



## Influence of Age on Job Burnout and Occupational Stress among High School Teachers

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of age of school teachers on their job burnout and occupational stress. A descriptive research design was used to study teachers working in high schools of Mysore city, Karnataka State, India. The data were collected from 388 teachers using stratified random sampling. The instruments used to measure the variables were: 1) Maslach Burnout Inventory by Maslach and Jackson (1981) and 2) The Occupational Stress Index by Srivastava and Singh (1984). The statistical techniques of descriptive statistics, and one way ANOVA were employed to analyze the data. Results revealed that age had significant influence over one of the component of burn out scores. In reduced of personal accomplishment, teachers with higher age groups had higher burn out scores. However, there were no significant differences between different age groups of school teachers with reference to their occupational stress.*

**Keywords :** occupational stress, job burnout, age groups, high school teacher

### 1. Introduction

Modern living has brought with it, not only innumerable means of comfort, but also a plethora of demands that tax human body and mind. Now-a-days everyone talks about stress. Teacher burnout can lead to students' negative reactions and attitudes toward the teacher in particular and the learning situation in general. Negative reactions are connected with reduced quality in teaching, less flexibility to accept various student needs, and poor teacher-student interactions (Capel, 1991).

According to research, stress, which in turn leads to burnout, is a cause of teacher attrition (Borg & Falzon, 1989; Capel, 1992). Half of the current teaching force is projected to retire between 2000 and 2010 (Southworth, 2000). As more teachers retire it is believed that they will be replaced by more inexperienced first-year teachers who, in turn, are not equipped to handle the stress that comes along with teaching (Archer, 1999). The magnitude of negative stress associated with teaching has been reported as a primary reason for teacher attrition and burnout (Bowden, 2000; Farber, 2000; Marshall & Marshall, 2003; Osborne, 1992; Terry, 1997).

Stress is the abnormal reaction that the organism displays against threatening environmental elements (Luthans, 1994). Stress, which is a general term used for pressure that people are exposed to in life (Jepson & Forrest, 2006).

Because teachers may be exposed to occupational stress, teaching is considered a highly stressful job (Crute, 2004; Wisniewski & Gargiulo, 1997). Teacher stress has its roots in teacher anxiety and job satisfaction (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978). The first time "teacher stress" appeared in an educational research paper was in 1977 (Kyriacou, 2001). Because teachers may be exposed to occupational stress, teaching is considered a highly stressful job (Crute, 2004; Wisniewski & Gargiulo, 1997). Teacher stress has its roots in teacher anxiety and job satisfaction (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978). A few research studies examined the relationship between emo-

tional symptoms and stress with findings that confirm the fact that stress can lead to depression and burnout (Belcastro & Gold, 1983; Drewett, 2005). Burnout is a particularly critical consequence of working in institutional settings (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Additional research studies have cited teacher stress as a major contributing factor to teacher burnout, causing teachers to have decreased satisfaction with teaching and even choosing to leave the profession (Borg & Riding, 1991; Newcomb et al., 1987; Parkay et al., 1988).

### 2. Literature Review

#### 2.1 Job Burnout

Christina Maslach was one of the first individuals to study job burnout systematically in the helping profession. The study of burnout was expanded. It started out as a concept that was used in dealing with human service workers; but it has since grown to be used in other professions such as educators, clergy, military personnel and business officials. Burnout is a multidimensional concept. Maslach (1982) made the concept operational in three dimensions: (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) depersonalization, and (c) personal accomplishments. In particular, Belcastro and Gold (1983) conducted a study among 359 teachers and examined the extent to which burnout could be associated with the teachers' somatic complaints and physical illnesses.

Maslach and Leiter (2005) identified two groups of factors which dominate the person before burnout. The first group called situational predictors which include six antecedents: (1) workload, (2) control, (3) award, (4) social network, (5) job fairness, and (6) values. The second group includes individual antecedents such as age, gender, marital status and experience. Maslach et al. (2001) reported that in terms of age, the rate of younger employees' burnout is greater than those employees who are in their 30s or 40s. Teaching is a studied job on the relationship between demographical variables and burnout. For example, in some studies, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization among young teachers is greater than older ones. In other researches, older teachers' job burnout

is greater than younger ones and vice versa (Brewer & Shapard, 2004).

A study by Goswami (2013) investigated how teachers’ burnout is related to different demographic characteristics such as age and gender. The results of this study showed the demographic variables age and area of work place affect job burnout. Jackson (1993) has found significant differences among employees’ burnout in terms of gender, age and marital status. There are also researchers who have not reported a significant relationship between demographic variables and burnout (Dillon & Tanner, 1995; Friedman & Faber, 1992).

2.2 Occupational Stress

The amount and degree of occupational stress a teacher experiences may be related to his negative self-perception, negative life experiences, low morale, and the struggle to maintain personal values and standards in the classroom (Worrall & May, 1989), while the extent to which a teacher perceives and experiences occupational stress in any school situation likely depends upon the appraisal of demands and the teacher’s coping mechanism to deal with them. Kyriacou (2001) stated, “The stress experienced by a particular teacher will be unique to him or her, and will depend on the precise complex interaction between his or her personalities, values, skills, and circumstances”

Aftab and Khatoon (2012) examined the relationships of a set of independent variables (gender, qualification, teaching experience, salary, subjects taught and marital status) with occupational stress among secondary school teachers. According to the results of the analysis, teachers with an experience of 6-10 years face occupational stress the most, and 0-5 years the least; while those falling in the remaining two groups slide in between these two.

Chaudhry (2012) explored the level of occupational stress among university teachers based on age, gender and type of organization. Descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, frequency tables, and ANOVA analysis have been used to analyze the data. The results indicate significant difference in the mean scores of faculty members having different age brackets regarding their perceived level of stress. The statistics shows the decreasing trend of stress with the increasing of age among the faculty members.

Numerous studies have confirmed that teaching can be a stressful profession. There is reduced of consistency of findings with regard to demographic variables and occupational stress. Therefore, the problem focused in this study was whether the demographic factors are associated with teachers’ stress.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Hypotheses of the study

- 1. There is no significant difference between teachers belonging to different age groups in their job burnout
- 2. There is no significant difference between teachers belonging to different age groups in their occupational stress

3.2 Sample

The population for the study consists of teachers working in schools in Mysore city, India which includes 788 teachers. In this research stratified random sample was used. Sample size was calculated according to the table provided by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Regarding the statistical range which is 788 number of sample is 388.

3.4 Tools used for data collection

In this research the following two questionnaires were used:

A. Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI): Job burnout was measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory, developed and standardized by Maslach and Jackson (1981). This is a widely used scale, and it consists of 22 statements that assess the three facets of professional burnout, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced of personal accomplishment. The

emotional exhaustion was regarded as the basic individual stress component of the syndrome (Maslach et al., 2001). The respondents identify as to how often they feel professional burnout on a “six-point Likert-type rating scale” ranging from “never” (0) to “every day” (6). This scale has been employed in a considerable number of Greek and international studies that have investigated the professional burnout of a substantial number of occupations, such as civil servants, doctors, and teachers in special and mainstream schools (Kanas, 1996). Iwanicki and Schwab (1981) reported Cronbach alpha internal reliability estimates of 0.90 for emotional exhaustion, 0.76 for depersonalization, and 0.76 for personal accomplishment. The validity of the MBI was substantiated by studies conducted by Iwanicki and Schwab (1981).

B. Occupational Stress Index: In this research the researcher used a standard test to measure the occupational stress that developed by Srivastava and Singh (1984), Incorporating 46 items, each to be rated on five point scale. Out of 46 items, 28 are true keyed and rests 18 are false keyed. Split half method was applied to establish the reliability of the scale which was found to be 0.935 by the authors.

3.3 Data collection

The questionnaires were administrated individually. The data required for the present study were collected from the high schools in Mysore. Respondents were requested to read each question carefully and then encircle the choice which best described their opinion regarding each item. The researcher distributed 400 questionnaires among the high school teachers in Mysore. Each participant received questionnaire related to occupational stress and job burnout. Finally, the investigator collected 388 questionnaires from teachers.

4-Results

The data collected thus were subjected to one way ANOVA to test the difference between teachers belonging to different age groups for burnout and occupational stress scores using SPSS for windows (version 16.0).

Tables 1 and 2 present the results of one way ANOVA for mean scores and Standard Deviation with Respect to Job Burnout of High School Teachers with Different Age Groups for burnout and occupational stress scores.

Table 1  
Mean Scores and Standard Deviation with Respect to Job Burnout of High School Teachers with Different Age Groups and results of one way ANOVA

Components of job burnout	Age groups (in years)	N	Mean	S.D	F value	P value
Emotional exhaustion	< 30	97	15.53	11.64	1.439	.231
	31-44	152	14.99	10.45		
	45-54	65	16.94	10.63		
	above 55 years	73	18.05	12.52		
	Total	387	16.03	11.21		
Depersonalization	< 30	97	9.93	7.04	1.391	.245
	31-44	152	8.71	5.45		
	45-54	65	9.95	8.09		
	above 55 years	73	10.30	5.78		
	Total	387	9.52	6.44		
Reduced Personal accomplishment	< 30	97	32.16 <sub>a</sub>	10.36	7.235	.001
	31-44	152	35.05 <sub>ab</sub>	10.07		
	45-54	65	32.51 <sub>a</sub>	11.68		
	above 55 years	73	39.08 <sub>b</sub>	10.03		
	Total	387	34.66	10.67		

**Note: df=3, 383; Mean values with different superscripts are significantly different from each other as indicated by Scheffe's Post hoc test (Alpha=.05)**

For comparing the study variables of burnout across different age groups, one way ANOVA was used. It may be seen from the table above that out of 3 components, only in one component, i., in reduced of personal accomplishment, teachers belonging to different age groups differed significantly ( $F=7.235$ ;  $p=.001$ ) in their burn out scores. The mean reduced of personal accomplishment scores for teachers belonging to less than 30, 31-44, 45-54 and above 55 years were 32.16, 35.05, 32.51 and 39.08 respectively. Further, Scheffe's post hoc test revealed that teachers with above 55 years of age had highest reduced of personal accomplishment scores and teachers with lowest age groups had least reduced of personal accomplishment scores. However, in rest of the 2 components (emotional exhaustion and depersonalization), age groups of teachers did not have significant influence, as the observed  $F$  values failed to reach the significance level criterion.

**Table 2**  
**Mean Scores and Standard Deviation with Respect to occupational stress scores of High School Teachers with Different Age Groups and results of one way ANOVA**

Variable	Age groups (in years)	N	Mean	S.D	F value	P value
Occupational stress	< 30	97	133.65	12.52	2.508	.059
	31-44	152	133.21	14.66		
	45-54	65	137.48	12.63		
	above 55 years	73	137.73	18.16		
	Total	387	134.89	14.67		

One way ANOVA revealed a non- significant difference in occupational stress between teachers belonging to different age groups.  $F$  value of 2.508 was found to be not significant at 0.05 level. The mean occupational stress scores obtained for teachers with <30, 31-44, 45-54 and above 55 years are 133.65, 133.21, 137.48, and 137.73 respectively. Though not statistically significant, we see that teachers with lower age groups had lesser stress compared to teachers with higher age groups.

## 5. Discussion

Main findings of the study are

- Only in reduced of personal accomplishment component of job burnout, teachers belonging to higher age groups had higher scores compared to teachers in younger age groups.
- Age groups of the teachers did not influence their occupational stress.

The purpose of this investigation is to examine how certain

demographic variable (different age groups) affect occupational stress and job burnout of high schools teachers in Mysore city. Hypothesis 1 stated as 'There is no significant difference between teachers belonging to different age groups in their job burnout' is partially accepted. Hypothesis 2 formulated as 'There is no significant difference between teachers belonging to different age groups in their occupational stress' is accepted.

Reduce personal accomplishment refers to a decline in one's feeling of competence and successful achievement in one's work. The high school teachers reported higher scores on reduced personal accomplishment. There are some studies that indicate that there is no difference between age groups in job burnout (Dillon & Tanner, 1995; Friedman & Faber, 1992; Zabel and Zabel, 2001). Wittehead, Ryba, and O'Driscoll (2000) studied factors relating to job burnout. The highest levels of emotional exhaustion were found in teachers of the upper primary level (grades 4 – 6) and in the 30 – 39 year age range. Reduced personal accomplishment was highest in first through third year teachers.

There are, also, some researches that found the significant difference age groups in job burnout (Maslach, 2001; Sunbul, 2003; Maslach & Leiter, 2005; Goswami, 2013). Evers, Tomic and Brouwers (2004) indicated that the teachers' age was significantly related with personal accomplishment. Results of this study showed that there was significant difference in reduced personal accomplishment between the age groups. This finding is consistent with previous studies which reported that there is significant difference in job burnout of teachers based on age. The reason can be that the teachers with higher age groups may have more interaction with problems in their life or age distance of teachers and students may be affected on their relations and reactions. Also, higher age groups of teachers may have lower job performance which effect on their self concept of achievement.

Numerous studies across a variety of occupational settings have, however, found significant age differences in occupational stress (Aftab & Khatoon, 2012; Chaudhry, 2012; Rav-eswaran et al., 2011). Results of this study showed that there was no significant difference in occupational stress between the age groups. This finding is not consistent with previous studies which reported that there is significant difference in occupational stress of teachers based on age.

## 6. Conclusion

The main objective of this paper is to examine the influence of age of school teachers on their job burnout and occupational stress. From the above results it can be concluded that significant differences were found between age groups of teachers with reference to their job burnout, specifically on reduced personal accomplishment. It was also found out that there were no significant differences between age groups of teachers with reference to their occupational stress. Though not statistically significant, it was seen that teachers with lower age groups had lesser stress compared to teachers with higher age groups.

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