

Effectiveness of Occupational Stress Coping Strategies for Teachers With Special Reference To Inclusive Education



Education

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ABSTRACT

The empirical study highlights at examining the sources, effects and the occupational stress coping strategies for teachers with special reference to inclusive education. Occupational Stress is a term refers to ongoing stress related to workplace. It is a physical or psychological disorder associated with an occupational environment and manifested in symptoms such as extreme anxiety, or tension, or cramps, headaches, or digestion problems. Sometime the stress also acts as a motivator to the individual to strive for excellence. It is a pressure experienced by the responsibilities assigned in their duty. Such pressure is highly experienced by the teachers working in the inclusive schools with diverse group of learners. The methodology adopted was both quantitative and qualitative. To collect the quantitative data, the occupational Stress and occupational stress coping strategies tool was developed by investigators. The investigator evaluates occupational stress by analyzing four key factors: i) organizational factor ii) professional factor iii) professional interpersonal interaction factor and iv) instructional factor. And the occupational stress coping strategies focus physical well being, psychological well being, emotional well being and social well being. To collect qualitative data an unstructured personal opinion was used. In these study occupational stress coping strategies was prepared by the investigators for teachers with special reference to the inclusive education. After administering stress coping strategies for a period of 4 weeks the effect of the strategies was assessed with the post test. The study result shows that the occupational stress coping strategies were effective. Thus, stress Coping strategies reduce the occupational stress for teachers with special reference to inclusive education are proved in this study.

Introduction

Teaching is well thought-out as an important occupation with high tasks and promise and the role played by a teacher is extremely essential in the scenario of Indian education. A classroom is considered as a miniature civilization representing different types of pupils with difference in abilities and disabilities. It is therefore, the duty of the teacher to provide learning experience suited to all types of children to achieve better outcome and all round development of the child. It is very essential that teacher should be aware of the entry behavior of each child to provide suitable learning environment. Teaching tends to be a very emotionally and physically exhausting profession (Travers, 2001). Teachers are responsible for the planning, teaching, and marking of course material, in addition to meeting with parents and writing reports. They deal with time pressures and heavy workloads. Factors such as poor student behavior, ranging from low levels of student motivation to misbehavior, and poor relationships with administration and colleagues can lead to occupational stress. In some cases, teachers contend with poor working conditions that include lack of resources and poor physical features of school buildings. In addition, they struggle with poor prospects concerning pay, promotion, and career development which also contribute to their stress (Kyriacou, 1998). In addition to their teaching responsibilities, they are also responsible for supervising students before and after school, during recess and lunch hours, and are expected to participate in extracurricular activities with students after school. Teachers cope with student issues that include violence on playgrounds, drug and alcohol abuse, pregnancy, depression, suicide, rape, robbery, and assault (Gold & Roth, 1993).

Need for the Study

Teaching is a highly stressful occupation. In fact, teachers throughout the world deal with a substantial amount of ongoing occupational stress (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998, Kyriacou & Sutcliffe 1978, Pitchers & Soddan 1998, Borg 1990). Teachers play a diversified role within the class room and outside the class room. A class room is considered as a miniature society representing different types of pupils with difference in abilities and disabilities. It is therefore,

the duty of the teacher to provide learning experience suited to all types of children to achieve better outcome and all round development of the child. It is very essential that teacher should be aware about the suitable teaching approaches and theories to provide suitable learning environment for a heterogeneous group of learners. Several studies have been undertaken to study the teachers' roles and responsibilities in an inclusive schools. Some studies have also been carried out to find out the stressors and coping strategies of teachers in inclusive schools. Forlin, Chris (1996) questioned inclusion – Is it stressful for teachers. The researcher involved 225 regular primary school teachers and 42 principals in Western Australia found that the inclusion of a child with a mild intellectual disability significantly increased the educator's appraisal of stress severity. Forlin, Chris (1998) investigated the ways in which Australian regular class teachers cope during inclusive education and the specific issues which are stressful for them. Forlin, Charis (2001) identified the potential stressors for regular class teachers in inclusion. Source of stress included their perceived competence, their concern that the education of the majority of students not be affected, and the behaviour of the child with disabilities. Gyimah, Emmanuel et al. (2008) investigated the emotional reactions to inclusion of Ghanaian Mainstream Teachers. The analysis involved five bi-polar emotional reactions; namely anxious/relaxed; encouraged/discouraged; confident/ diffident; satisfied/dissatisfied; self-assured/worried. The results confirmed that in teaching children with special needs in the mainstream, teachers experienced psychological stress. On the basis of the findings, suggestions for more information about special needs education, supply of resources and inter-agency collaboration were made.

The concept of inclusion is gaining momentum and in depth analysis is warranted in to find out the coping strategies to reduce the stress factors to implement inclusion successfully. It is very essential to explore the stress of teachers and necessary coping strategies to enhance the academic achievement of the children with special needs in inclusive set up. The strategies will make the teachers to develop better insight to reduce their occupational stress and the ways

and means to improve scholastic achievement and core intelligences of the diverse group of children in inclusive schools. The present study also aimed in this direction to identify the professional stress coping strategies for teachers working in inclusive educational set up.

Title of the Study
Effectiveness of Occupational Stress Coping Strategies for Teachers with Special Reference to Inclusive Education.

Objectives of the Study

To develop a tool and to identify the occupational stress of teachers working in inclusive classroom

To find out the effectiveness of occupational stress coping strategies to the teachers experiencing occupational stress in an inclusive classroom

Hypotheses of the Study

The designed stress coping strategies are effective to reduce the occupational stress of teachers working in inclusive classroom

There is no significant difference in the mean scores of occupational stress of teachers working in inclusive classroom control and experimental group of pre and post assessment

Methodology

Explorative cum Experimental method is adopted in the study. 40 teachers were selected using simple random sampling techniques and their level of stress was assessed. The designed stress coping strategies was implemented and post test was done. The raw data were scored and subjected to analysis and interpreted below.

Results and Discussions

Mean and Standard Deviation and Correlated 't' value of Teachers Occupational Stress of Experimental Group at Pre and Post Assessment

The objective was to compare the occupational mean scores of Teachers of control and experimental group at Pre and post assessment. The data were analyzed with help of correlated 't' test and results were given in table.

Table 1: occupational Stress Coping Mean and Standard Deviation and Correlated 't' value of Teachers of Experimental Group at Pre and Post Assessment

	No.	Control Group			Experimental Group		
		Mean	SD	Correlated 't' value	Mean	SD	Correlated 't' value
Pre test	20	77.41	8.88	0.96 [®]	77.5	9.07	12.01**
Post test	20	76.83	8.14		44.0	8.57	

From the above table it is evident that the correlated 't' value on the pre and post assessment scores of control group with regard to occupational stress of teachers (t value- 0.96) is not significant at 0.05 level which shows that there is no significant difference between pre and post assessment of control group teachers in their occupational

stress. Therefore formulated hypothesis, "there is no significant difference in the mean scores of occupational stress for teachers working in inclusive classroom control group of pre and post assessment" is accepted.

The table obtained correlated 't' value on the pre and post assessment scores of experimental group teachers with regard to occupational stress is (t value-12.01) found to be significant at 0.01 level. It means that the experimental group differ significantly in their occupational stress scores before and after implementation of Inclusive Coping Strategies (ICS). Therefore formulated hypothesis, "there exists no significant difference in the occupational stress mean scores of pre and post assessment of experimental group teachers working in inclusive setup" is rejected.

It also revealed that decrease in the occupational stress mean score from pre test to post test of experimental group teachers is due to the effect inclusive coping strategies designed and implemented in the present study. Further, even though there exist significant difference in the mean scores of control group it is not significant and when it is compared with experimental group it is evident that the experimental group have markedly reduced their occupational stress than the control group which showed the effectiveness of the Inclusive Coping Strategies implemented in this study.

Conclusion

The findings of the study suggested that the implementation of inclusive coping strategies could significantly reduce the occupational stress of teachers working in inclusive educational set up The present study will be a lime light for providing more stress coping training programmes to reduce the occupational stress and try to improve working condition in inclusive school. Teachers working in inclusive school settings set back in their work situation when there is too much demand and over expectations of the job in inclusive classroom. It is very essential to explore the stress of teachers and necessary coping strategies to enhance the academic achievement of the children with special needs in inclusive set up. The present study will help the teachers to develop better insight on stress coping strategies and their ways to reduce their stress and the ways and means to improve teaching competencies and core intelligence to handle the diverse group of children in inclusive schools.

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