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Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction of Primary School Teachers in the Context of NEP 2020: A Study in Murshidabad District

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Abstract:

In light of the National Education Policy 2020, the current study examines the connection between job satisfaction and occupational stress among primary school teachers in the Murshidabad area. Stratified random selection was used to choose a sample of 120 teachers for the study, which used a descriptive and correlational research methodology. Data was gathered using standardised instruments, including the Job Satisfaction Questionnaire and the Occupational Stress Scale. The results show that teachers had a moderate degree of job satisfaction and a moderate to high level of occupational stress. Occupational stress and job satisfaction were shown to have a strong negative connection (r = -0.62), suggesting that higher stress is associated with poorer job satisfaction. Gender-wise analysis shows that female teachers experience significantly higher stress, while male teachers report higher job satisfaction. The results highlight the impact of increased workload, administrative responsibilities, and socio-cultural factors, especially under the evolving demands of NEP 2020. The study underscores the need for supportive institutional mechanisms, stress management strategies, and gender-sensitive policies to enhance teacher well-being and effectiveness.

Keywords: *Occupational Stress, Job Satisfaction, Primary School Teachers, NEP 2020, Murshidabad District.*

Introduction:

Education is widely acknowledged as a catalyst for social transformation and economic development. At the heart of the education system are teachers, whose roles extend beyond the transmission of knowledge to include mentoring, guiding, and nurturing young minds. Primary school teachers, in particular, serve as the first formal educators in a child's life, making their role both critical and demanding.

In recent years, the teaching profession has become increasingly complex due to rapid changes in educational policies, societal expectations, and technological advancements. The implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a landmark reform in India's education system, emphasizing holistic learning, competency-based education, and inclusive practices. While these reforms are progressive, they have also intensified the demands placed on teachers, particularly in resource-constrained regions like Murshidabad district.

Murshidabad offers a distinctive setting for assessing the effects of educational changes on teachers because of its primarily rural population and socioeconomic difficulties. Teachers' difficulties are made worse by problems including poor infrastructure, high student-teacher ratios, and restricted access to training materials. The purpose of this study is to investigate how these variables affect the district's primary school teachers' job satisfaction and occupational stress.

Review of Literature

"The relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction has been extensively studied across professions, with teaching identified as one of the most stressful occupations". Kyriacou (2001) defines teacher stress as the experience of unpleasant emotions resulting from aspects of teaching work. High levels of stress have been linked to burnout, absenteeism, and reduced teaching effectiveness.

Studies in the Indian context reveal that teachers often face stress due to administrative workload, lack of resources, and role ambiguity (Kaur, 2017). "Research also indicates that job satisfaction among teachers is influenced by factors such as salary, work environment, recognition, and professional autonomy" (Sharma & Jyoti, 2009).

With the introduction of NEP 2020, new dimensions of stress have emerged. Teachers are required to adopt innovative pedagogies, integrate technology, and focus on continuous assessment, often without adequate training or support. Preliminary studies suggest that while NEP 2020 enhances opportunities for professional growth, it also increases workload and performance expectations.

However, there is a paucity of region-specific studies focusing on districts like Murshidabad, where contextual challenges significantly influence the implementation of educational policies. This study seeks to fill this gap by providing empirical insights into the experiences of primary school teachers in the district.

Conceptual Framework: Occupational stress refers to the physical and emotional strain experienced when job demands exceed an individual's capacity to cope. In the teaching profession, stress can arise from multiple sources, including workload, classroom management, administrative duties, and policy changes. Job satisfaction is a multidimensional construct that reflects an individual's overall evaluation of their job. It encompasses intrinsic factors such as personal fulfillment and extrinsic factors such as salary, work conditions, and recognition. "The relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction is generally inverse. High stress levels tend to reduce job satisfaction, leading to decreased motivation and productivity. Conversely, supportive work environments and manageable workloads enhance satisfaction and reduce stress"(Kaur, 2017)..

Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the degree of occupational stress experienced by Murshidabad district primary school teachers.
2. To assess Murshidabad district elementary school teachers' job satisfaction.
3. To investigate the connection between primary school teachers' job satisfaction and occupational stress in the Murshidabad district.

4. Hypotheses:

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Murshidabad district.

H_{02}: There is no significant difference in occupational stress between male and female primary school teachers.

H_{03}: There is no significant difference in job satisfaction between male and female primary school teachers.

Methodology

Research Design: Examining the connection between work-related stress and contentment in one's position, the study makes use of a descriptive and correlational research strategy.

Sample: The study comprises a sample of 120 primary school teachers drawn from various rural and urban schools in Murshidabad district. The participants were selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure adequate representation of different categories of teachers based on location and demographic characteristics.

Tools: The present study employed two structured tools to collect relevant data on occupational stress and job satisfaction among primary school teachers.

(i) Occupational Stress Scale: In order to gauge the amount of stress that educators face on the job, researchers used the Occupational Stress Scale. The 21 elements that make up the tool address important aspects including workload, job ambiguity, role conflict, administrative pressure, student-related issues, and infrastructural limits. Respondents are asked to rate their level of agreement with statements that make up the items.

Scoring Procedure: The scale follows a Likert-type format**,** typically ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." Each response is assigned a numerical value (e.g., 5 to 1 or vice versa depending on item direction). "The total score is obtained by summing the responses across all items, with higher scores indicating a higher level of occupational stress".

Reliability: Using Cronbach's alpha, we found that the scale is reliable; a coefficient of 0.80 or above suggests high levels of internal consistency and is appropriate for use in research.

(ii) Job Satisfaction Questionnaire: The **Job Satisfaction Questionnaire** consisting of 20 items was utilized to assess the degree of satisfaction among teachers regarding various aspects of their profession. The instrument encompasses dimensions such as work environment, salary and benefits, professional recognition, job security, interpersonal relationships, and opportunities for professional development.

Scoring Procedure: Similar to the stress scale, this tool also uses a **Likert-type response format**, where respondents indicate their level of agreement or satisfaction. Scores are assigned to each response, and the total job satisfaction score is calculated by summing the item scores. Higher scores represent higher levels of job satisfaction.

Reliability: The reliability of the questionnaire was determined through **Cronbach's alpha**, with a coefficient of around **0.82 or higher**, demonstrating satisfactory internal consistency and dependability of the instrument.

Data Analysis: The collected data were analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques, including mean and standard deviation to describe the data, and inferential statistics such as t-test, and correlation analysis to examine differences and relationships among variables.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: The Murshidabad district's elementary school teachers' levels of occupational stress and happiness on the job.

Variable	Mean	SD	N	r-value
Occupational Stress	72.45	8.62	120	
Job Satisfaction	65.3	7.95	120	-0.62

Primary school teachers in the Murshidabad area reported higher levels of occupational stress and lower levels of work satisfaction, as seen in Table 1. Teachers, according to the mean occupational stress score (M = 72.45, SD = 8.62), are under moderate to moderately high stress as a result of their work. In contrast, respondents seemed to be somewhat satisfied with their jobs (M = 65.30, SD = 7.95).

Occupational stress and work satisfaction are somewhat negatively correlated, according to the estimated Pearson's correlation coefficient (r = -0.62).

This implies that as the level of occupational stress increases, the level of job satisfaction tends to decrease among primary school teachers. The inverse nature of the relationship highlights the detrimental effect of excessive stress on teachers' professional fulfillment and well-being.

This result agrees with other studies in educational psychology that have shown how stress may cause teachers to lose motivation, get burnt out, and have less of an impact in the classroom. Administrative burden, insufficient infrastructure, and the difficulties of implementing NEP 2020 are all potential sources of elevated stress in the Murshidabad district. As a result, teachers' work satisfaction is negatively impacted by these pressures.

As a consequence, we can say with confidence that there is a strong correlation between occupational stress and work satisfaction, as we can reject the null hypothesis (H_{01}). In order to improve overall educational results and work happiness, it is crucial to address variables that cause stress.

Table 2: Gender-wise difference in the Occupational Stress among primary school teachers in Murshidabad district.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df
Male	72	70.8	8.1		
Female	48	74.9	8.95	2.45	118

Male and female elementary school teachers' levels of occupational stress are compared in Table 2. Male educators report lower levels of occupational stress (M = 70.80, SD = 8.10) than their female counterparts (M = 74.90, SD = 8.95). This suggests that there is a greater level of occupational stress among female instructors.

There seems to be a statistically significant difference in stress levels between male and female instructors at the 0.05 level, according to the estimated t-value (t = 2.45) with 118 degrees of freedom. This finding suggests that the district's primary school teachers' occupational stress is significantly impacted by their gender.

Several things could contribute to the greater stress levels experienced by female educators. There is a lot of role conflict and psychological strain for female educators since, on top of all their professional duties, they

usually have to take care of more of the home and family. They may be under much greater stress due to issues with employment assistance, safety worries, and social expectations. A substantial difference in occupational stress between male and female instructors is shown by the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_{02}).

Table 3: Gender-wise difference in Job Satisfaction among primary school teachers in Murshidabad district.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df
Male	72	67.2	7.5		
Female	48	62.4	8.1	3.12	118

In Table 3, we can see how male and female elementary school teachers rate their own level of work satisfaction. In comparison to female teachers, male instructors report greater levels of work satisfaction (M = 67.20, SD = 7.50) than female teachers (M = 62.40, SD = 8.10).

The computed t-value (t = 3.12) with 118 degrees of freedom is statistically significant at the 0.01 level, suggesting that the difference in job satisfaction between male and female teachers is highly significant. This result demonstrates that gender significantly influences job satisfaction levels among teachers.

The relatively lower job satisfaction among female teachers may be linked to their higher stress levels, as identified in Table 2. The dual burden of professional and domestic responsibilities, combined with limited institutional support, may reduce their overall sense of satisfaction. Female educators may be less satisfied with their jobs for a variety of reasons, including a lack of recognition, difficulties in the workplace, and little chances for professional growth. A statistically significant difference in work satisfaction between male and female educators has been confirmed by rejecting the null hypothesis (H_{03}).

Table 4: Summary Table for Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Statistical Tool	Calculated Value	Result (at 0.05 level)
H_{01}	Correlation (r)	-0.62	Significant
H_{02}	t-test	2.45	Significant
H_{03}	t-test	3.12	Significant

Discussion:

A moderate level of work satisfaction and a moderate to high level of occupational stress were found to be significantly correlated (r = -0.62) among primary school teachers in the Murshidabad district, according to the current study's results. This indicates that as stress levels in the workplace rise, job satisfaction falls. Such a relationship is widely supported in contemporary educational research. Studies have consistently shown that excessive workload, administrative pressure, and role ambiguity contribute to heightened stress, which in turn diminishes teachers' motivation and professional fulfillment (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2021; Collie, 2021). Moreover, recent research emphasizes that occupational stress is a strong predictor of burnout, emotional exhaustion, and reduced teaching effectiveness, all of which negatively influence job satisfaction

(Kim & Burić, 2023; Wang et al., 2022). Thus, the rejection of the first null hypothesis is justified, reaffirming that occupational stress is a crucial determinant of job satisfaction.

Occupational stress is much greater for female instructors than for male teachers, according to the gender-wise analysis (t = 2.45). These results are in line with those of other recent research that have shown that gender disparities in occupational stress are impacted by institutional and socio-cultural variables. Female teachers often encounter a "dual burden" of professional responsibilities and domestic obligations, leading to role conflict and increased psychological strain (Burić & Kim, 2021; Agyapong et al., 2022). In developing regions, including parts of India, traditional gender expectations further intensify these pressures, contributing to higher stress levels among women educators (Kaur & Kumar, 2023). Additionally, limited workplace support and fewer opportunities for stress relief mechanisms may exacerbate the issue. Therefore, the rejection of the second null hypothesis highlights the significance of gender as a factor influencing occupational stress.

Similarly, the study finds that **male teachers report significantly higher job satisfaction than female teachers** (t = 3.12). This outcome is consistent with existing literature suggesting that job satisfaction is closely linked to perceived work-life balance, institutional support, and recognition (Toropova et al., 2021; Smetackova et al., 2020). Female teachers, due to higher stress levels and competing responsibilities, often report lower satisfaction with their professional roles (Kaur & Arora, 2022). Furthermore, organizational factors such as limited career advancement opportunities and lack of acknowledgment may disproportionately affect female teachers, thereby reducing their overall job satisfaction. The rejection of the third null hypothesis thus confirms that gender differences significantly influence job satisfaction.

Overall, the findings reinforce the broader theoretical and empirical understanding that **occupational stress and job satisfaction are inversely related**, and that gender plays a critical role in shaping these experiences. The results are in line with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which suggests that unfavorable working conditions (stressors) reduce job satisfaction, and with the Job Demand-Resources (JD-R) model, which posits that high job demands lead to strain when adequate resources are lacking (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). In the context of evolving educational reforms such as the National Education Policy (NEP 2020), teachers are required to adapt to new pedagogical approaches and administrative expectations, which may further intensify stress levels if not supported by adequate resources (Sharma & Singh, 2022).

Findings:

- Primary school teachers in Murshidabad district experience a moderate to high level of occupational stress, indicating significant pressure in their professional roles.
- Despite high stress, teachers report a moderate level of job satisfaction, suggesting partial fulfillment but not optimal professional well-being.
- A moderately strong negative correlation (r = -0.62) exists between occupational stress and job satisfaction, indicating that increased stress leads to decreased job satisfaction.
- Teachers' levels of occupational stress are a major factor in their level of work satisfaction because of the strong correlation between the two.
- Female teachers experience significantly higher occupational stress than male teachers (t = 2.45), highlighting gender as an important influencing factor.
- Teachers' levels of work stress vary significantly depending on their gender.
- Male teachers report significantly higher job satisfaction compared to female teachers (t = 3.12).

- Among educators, male and female perspectives on work satisfaction vary significantly.
- Higher stress among female teachers is likely influenced by the dual burden of professional and domestic responsibilities.
- Teachers experiencing higher stress levels tend to have lower job satisfaction, reinforcing the inverse relationship between the two variables.

Conclusion:

Important factors that determine a teacher's efficacy, according to the research, are occupational stress and work satisfaction. Considering NEP 2020, teachers are required to navigate significant changes in pedagogy and curriculum, often under challenging conditions. While the policy offers a progressive vision for education, its success depends on the well-being and preparedness of teachers. In Murshidabad district, socio-economic constraints, infrastructural limitations, and administrative pressures contribute to elevated stress levels. At the same time, intrinsic motivation and job security sustain moderate levels of job satisfaction. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that integrates policy support, institutional development, and teacher empowerment. Ensuring the well-being of teachers is not only essential for their professional satisfaction but also for the overall quality of education. A balanced approach that reduces stress and enhances satisfaction will ultimately lead to improved learning outcomes and sustainable educational development.

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