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The Relational Study of Occupational Stress and Teacher Freezing Among Secondary School Teachers

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ABSTRACT Teacher freezing and occupational stress are the conditions observed frequently among the teachers. With an aim to conduct a correlational investigation between occupational stress and teacher freezing, descriptive survey design was implemented in the current study. 208 teachers from secondary schools of West Bengal were taken into consideration as sample for the investigation. The investigator employed Pearson's correlation for data analysis and the result showed that occupational stress is negatively correlated to teacher freezing with regard to gender and nature of institutions. This suggests that teachers experiencing substantial occupational pressure tends to encounter increased levels of freezing in their profession.

INTRODUCTION

Human beings and work are closely intertwined. Their whole life hovers around work. It is the occupation that gives their lives a purpose and determines their standard of living. But their occupation is not all that congenial all the time. Accomplishment of any piece of work inexorably anticipates exertion of some amount of physical and mental energy. This physical and mental exhaustion due to the occupational involvement creates some degree of strain in the individual which can be termed as 'stress'. Occupational stress is a stern work threat which has the influence to fetch catastrophe on teachers. There were instances where teachers failing to meet the necessity of students led to low academic achievements which had an effect on enriched development of human resources for the country (Tao et al. 2021; Santiago et al. 2018; Wallnas and Jendle 2017). Currently, several studies have scrutinised occupational stress among teachers and have recommended that teachers undergo through excessively high levels of stress (Adeyemo and Ogunyemi 2005). Dankade et al. (2017) found that the reason behind teachers' occupational stress is primarily caused by demanding job duties, high student-teacher ratios, dearth of passion and students' insubordination

Stress generated due to excessive work responsibilities, can be detrimental for the efficiency of the teachers which can lead to teacher freezing. Teacher freezing may manifest as apathy and indifference of teachers, dearth of dedication and enthusiasm fulfilling duties, and a diminished interest in pursuing growth or innovation. It is the entire vegetated condition of a teacher which steers to indolent, turnover intents and professional discontent. Teachers being unable to meet the demand of contemporary professional situations were found to be sluggish and lethargic with least motivation leading to teacher freezing. In one study Taj (1998), concluded that the lower level of professional contentment can bring out elevated degree of teacher freezing. Dankade et al. (2017) found lack of contentment in work place to be a reason for occupational stress. This made it indirectly clear that occupational stress can result in inefficiency of teachers which is otherwise termed as teacher freezing.

Many scholars invested their effort in studying occupational stress and teacher freezing in different directions. There were comparative studies on the basis of various categorical variables like gender, nature of institutions, age and year of experiences (Christian et al. 2022; Bhrigu et al. 2021; Akhter and Kar 2019; Alson 2019; Islam 2019; Harish and Prabha 2018; Kavita and Hassan 2018; Dawn et al. 2017; Jahan 2017; Rabha 2017; Saravanan and Muthulakshmi 2017; Solomon et al. 2017; Swathikishore and Baby 2017).

Some of the investigators were found to study on its relationship with self-efficacy giving a result of no correlation (Ipek et al. 2018), some attempted to find how stress generated from occupation impacted psychological wellbeing (Bahari and Wider 2016), some others were found to explore the relation between stress generated from teaching occupation and the coping strategies adopted by teachers (Nagra and Kaur 2014). Some studies have observed that professional isolation is correlated with stress generated from occupation (Dussault et al. 2001). Relationships between teacher effectiveness, teacher stress and teacher commitment had also been studied (Kauts and Kaur 2015). Few studies are fixated on understanding the causal impact of occupational stress on teachers (Saxena and Manjekar 2020), assessing various aspects influencing job stress (Bhrigu et al. 2021; Dankade et al. 2017). Both comparative analysis and correlational studies were also conducted on teacher freezing. Comparison based on categorical variable were analysed by few scholars like Jaseena (2022), Basu and Banerjee (2020), Jena (2018), Musheer and Rafaqi (2018), Dhull and Poonam (2015), Singla (2014), Kumar and Kamini. (2013). Rawat in 2022 observed that the environment of educational institution had a substantial effect on various dimensions of teacher freezing The study of Chaudhury and Kundu (2023) demonstrated a positive correlation between teacher freezing and change proneness which indicated that if the teachers have high level of freezing, they will show low level of change proneness. Malik and Sonia (2020) learnt from their study that teachers having external locus of control exhibit increased teacher freezing tendencies. Malik (2020) found that teacher freezing and professional satisfaction are positively correlated with each other. Rajni (2016) concluded from her study that teacher freezing was negatively correlated with mental health. Rajni in 2016 found that positive correlation was found between teacher freezing and neuroticism. Another study by Sharma (2015) found that negative correlation was there between teacher commitment and teachers freezing. Sharma and Goswami in 2024 opined in their study that teaching profession entails stress which in turn can be hazardous leading to freezing among those teachers. Study conducted by Bashir and Jan (2024) also cited that high demands and dearth of proper social sustenance cause emotional among the teachers which in turn create a stressful situation leading to suffer from teacher freezing. Pushpalata and Keshamma (2024) also found that work stress negatively affects the quality of teachers' performance. Ozyildirim (2024) also made an effort to study the level of teachers' efficiency during their high stress level. Thus, many of these studies indicated an indirect relation between occupational stress and teacher freezing but no such studies have been carried out to prove a direct relation between them. For this reason, the present study has been initiated by the investigators.

Objectives of the Study

The study objectives were:

1. To examine the nature of teacher freezing and occupational stress of teachers from secondary schools
2. To explore the correlation among teacher freezing and occupational stress.
3. To explore the correlation between various dimensions of teacher freezing and occupational stress.

Hypotheses of the Study

The study aimed to assess the following hypotheses:

$H_0$1: Teacher freezing does not significantly correlate with occupational stress in respect of teachers from secondary schools.

$H_0$1.1: Teacher freezing does not significantly correlate with occupational stress in respect of teachers from government secondary school.

$H_0$1.1.1: Teacher freezing does not significantly correlate with occupational stress in respect of male teachers from government secondary schools.

$H_0$1.1.2: Teacher freezing does not significantly correlate with occupational stress in respect of female school teachers from government secondary schools.

$H_0$1.2: Teacher freezing does not significantly correlate with occupational stress in respect of teachers from private secondary schools.

$H_0$1.2.1: Teacher freezing does not significantly correlate with occupational stress in

respect of male teachers from private secondary school.

$H_0$1.2.2: Teacher freezing does not significantly correlate with occupational stress in respect of female teachers from private secondary school.

$H_0$2: Intellectual dimension of teacher freezing does not significantly correlate with occupational stress.

$H_0$3: Psychological dimension of teacher freezing does not significantly correlate with occupational stress.

$H_0$4: Social dimension of teacher freezing does not significantly correlate with occupational stress.

$H_0$5: Physical dimension of teacher freezing does not significantly correlate with occupational stress.

$H_0$6: Moral dimension of teacher freezing does not significantly correlate with occupational stress.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Pursuant to the purpose of the present investigation, to know the relation between teacher freezing and occupational stress of the school teachers of secondary level, descriptive survey framework was utilised.

Sample and Sampling Technique

For the current investigation, data were randomly sampled from secondary school teachers throughout West Bengal. Individuals from different government and private academic institutions (N=208) participated in the study. A comprehensive breakdown of the sample is provided in Table number 1.

Tool Used

In the study, the tools used are:

- The Occupational Stress Scale for Teachers prepared by Sarala Rani and Suman Dalal in 2005. The scale consists of 36 items of occupational stress. The calculated internal consistency for the present location was 0.66. Content validity was established with the assistance of expert opinion.
- The Teacher Freezing Scale prepared by Haseen Taj in 1996. There are 74 items in the scale which are grouped catering to the dimensions given by Haseen Taj (1988). The internal consistency calculated for the present location was 0.71. Content validity was recognised through consultation with experts.

Statistical Technique Used

For the need of the present investigation, Pearson coefficient of correlation was employed**.**

Table 1: Sample distribution in accordance to categorical variables (Type of Institution and Gender)

S. No.	*Name of the district*	*Type of institutions*				*Total*
		Government		*Private*		
		Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	
1	Bankura	1	3	1	2	6
2	Birbhum	10	10	2	7	35
3	Burdwan	2	6	4	4	10
4	Cooch Bihar	3	8	1	1	10
5	Hooghly	1	4	2	2	6
6	Howrah	2	5	4	2	6
7	Jalpaiguri	1	2	1	2	4
8	Kolkata	5	9	8	10	25
9	Medinipur	2	2	1	2	6
10	North 24 Parganas	10	10	8	9	45
11	South 24 Parganas	13	12	8	6	53
Total	All districts	50	71	40	47	208

Source: Data collected for the survey in December 2024

Delimitation of the Study

School teachers at secondary level from West Bengal were chosen for the present study.

RESULTS

Based on the objectives and hypotheses articulated, the analysis related to interpretation of the correlation between occupational stress and teacher freezing has been presented in Table number 2 and 3.

In the Table 2, the mean value clearly indicates that level of teachers' freezing among school teachers at secondary level based on gender and nature of institutions, belongs to above average level but collectively calculated mean showed that the level of teacher freezing is at moderate level. Occupational stress of these teachers is at average level irrespective of the gender and the nature of institutions. The correlation between them is significantly negative. The Pearson coefficient of correlation value (*r*) is -.966 for the total sample. So, the hypothesis $H_0$1 is not accepted with a significance level of 1 percent and the alternate hypothesis is upheld. As per the hypotheses $H_0$1.1 and $H_0$1.2, correlation is presented based on the categorical variable gender. Here it is also indicated that teacher freezing is significantly and inversely correlated with occupational stress of government (*r* = -.947) and private (*r* = -.992) school teachers. So, the hypotheses $H_0$1.1 and $H_0$1.2 are also rejected at 1 percent level of significance. The categorical variable government and private was further segregated among male and female groups and based on that data was analysed. The correlational value of male government school teachers (*r* = -.990), female government school teachers (*r* = -.923), male private school teachers (*r* = -.991) and female private school teachers (*r* = -.993) are found to be significantly negative. So, the hypothesis $H_0$1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 are not accepted at 1 percent level of significance. The result denotes that if the male

Table 2: Pearson's correlation between teacher freezing and occupational stress of secondary school teachers

Categorical variable		*Mean*		*SD*		*n*	*R*
		T.F	*O.S*	*T.F*	*O.S*		
Govt.	Male	252.14	99.30	22.152	10.122	50	-.990**
	Female	245.08	99.80	25.996	10.622	71	-.923**
Govt. Total		248.51	99.88	25.076	10.392	121	-.947**
Pvt.	Male	256.02	99.92	25.381	9.872	40	-.991**
	Female	253.72	98.34	25.016	11.036	47	-.993**
Pvt. Total		254.74	99.09	25.260	9.871	87	-.992**
Total		250.84	99.29	24.979	10.312	208	-.966**

*Note:***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Govt.= Government; Pvt. = Private
*Source:*Data collected for the survey in December, 2024

Table 3: Pearson's correlation between dimensions of teacher freezing and occupational stress of secondary school teachers

Dimensions of teacher freezing	*Mean*	*Intellectual*	*Psychological*	*Social*	*Physical*	*Moral*
		88.90	40.22	35.38	66.84	19.58
	SD	10.230	5.426	5.417	7.435	3.623
Occupational Stress	*Mean*			99.29		
	SD			10.312		
n				208		
r		-.795**	-.697**	-.727**	-.795**	-.646**

*Note:***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
O. S = Occupational Stress; T. F = Teacher Freezing
Source: Data collected for the survey in December 2023

and female teachers belonging to government and private institutions have almost no teacher freezing, then they will have low levels of occupational stress.

Table 3 reveals that teacher freezing at secondary level schools in different dimensions are negatively and significantly correlated to their occupational stress. The Pearson coefficients of correlation values (*r*) are -.795 for intellectual dimension, -.697 for psychological dimension, -.727 for social dimension, -.795 for physical dimension and -.646 for moral dimension. So, the hypothesis $H_0$2, $H_0$3, $H_0$4, $H_0$5, $H_0$6 are rejected at 1 percent level of significance indicating acceptance of the alternative hypothesis. Thus, for the detailed analysis when the correlation between various dimensions of teacher freezing and occupational stress has been scrutinized, it was evident that dimension wise low level of freezing will have low level of occupational stress. The analysis made with dimensional segregation of teacher freezing as available in the scale used, confirms the broad result which showed that teacher freezing is inversely correlated to occupational stress.

DISCUSSION

The present study clarified with its result that the teachers who have high levels of occupational stress are more prone to freezing in their profession, both dimension wise and in total. The present result is indirectly in line with some studies (Bashir and Jan 2024; Pushpalata and Keshamma 2024; Sharma and Goswami 2024). Bashir and Jan in 2024 observed in their study that high demands in job and challenges faced by them in their professional sector generate stress among the teachers which play a part to develop teacher freezing among them to a moderate level. Pushpalata and Keshamma (2024), who found that teachers have high occupational stress level, have supported the result obtained in the existing study. Sharma and Goswami (2024) also supported the result of the present by qualitatively concluding that stress generated by the teaching occupation led to medical and emotional illness which is a factor responsible for the teacher freezing. Bhrigu et al. (2021) concluded that dearth of job satisfaction can be a factor for occupational stress among the teachers of educational institutions. Malik in 2020 in his study on teacher freezing confided with his result that lower the job satisfaction higher the level of teacher freezing. This indirectly confirms that elevated occupational stress results in increased levels of teacher freezing, which is being inveterate in the result acquired in the present study. Kauts and Kaur (2015) concluded in their study that teacher's stress and teacher commitment are negatively correlated. Negative correlation between teacher freezing and teacher commitment has also been found in the study by Sharma (2015). This also indirectly confers the result of the present study. Further, some of the reasons behind the occupational stress like work overload, anxiety, boredom and incapacitation as given by Dankade et al. (2017) were also stated by Taj (1998) as the factors for teacher freezing. It was found that Saxena and Manjekar (2020) stated ineffectiveness of the teachers as an effect of occupational stress which is in itself a definition of teacher freezing as given by Taj in 1998. The negative correlation between different dimensions of teacher freezing and occupational stress as a whole has been confided by various previous studies. The present result, where it was found that teachers with high level of teacher freezing in physical and psychological dimensions have heightened occupational stress, is consistent with the result found by Ozyidirim (2024). Ozyildirim (2024) in his study found that high level of stress owing to the occupation leads to physical and psychological hazard that led to increase in inefficiency. Sharma and Goswami (2024) in their qualitative study stated that the teachers suffering from excessive stress in teaching occupation exhibits freezing at emotional level thereby supporting the present quantitative result where it was found teachers who have high level of emotional teacher freezing have significant level of work-related stress. Thus, the ancillary relation between occupational stress and teacher freezing were there in many studies but the present study made an honest attempt to find out the relation between them conferring to some of the previous studies.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study provides valuable insights which made it clear that teacher freezing can be a resultant outcome of occupational stress. So, it is very necessary to put effort into finding

various coping stratagems to manage occupational stress among the secondary school teachers which ultimately can help in blocking the loss of potential of these teachers. Education of the modern genre has gone through a drastic modification owing to complicating the job situation of the teachers. To change with the shifting environment can help to confront the stress caused by occupation and thereby circumvent suffering from teacher freezing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Future research can be directed to explore the effect of occupational stress on various dimensions of teacher freezing which will provide an in-depth knowledge in this area. It is also very necessary to conduct a qualitative study to look into the factors contributing to occupational stress leading to teacher freezing so that solutions for dealing with the situation can be apprehended and necessary steps to curb the problem can be adopted with utmost urgency. Forthcoming studies ought to strive to embrace a more varied sample to boost the potential for generalising the results.

LIMITATIONS

The present investigation pertains only to one state which is West Bengal and conducted only on secondary school teachers.

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