et al, 2009; Schwarzer, Hallum, 2008). As the knowledge of the moderating effect analysis, will help to know how to manage teachers' stress and performance, an appraisal of the formation of stress and the causative stressors, will enable the teachers to be cautious of the stressors in advance and prevent them by adopting suitable strategies.

RATIONALE

The term 'stress' is treated in common parlance as a word emphasizing unbearable oppression, torture or tiredness or an inexpressible physical, mental and emotional fatigue tormenting the individuals day and night. Since everyone is complaining of 'stress', the word has lost its seriousness in the social interaction at all levels. However, when stress is studied on medical grounds, its impact on human beings is stated to be alarming and quite dangerous. That is why "stress is defined as a psychological, physical and emotional reaction resulting from an individual's response to environmental anxiety, conflict, pressure and similar other stimuli that intimidate a person's ability to manage" (Reliman, 2015). The same idea is echoed in the explanation offered by Temibiaj (2015) 'as a reaction to certain events in the environment'. According to Kaur, Kumari and Sharma (2013) stress is an adverse reaction that a person has to exercise excessive pressure or other types of demands. But there is another school of thought which believes that stress is neither good nor bad but depends on how it is experienced (Alabi, Murtala; Lawal, 2012). As psychologists like Ogbuokiri (2012) consider stress "as a stimulant or energizer it appears to be positive and beneficial". In the modern scientific world stress is a phenomenon that must be recognized and addressed in various professions (Oliver, M. AJ; Venter, D. J.L, 2003). Due to complexity of present day society and the development of professions, including teaching, teachers in no way blame about over working as in old days, rather they can only

complain about work related stress they are experiencing (Saptoe, 2000). Very often stress is caused by external factors such as working environment, interpersonal relationship, etc. But when we closely look into the problem, we can note the link between the external stressors profoundly known and the invisible internal stressors such as being ambitious, competitive, materialistic, etc (Yates, 1979). Stress which serves a motivating factor, will necessarily contribute to a person's proper functioning in life. That is why, several researchers have indicated through research that "a definite relation exists between work stress and a person's productivity" (Warren; Toll, 1993). This kind of positive stress made possible for individuals by way of an unexpected promotion, a great opportunity be with a company of elite people, a membership to participate in a challenging task, etc is referred as 'eustress' by Fisher (1994), Keiper; Buselle (1996). The other category of stress, generally called negative stress such as tension, worry, frustration, etc leading to serious ailments or discomforts is otherwise called 'distress' (Keiper; Buselle, 1996). This is the type of stress known as "the disease of our time" (Schle, Busch, 1998). Between these two extremes, - eustress and distress – one can find the normal stress referred to as "neutral" stress (Keopar, Buselle, 1996). Moreover, teachers' stress is noted to take the form of an endemic from the research outcomes published all over the world (Vanwyk, 1998). The information may sent forth a panic message all over the globe about the serious implications for the physical and mental health of teachers. Disregard of all good things attributed to teacher stress, a series of research findings had forced the psychologists to consider teacher stress as the major factor contributing to job dissatisfaction, job related illness and early retirement in England (Sandick, et al, 2001). Apart from such positive or negative aspects of stress certain psychologists, based on the nature of job / profession, classify the occupations as those as more stressful and less stressful. As per the version of Biggs (1988), "persons in the help seeking professions are particularly prone to stress, because of their idealistic goals. Feldman (1998) lists teaching as one of the more stressful occupations. Saptoe (2000) reports that lack of discipline in schools, abolishment of corporal punishment, unmotivated learners, redeployments, retrenchments, retirement packages, large pupil teacher ratio, introduction of modified / new curriculum, etc contribute to increase the stress level of teachers. In addition to such internal factors, certain happenings outside the schools, in the community and in the school management, beyond the control of teachers such as introduction of new education policy by the government, change of the school head – the one diagonally, different from the previous one; formation of a new governing body, very large improvement in the country crime rate, coping with the currently changed political regime, cancerous growth of corruption in state departments are also reported to be instrumental for enhancing stress among teachers (Marais, 1992). It is not uncommon among teachers often complaining about illness, more probably due to hypertension, diabetes, ulcers, and heart attacks, while yet other sizable percentage of teachers are planning seriously to leave the profession at the earliest (Vanwyk, 1998; Patel, 1991; Biggs, 1988). While these are confirmed by Wrobel (1993) it is also stressed that 'a significant number of teachers perceive the educational workplace as stressful, and as a result of it they are likely to experience failure in their careers' (Cordes; Dougherty, 1993). From all these one is driven to think that the baffling question about teacher stress is not whether it is good or bad for the teachers, rather what is the criterion that renders the teaching stress good to certain teachers and bad to yet other category of teachers. This is what certain researchers have arrived at the end of their investigation. In the words of Patel (1991) "each individual is unique. No

two teachers will react the same way in a given stressful situation”. “one teacher may experience a situation as externally stressful while to other one may take it as exciting and challenging” (Fisher, 1994). The reason attributed for such differences in feeling good or bad about the same experience is due to the type of personality the individual possesses (Patel, 1991; Yates, 1979).

The foregoing theoretical analysis, enlightens the facts that i) the intensity of impacts of negative environment conditions causing stress in teachers is subject to the type of personality / psychological characteristics the individual teacher possesses; ii) As per the intensity of stress experienced by teachers, they reflect deficiency in job execution and performance in teaching. Thus the researcher has rationalized that the origin and development of stress in teachers is vested on their psychological growth / psychological make-up of individual teachers.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

1. The higher secondary schools in general and higher secondary teachers in specific are the ones who tolerate silently, the ill treatments of the management, insults of the students and parents, disappointments caused by trusted colleagues, etc only because of their mindset to put up themselves as ideal, resourceful, and job oriented illustrious professionals of values and virtues. They are being highly qualified in the school environment, look only for name and fame. They are willing to sacrifice all the pleasures in life for the sake of the profession. As a result of it, the pent up emotion, they are really to be taxed to the maximum by their own commitment to help the students in transit to leave the campus meritoriously, glorifying the work and dedication of the teachers and the school management. This is the greatest reward for which the teachers burn themselves as candles to enlighten the younger generation to achieve their goals in life believing a place in the hearts of the stakeholders. The present outcomes of the study will certainly contribute to the literature about the nature of the professional life being led by higher secondary teachers. Prompted by this information the school management and the community may come forward to take steps to remedy the problem.

2. The research was designed and executed to answer the following research questions framed:

- i. What is the status of higher secondary teachers in the schools of Chennai in regard to their overall *Occupational stress*?
- ii. What is the status of higher secondary teachers in the schools of Chennai in regard to Workload, Students Misbehaviour, Lack of Professional Recognition, Lack of Classroom Resources, Poor Colleague Relationship, Lack of Neutrality in Administration and Lack of Concern for Teachers' in Need?
- iii. What is the status of independent variables – Self regulation, Self efficacy and Mental health in terms of higher secondary school teachers in Chennai?
- iv. What is the significance of relationship between the *Occupational stress* of higher secondary teachers and the independent variables - Self regulation, Self efficacy and Mental health.
- v. What is the significance of prediction of Self regulation, Self efficacy and Mental health over *Occupational stress* of higher secondary teachers in total and in terms of dimensions.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

TEACHERS' OCCUPATIONAL STRESS: AN ASSESSMENT STUDY WITH SELF REGULATION, SELF EFFICACY AND MENTAL HEALTH

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Occupational Stress: By this the Researcher means the score obtained on the *Teacher Occupational Stress Scale* prepared and validated by the Researcher and the Research Guide.

Self Regulation: By this the Researcher means the score obtained on the *Teachers' Self Regulation Behaviour Scale* published by Portia, R (2018).

Self Efficacy: By this the Researcher means the score obtained on the *Self Efficacy Scale* published by Megan, T. M and Anita, W.H (2001).

Mental Health: By this the Researcher means the score obtained on the *Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS)* published by NHS Health Scotland, University of Warwick and University of Edinburgh (2006).

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To find the level of *Occupational stress* and its dimensions – Workload (WL), Students Misbehaviour (SM), Lack of Professional Recognition (LPR), Lack of Classroom Resources (LCR), Poor Colleague Relationship (PCR), Lack of Neutrality in Administration (LNA) and Lack of Concern for Teachers' in Need (LCTN) of higher secondary school teachers in Chennai.
- ✓ To find the level of the independent variables – *Self regulation*, *Self efficacy* and *Mental health* of higher secondary school teachers in Chennai.
- ✓ To find the significance of correlation between *Occupational stress* and its dimensions, and the chosen independent variables- *Self regulation*, *Self efficacy* and *Mental health* of higher secondary school teachers in Chennai.
- ✓ To find the significance of independent variables - *Self regulation*, *Self efficacy* and *Mental health* in predicting *Occupational stress* and its dimensions of higher secondary school teachers in Chennai.

HYPOTHESES

- ✓ The level of *Occupational stress* and its dimensions – Workload (WL), Students Misbehaviour (SM), Lack of Professional Recognition (LPR), Lack of Classroom Resources (LCR), Poor Colleague Relationship (PCR), Lack of Neutrality in Administration (LNA) and Lack of Concern for Teachers' in Need (LCTN) of higher secondary school teachers in Chennai is **moderate**.
- ✓ The level of the independent variables – *Self regulation*, *Self efficacy* and *Mental health* of higher secondary school teachers in Chennai is **moderate**.

- ✓ There is **no significant correlation** between *Occupational stress* and its dimensions, and the chosen independent variables- *Self regulation*, *Self efficacy* and *Mental health* of higher secondary school teachers in Chennai.
- ✓ There is **no independent variable significantly predicting** *Occupational stress* and its dimensions of higher secondary school teachers in Chennai.

POPULATION

All the higher secondary school teachers working in the schools recognized by Government of Tamilnadu in Chennai City form the population of the study.

SAMPLE

Stratified random sampling was followed for selecting sample for the present study. As proposed 5% of the population was chosen after stratification of the sample on the basis of *Type of School Management* and then *Gender*. The final sample of the study comprised **450 higher secondary school teachers**.

METHOD

The present study made use of **Descriptive Survey method** for realizing the objectives of the study.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

- Teacher Occupational Stress Scale –Prepared and Validated by the Researcher and the Research Guide.
- Teachers' Self Regulation Behaviour Scale –Published by Portia, R (2018).
- Self Efficacy Scale – Published by Megan, T. M and Anita, W.H (2001).
- Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale - Published by NHS Health Scotland, University of Warwick and University of Edinburgh (2006).

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

- ✓ Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation.
- ✓ Carl Pearson's Product Moment Correlation.
- ✓ Regression analysis.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

HYPOTHESIS 1

*The level of Occupational stress and its dimensions of higher secondary school teachers is **moderate**.*

Table - 1

Level of Occupational stress and its dimensions of higher secondary school teachers

*** indicates the level of Occupational stress**

WL: - Workload
SM - Students Misbehaviour
LPR - Lack of Professional Recognition
LCR - Lack of Classroom Resources
PCR - Poor Colleague Relationship
LNA - Lack of Neutrality in Administration
LCTN - Lack of Concern for Teachers in Need
OOS - Overall Occupational Stress

Variable	Low		Moderate		High	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
WL	115	25.6	198	44.0*	137	30.4
SM	149	33.1	161	35.8*	140	31.1
LPR	129	28.7	130	28.9	191	42.4*
LCR	142	31.6	183	40.7*	125	27.8
PCR	134	29.8	212	47.1*	104	23.1
LNA	119	26.4	151	33.6	180	40.0*
LCTN	130	28.9	169	37.6*	151	33.6
OOS	130	28.9	190	42.2*	130	28.9

HYPOTHESIS 2

The level of Self regulation of higher secondary school teachers is **moderate**.

Table - 2

Level of Self regulation of higher secondary school teachers

Variable	Low		Moderate		High	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Self regulation	141	31.3	151	33.6	158	35.1*

*** indicates the level of Self regulation**

HYPOTHESIS 3

The level of Self efficacy of higher secondary school teachers is **moderate**.

Table - 3

Level of Self efficacy of higher secondary school teachers

Variable	Low		Moderate		High	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Self efficacy	135	30.0	167	37.1*	148	32.9

*** indicates the level of Self efficacy**

HYPOTHESIS 4

The level of Mental health of higher secondary school teachers is **moderate**.

Table - 4

Level of Mental health of higher secondary school teachers

Variable	Low		Moderate		High	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Mental health	115	25.6	179	39.8*	156	34.7

* indicates the level of Mental Health

HYPOTHESIS 5

There is no significant relationship between occupational stress and its dimensions of higher secondary school teachers and their Self regulation, Self efficacy and Mental health.

Table - 5

Relationship between occupational stress and its dimensions of higher secondary school teachers and their Self regulation, Self efficacy and Mental health

**significant at 0.01 level

* significant at 0.05 level

HYPOTHESIS 6

Self regulation, Self efficacy and Mental health of higher secondary school teachers are not significant enough to predict their Occupational stress and its dimensions.

Table - 6

Nature of prediction of Self regulation, Self efficacy and Mental health of higher secondary school teachers over their Occupational stress and its dimensions

Dimensions	Equation	R ² Value	Variable	Coefficient	'p' Value
WL	13.11+ (0.07*SR) + (0.05*SE) +(0.09*MH)	0.12	SR	0.18	0.00*
			SE	0.15	0.00*
			MH	0.25	0.00*
SM	17.37+ (0.09*SR) + (0.07*SE) +(0.08*MH)	0.18	SR	0.26	0.00*
			SE	0.32	0.00*
			MH	0.29	0.00*
LPR	13.62+ (0.09*SR) + (0.05*SE) +(0.07*MH)	0.11	SR	0.35	0.00*
			SE	0.48	0.00*
			MH	0.31	0.00*
LCR	13.83+ (0.14*SR) + (0.11*SE)	0.15	SR	0.28	0.00*
			SE	0.35	0.00*
			MH	0.30	0.00*

Dimension	Variables	N	Calculated 'r' Value	'p' Value
WL	SR	450	0.37	0.00**
	SE	450	0.45	0.00**
	MH	450	0.11	0.02*
SM	SR	450	0.29	0.00**
	SE	450	0.51	0.00**
	MH	450	0.48	0.00**
LPR	SR	450	0.32	0.00**
	SE	450	0.51	0.00**
	MH	450	0.29	0.00**
LCR	SR	450	0.38	0.00**
	SE	450	0.30	0.00**
	MH	450	0.19	0.00**
PCR	SR	450	0.28	0.00**
	SE	450	0.09	0.04*
	MH	450	0.23	0.00**
LNA	SR	450	0.35	0.00**
	SE	450	0.27	0.00**
	MH	450	0.22	0.00**
LCTN	SR	450	0.10	0.03*
	SE	450	0.28	0.00**
	MH	450	0.30	0.00**
OOS	SR	450	0.33	0.00**
	SE	450	0.37	0.00**
	MH	450	0.39	0.00**

	+(0.09*MH)				
PCR	11.68+ (0.09*SR) + (0.10*SE) +(0.11*MH)	0.09	SR	0.29	0.00*
			SE	0.22	0.00*
			MH	0.18	0.00*
LNA	13.08+ (0.10*SR) + (0.08*SE) +(0.07*MH)	0.14	SR	0.34	0.00*
			SE	0.26	0.00*
			MH	0.37	0.00*
LCTN	12.09+ (0.11*SR) + (0.17*SE) +(0.14*MH)	0.18	SR	0.18	0.00*
			SE	0.20	0.00*
			MH	0.33	0.00*
OOS	94.87+ (0.19*SR) + (0.27*SE) +(0.17*MH)	0.21	SR	0.28	0.00*
			SE	0.34	0.00*
			MH	0.38	0.00*

* *significant*

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. The level of Overall *Occupational Stress* of higher secondary school teachers in the schools of Chennai is found to be **moderate**, as 42.2% of the sample has fallen under this category.

In the case of the dimensions *Workload (WL)* (44%), *Students misbehaviour (SM)* (35.8%), *Lack of classroom resources (LCR)* (40.7%), *Poor colleague relationship (PCR)* (47.1%), and *Lack of concern for teachers in need (LCTN)* (37.6%) also the higher secondary school teachers

have recorded **moderate** as majority of them have come under this category.

However, in the dimensions *Lack of professional recognition (LPC)* (42.4%) and *Lack of neutrality in administration (LNA)* (40%), the target population is found to be **high**.

2. The level of *Self regulation* of higher secondary school teachers in the schools of Chennai is found to be **high**, as 35.1% of them falls under this category.

3. The level of *Self efficacy* of higher secondary school teachers in the schools of Chennai is found to be **moderate**, with 37.1% of the sample falling under this category.

4. In the case of the other independent variable – *Mental health* of higher secondary school teachers is found to be **moderate** as 39.8% of the sample falls under this category.

5. On computing correlation between *Occupational stress* and the independent variables, it is found that *the overall Occupational stress* has recorded **significant negative correlation** with all the independent variable – *Self regulation*, *Self efficacy* and *Mental health*.

On computing dimension wise correlation, all the dimensions of *Occupational stress* – *Workload (WL)*, *Students misbehaviour (SM)*, *Lack of professional recognition (LPC)*, *Lack of classroom resources (LCR)*, *Poor colleague relationship (PCR)*, *Lack of neutrality in administration (LNA)* and *Lack of concern for teachers in need (LCTN)* are found to have **significant negative correlation** with all the independent variables - *Self regulation*, *Self efficacy* and *Mental health*.

6. On computing multiple regression analysis, it is found that overall *Occupational stress* and all its dimensions - *Workload*, *Students misbehaviour*, *Lack of professional recognition*, *Lack of classroom resources*, *Poor colleague relationship*, *Lack of neutrality in administration* and *Lack of concern for teachers in need* - of higher secondary

school teachers in the schools in Chennai are **significantly predicted** by the independent variables - *Self regulation, Self efficacy and Mental health*.

DISCUSSION

Chennai, the capital of Tamilnadu being a cosmopolitan city, cherishing the values and qualities of an ideal smart city in a sprawling country like India is looked up always for better and standard accomplishments in all fields of human activity. It is not just a fancy for the people of Tamilnadu to glorify its historical contributions to the world in general, and in specific to the Bharath Matha – India, the country of the union of diversities, rather to feel and enjoy every bit of its prestigious growth and developments in par with international cities of the world at all levels in the areas of education, science, and technology, business and industry, governance and administration, sports and entertainments, and culture and linguistics. Of course, the corner stone for all such superstructure is the provision of standard quality education to all, in any forsaken condition in the nook and cranny of Tamilnadu. While the government of Tamilnadu is proceeding on such visualized and structured path of development in all phases of life, the observed **moderate** level of occupational stress of higher secondary teachers in the schools in Chennai city is not refreshing to the teacher community, educational authorities and academics in general. Given the standard academic exposures to all the categories of teachers and the unique provisions for professional advancement, their recorded moderate level of occupational stress, opens up the flood gate of criticism leveled against school administration, functioning of department of higher secondary education, learners' academic orientation and discipline, and the responsibilities of other stakeholders likely to be in touch with the schools and the learners.

However, instead of pointing our fingers towards others, the external factors, the Researcher gives more weightage to the internal factors, that is the person oriented ones to arrive at reasons for the status of occupational stress clicked by higher secondary school teachers in Chennai in the present investigation. It is evident that a pretty large (42.2) percentage of the sample has fallen under the point of **moderate** level of occupational stress. The dimension wise analysis reveals that the largest percentage of the sample (47.7%) seems to have been affected by poor colleague relationship, followed by a larger percentage (44%) of the sample affected by workload, and equally large percentage of the sample felt stressed by the lack of classroom resources (40.7%). Of the seven dimensions studied of higher secondary teachers after reporting Three dimensions – *poor colleague relationship; workload and lack of classroom resources* – are not simply or just **moderately** stressed, rather they appear to be embracing the borders of higher level infliction. The remaining Two dimensions – *lack of concern for teachers in need* (37.6%) and *student misbehaviour* (35.8%) with lesser percentage of the sample seem to be inflicting the population just **moderately**. Of the Five dimensions discussed above Two are directly job oriented – *workload and lack of classroom resources* – whereas the other Three dimensions – *student misbehaviour, poor colleague relationship and lack of concern for teachers in need* – are relationship oriented ones. The other Two dimensions of occupational stress of teachers – *lack of professional recognition and lack of neutrality in administration* have struck **high**. Of the Two, the first one being job oriented, the second one comes under relationship category. In total, out of 7 dimensions of teachers' occupational stress, in the **moderate** level stress affliction, the following Two job related

dimensions and Three relationship based dimensions are figured. In the **high** category of stress affliction, out of Two dimensions, one is job oriented and the other one is relational. In summing up numerically, out of Three job related dimensions studied, only one – *lack of professional recognition* – has come out critical, that is, inflicting agony to the maximum **high** to the higher secondary teachers in the schools in Chennai. Similarly, out of the Four relation oriented dimensions of occupational stress studied, only one – *lack of neutrality in administration* – has painted the stress affliction of higher secondary teachers in Chennai in red that is statistically shown by high because of violations of human right, and failure to keep up the basic ethics of the teaching profession.

The foregone discussion based on the major research outcome - the intensity of the higher secondary teachers' occupational stress in total and in terms of its dimensions has brought out that the constituting factors, termed as dimensions are of Two major categories – Work / job based dimensions – and Relation based dimensions. The Researcher has arrived at the conclusion that the dimension – *lack of professional recognition*, the one out of Three job related ones and the dimension – *lack of neutrality in administration* – one out of four relationship oriented factors and established theoretically they are the major contributors for the overall moderate level of occupational stress of higher secondary teacher of the schools in Chennai. It corroborates the research findings published by Schuler (1982); wherein the researcher identified 7 categories of occupational stressors, in which *the most prominent ones are job qualities related ones and the relationship oriented categories*. Moreover, occupational stress is treated by the Researcher in the current study as a debilitating factor negatively affecting teachers job performance, the authors Conish and Swindle (1994) have reported that occupational stress is a mental and physical condition that affects the productivity, efficiency, personal health and working quality of an employee. In accordance to what the current research has brought out, Nelson and Thampson (1968) have reported that the major reasons for teacher attrition are teaching leads to poor faculty relationships and discipline problems.

The key for the success of a research is its conceptualization. In the current research, the Researcher has conceptualized that the structure of occupational stress can be developed in a framework comprising internal and external resources available for the individuals / population involved in the study. Following the usual practice, the Researcher collecting external or environmental factors capable of negatively influencing the job of teaching of higher secondary teachers, developed the research instrument, in the form of Likert type scale to assess the status / level of occupational stress accrued by the target group in its job of imparting knowledge and skills primarily, then fostering character and discipline, and rendering them finally as productive individuals with the ability to lead, and shoulder responsibilities. The instrument has been designed to assess the intensity or status or level of the target groups' occupational stress. In order to verify 'how' such outcomes emerged from part of assessment, the Researcher inducted separately certain psychological factors which are likely to influence the occupational stress of teachers. For this reasons the Researcher had adopted Three psychological characteristics as independent variables such as – Self Regulation, Self Efficacy and Mental Health. The Researcher conceived that these factors are already formed in the population of teachers to some extent and will serve as preventives or resistors to avoid the formation of stress in them. The study reveals that the chosen population is **high** in Self Regulation. It is the most needed

characteristic for teachers, especially at higher secondary level. *The merit of this factor lies in its ability to flexibly active, monitor, inhibit, preserve and / or adapt one's behaviour, attention, emotions and cognitive strategies in response to directions from internal cues environmental stimuli and feedback from others in an attempt to attain personally relevant goals* (Moilnen, 2007). Thus it is explicit that Self Regulation is the most sought after characteristic for human beings of all categories because it has the capacity to alter one's thinking and reasoning for crucial decision making appropriate to the demand of the hour without violation of life values to avoid facing stress or to get rid of the stress already formed. All such good things appear to have happened in the lives of higher secondary class teachers in Chennai. It is reported that they are endowed with high self regulation and by virtue of it they have brought down the level of Occupational stress to **moderate** level. The interaction between self regulation and Occupational stress is made evident by correlative analysis signifying Self Regulation as the correlate of Occupational stress. More importantly the further analysis confirmed the contribution of self regulation towards weakening the strength of occupational stress by reporting Self Regulation as a predictor of occupational stress of higher secondary teacher in Chennai.

Similarly, Self Efficacy, another independent variable of Occupational stress of higher secondary school teachers in Chennai is a potent psychological factor, essential for estimating one's own capacity or the skills possessed to accept the responsibility being offered or embark on the task thrust on them. The layman's explanation does not exhibit the proper notion of self efficacy. According to Albert, Bandura (1982), the Creator of terminology, self efficacy "it is a personal judgment of how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations". It connotes that if a person well conversant with a field of activity believes that he / she is of **average** level of self efficacy, he / she will undertake tasks of average difficulty and as such without the risk of failure he / she can complete the task. But another in the same outfit of capabilities exhibits higher level self efficacy, he / she will naturally opt for challenging assignments and clear them as planned to emerge successful. This is what exactly happened in the target population. It is a fact that no one can raise their finger against them in respect of their competence. But lo! their self efficacy is just **average** not in congruence with their real capacity. It is because of their low estimate of themselves they have fallen to **moderate** level self efficacy and correspondingly their impact on occupational stress would have been at the low ebb, incapable of coping with the virulence of self regulation. Therefore, the contribution of self efficacy was not helpful to bring down the **moderate** level to still lower level, though it is significantly correlated and turned out to be a predictor of the occupational stress of the target population.

Quite different from the other two independent variables mental health acts uniquely among human beings. It is a common saying that a person can afford to lose everything in life but not his / her character because if character is lost everything is lost and become unfit to live. This is what the social and moral code of life demands for a worthy human living. Likewise the psychological domain of human life requires '*mental health*' because it is capable of securing an acceptable form of emotional reactions with attuned behavioural manifestations. That is "mental health of a person denotes a psychological state which provides satisfactory level of functioning of

emotional and behavioural adjustment” (WHO, 2014). Thus “*mental health* highlights emotional wellbeing, the capacity to live full and creative life and the flexibility to deal with lives’ challenges and exhibit contentment and happiness” (Bertolota, J, 2013). A happy and meaningful life is assured only by mental health. All is possible in life with mental health. Possessing everything in life, but losing mental health is tantamount to drowning oneself with eyes open in a mire of sorrow. All is well with mental health, all turns out a misery with the loss of mental health. In this aspect, mental health is of paramount importance for the psychological wellbeing of higher secondary teachers of the schools in Chennai. But to our dismay, it has fallen flat at **moderate** level. So it is likely to wield a greater blow to the subjective wellbeing of the target population. Such a positively loaded characteristic having lost its stature by occupying an **average** state of condition, its positive impact over the target population would be minimal to reduce stress in them. Since poor mental health has the power to sweep out all good things gained through high self regulation, the residual overall **moderate** level of occupational stress recorded in the study may appear to be a ‘blue from the bolt’ at the back of their mental health. However the Researcher attributes this gain in the midst of losses to the influences extraneous factors not taken into account, and also to other psychological factors not included in the study owing to difficulty in handling multiple psychological factors in one stroke. Thus the Researcher puts forth the following recommendations to the department of higher secondary education, Government of Tamilnadu.

- i. Higher secondary school teachers may be inducted in mindfulness programmes to get rid of the stress accrued from job performance.
- ii. The government educational authorities may organise series of seminars and workshops for district educational authorities, school management authorizes, and school heads on *how to provide more professional recognition to faculty and how to maintain neutrality in administration* to avoid bias and prejudice.
- iii. The Ministry of school education may organise State Level Seminar cum Workshops for all the faculty handling higher secondary classes to enhance their self efficacy and mental health.
- iv. The Ministry of school education may plan and organize series of Awareness Programmes on stress formation – stress reduction and stress coping strategies for all teachers right from primary level to high school level working in the schools in Tamilnadu.

Thus, as conceptualized by the Researcher, the study has estimated the *status of occupational stress* of the target population and the worth of *personal resources* inducted as independent variables – Self Regulation, Self Efficacy and Mental Health – in terms of their status and the nature of impact each one will have on occupational stress of the higher secondary teachers of Chennai and the extent to which they can reduce the stress in the target group. Hereby the current research has answered all the research questions raised and filled the research gaps successfully.

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