

Investigating the Occupational Stress of Basic Education Teachers in Kayah State

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate teachers' occupational stress in Basic Education at all seven townships at Kayah State. Descriptive survey method was applied in this study. Total number of 254 in-service Basic Education teachers among twenty-five Basic Education schools in Kayah State was randomly selected as the sample in this study. A questionnaire was used to collect demographic information of the participants such as gender, marital status, rural and urban areas, and positions. The research instrument used in this was adopted from Teacher Occupational Stress Scale (Clark, 1980) consisting 30 items. The teachers' occupational stress questionnaire including 30 items was used to measure teachers' occupational stress. There was no significant difference in teachers' occupational stress according to gender, marital status, rural and urban areas. There was significant difference in teachers' occupational stress according to position; i.e., primary teachers (43%), junior teachers (33%) and senior teachers (24%). It

may reveal that teachers' occupational stress is also inversely proportional to teaching experiences and teacher education. The result of the study will help Basic Education teachers and administrative leaders in this research area (Kayah State), then the ones in other areas under the various education departments, including both private and state, in investigating the occupational stress of teachers and to fulfill their needs and requirements along the right pathway in accordance with the currently changing education age in Myanmar.

Key words: occupational stress, social stress, job stress and role stress

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Stress is an unavoidable phenomenon in human life. Though the types of stress may differ but almost any aspect of life can lead to stress, be it lacks of friends, lack of money, unemployment or even employment. Few years ago, it was not

considered as a public health problem in any country but recently stress has gained worldwide attention due to its potential hazards, Dr. Shyam Swaroop Sharma, 2008.

About a third of people worldwide were stressed, worried and in pain last year. That's according to the 2019 Global Emotions Report. And then, according to Career Cast's annual job in the world, teaching profession is one of the constituents of 20 most stressful jobs in the world.

Teachers stress seems as an interaction of teacher, students and environment. Teacher stress can be defined as the experience by a teacher of unpleasant negative emotions such as anger, frustration, anxiety, depression and nervousness, resulting from some aspect of their work (Kyriacou 2000). Since the early 1970s, the amount of research on teacher stress has increased steadily, and it is now a major topic of research in many countries (Vandenberghe & Huberman 1999; Kyriacou 2001). In research globally, a consistent correlation has been found between changing education policies of the government and heavy workload of teacher.

A number of surveys have been pointed out the comparatively stressful nature of teaching profession. T. Cox, Mackay, S. Cox Watts, and Brockley (1978) reported that more than 60 percent of teachers considered working as the main source of stress in their lives. Kyri Acou (1980)

revealed that teachers, when compared to people in other profession, teachers do experience a higher level of stress than many other professionals.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the teachers' occupational stress of Basic Education in Kayah State. Particularly, it is indented to investigate the teachers' occupational stress according to position, gender, urban and rural areas, and marital status.

1.3 Scope

The study is restricted to (254) primary, junior and senior Basic Education teachers from all seven townships from Loikaw Township, Dee Maw So Township, Hphruso Township, Shar Daw Township, Baw La Khe Township, Pha Saung Township and Mae Se Township, all around Kayah State.

Townships	P.T		J.T		S.T	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Loikaw	1	14	1	26	3	21
Deemawso	3	16	1	18	3	18
Hpruso	2	10	1	10	2	11
Bawlakhe	1	6	0	10	2	10
Phasaung	1	5	0	9	1	8
Maese	1	5	0	8	1	6
Shardaw	2	4	0	7	1	5
Total	11	60	3	88	13	79

1.4 Definition Key Terms

(1) Occupational stress: It stems from unexpected responsibilities and pressure that do not align with a teacher's knowledge, skills, or expectations, inhibiting one's ability to cope.

(2) Social stress : It denotes social stress as "circumstances of daily social roles that are generally considered problematic or undesirable."

(3) Job stress : It stands for important aspects of job characteristics, such as skill variety, task significance, autonomy, and feedback.

(4) Role stress : It denotes teachers' set of connected behaviors, rights, obligations, beliefs, and norms as conceptualized by teaching profession.

2. Review of Related Literature

Research on stress among teachers has received considerable attention (Travers and Copper, 1993). Numerous studies have explored the specific conditions that make teaching stressful. These conditions can be categorized either as exogenous (i.e., unfavorable occupational conditions, excessive workload, lack of collaboration, etc.) or endogenous (i.e., individual personality characteristics, disappointment and frustration that probably stem from unrealistic expectation that teachers hold, etc.).

As for Myanmar, ASEAN Institute for health development (2015) took a research on

job stress and burnout among Hospital Nurses in a City of Myanmar. It revealed that nurses in private hospitals being in senior position had high job stress. A long term consequence of stress is occupational burnout, which is defined as syndrome that results from chronic and extended occupational stress characterized by physical, emotional and attitudinal exhaustion (Kyriacou, 1997).

(2.1) Occupational stress

In Firth-Cozen's and Payens (1999) review of 43 studies carried out in the US between 1979 and 1998, teachers were classified first in terms of level of emotional exhaustion compared with other professional groups of study.

A considerable number of studies both in mainstream (Brouwers and Tomic, 2000; Jaoul, 2004) and in special education settings (Jennet et al, 2003) and at primary and secondary level (Carlile, 1985) have identified the major sources of teachers' occupational stress as follows:

(1) Factors that directly concern the nature of teaching profession.

(2) Individual difference that influence teachers' ability again stress.

(3) Administrative factors that are related to the school organization and administration.

(2.2) Social stress

Social stress is a stress that stems from one's relationships with others and from the social environment in general. Based on the appraisal of emotion. Socio-environmental conditions differ in the capacity to evoke stress; however, some conditions threaten virtually everyone, whereas others are uniformly navigated with

ease. The various strategies developed to weight life events according to the average amount of readjustment required (e.g. Dohrenwend et al 1978). Events differ from one another in average ratings, due to the characteristics of the event, ratings of a single event differ across raters.

B.S Dohrenwend and associates (1978) defined life-event stressors as objective occurrences of sufficient magnitude to change the usual activities of most persons. The initial conceptualization of any change as stress-provoking has given way to agreement that undesirable events are most psychologically distressing; other dimensions such as whether events can be controlled or predicted are of secondary importance (Ross & Mirowsky 1979, Thoits 1983)

(2.3) Job stress

Teachers' job stress reflects the experience of unpleasant emotions as a result of teaching work (Kyriacou, 2011). This is not only highly relevant to teachers but also to school administrators and policy makers, given that the profession of teaching has been labeled as highly stressful by many researchers (Al-Fudail & Mellar, 2008; De Nobile & Mc Cormick, 2005). In fact, various international studies have shown that up to one third of teachers are stressed or extremely stressed (Borg & Riding; 1991, Geving 2007). In the studies, many different sources have been cited as causes of teacher stress; however, two types of stress that have consistently been mentioned in the literature.

(2.4) Role stress

The use of role concepts suggest that job related stress is associated with individual, interpersonal and structural variables (Katz and Kahn, 1978; Whetten,

1978). The presence of supportive peer groups and supportive relationships with supervisors are negatively correlated with R.C (Caplan et al., 1964)

There is evidence that role incumbents with high levels of role ambiguity also respond to their situation with anxiety, depression, physical symptoms, a sense of futility or lower self-esteem, lower level of job involvement and organizational commitment, and perceptions of lower performance on the part of the organization of supervisors and of themselves (Brief and Aldag, 1976; Greene, 1972)

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Participants

(254) primary, junior and senior Basic Education teachers from Loikaw Township, Deemaw So Township, HPhruso Township, Shar Daw Township, Baw La Khe Township, Pha Saung Township, and Maese Township, all seven townships of Kayah State.

3.2 Instrumentations

In order to assess Basic Education teachers' stress, the instrument was developed in Myanmar Language on the basis of teachers' occupational stress inventories from Teacher Occupational Stress Scale (Clark, 1980). It consists of (30) items with a five-Likert type scale. There are 14 reverse questions in the instrument.

Following the scale is the scoring key. Those scales are used to provide tools to examine teachers' occupational stress. Each item was scored on a 5-point scale with the response of Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Sure, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

3.3 Scoring Key

+ = Question reflects positive attitudes

- = Question reflects negative attitudes

3.4 Scoring Directions

Each positive item receives the score based on points

A = 5, B = 4, C = 3, D = 2, E = 1

Each negative item receives the score based on points.

A = 1, B = 2, C = 3, D = 4, E = 5

3.5 Procedures

After getting the title of the study, literature survey such as gathering the related literature review were done not only from library and the expert teachers but also from internet sources. The preparation of the tests and questionnaires were made continually and carefully. These instruments were modified to be apt for Myanmar teacher.

3.6 Data Collection

Data collection was made by administering the occupational stress to primary, junior, senior teachers in their schools after taking the permission of the respective headmasters. The researcher took a few seconds to explain the purpose of the study and importance of their participation and the assurance of confidentiality of their responses which would be used only for their research purposes. The researcher also explained the teachers on how to respond the test and questionnaires and help them if they have problems to understand the questions. All of the participants' responses were gathered by survey procedure.

3.7 Data Analysis

After conducting the survey procedure with 254 teachers, data scores obtained from problem solving questionnaires were analyzed descriptively for descriptive statistics (means and standard deviation), differential statics (t test, ANOVA) by using SPSS. Firstly, descriptive statistics were utilized to find out whether the result of this study was good or not.

Secondly, independent sample *t* test analysis was used to determine whether there was significant difference of occupational stress according to position but not varied according to gender, urban and rural areas and marital status.

After developing the instrument for occupational stress, determining the research method and collection the data, the detail data analysis and findings were explained in the next chapter.

4. Data analysis and Findings

(4.1) Mean and Standard Deviation of Occupational Stress by Gender

Teacher's Gender	<i>N</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	27	71.8889	13.58261
Female	227	70.9339	12.34676

According to Table (4.1), the mean scores of occupational stress were slightly different by gender. The mean scores of males for occupational stress were 0.955 more than that of females. Thus, it can be

assumed that male teachers were slightly stress in occupational than female teachers.

To be exact statistically, the independent sample *t* test was used to explore whether these differences were significant or not.

Table (4.2) Result of Independent Sample *t* test for Occupational Stress by Gender

Variable	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>MD</i>
Occupational Stress	.376	25	.707	.9549

The result for the independent sample *t* test in Table 4.2 showed that there was no significant difference in occupational stress by gender ($t=.376$ and $p>.05$). Thus, it was not significantly different by gender.

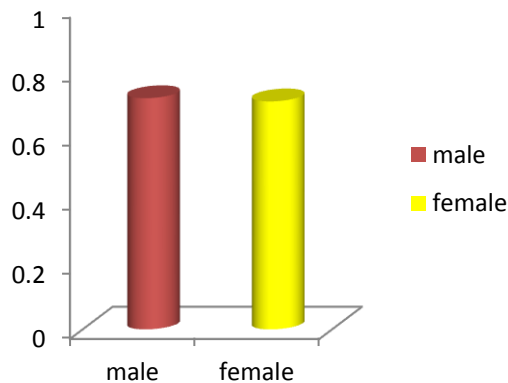


Figure (4.1) Comparison of Occupational Stress by Gender

Table (4.3) Mean and Standard deviation of occupational stress by marital status

Marital Status	<i>N</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation
Married	155	70.59	12.868
Single	99	71.73	11.821

According to Table (4.3), the mean scores of occupational stress were slightly different by marital status. The mean scores of males for occupational stress were 1.14 more than that of single. Thus, it can be assumed that male teachers were slightly stress in occupational than female teachers.

To be exact statistically, the independent sample *t* test was used to explore whether these differences were significant or not.

Table (4.4) Result of Independent Sample *t* test for Occupational Stress by marital status

Variable	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>MD</i>
Occupational Stress	-.707	252	.480	-1.134

The result for the independent sample *t* test in Table 4.4 showed that there was no significant difference in occupational stress by gender ($t=-.707$ and $p>.05$). Thus, it was not significantly different by marital status.

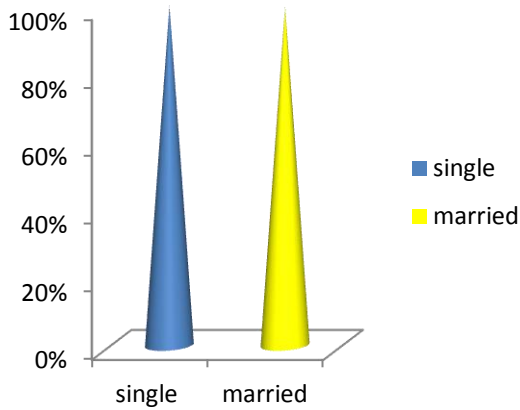


Figure (4.2) Comparison of Occupational Stress by marital status

Table (4.5) Mean and Standard deviation of occupational stress by school

School	<i>N</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation
Rural	113	71.91	12.239
Urban	141	70.33	12.631

According to Table (4.5), the mean scores of occupational stress were slightly different by school. The mean scores of males for occupational stress were 1.58 more than that of rural area. Thus, it can be assumed that rural teachers were slightly stress in occupational than urban teachers.

To be exact statistically, the independent sample t test was used to explore whether these differences were significant or not.

Table (4.6) Result of Independent Sample *t* test for Occupational Stress by school

Variable	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>MD</i>
Occupational Stress	1.003	252	.317	1.578

The result for the independent sample *t* test in Table 4.6 showed that there was no significant difference in occupational stress by school ($t=1.003$ and $p>.05$). Thus, it was not significantly different by marital status.

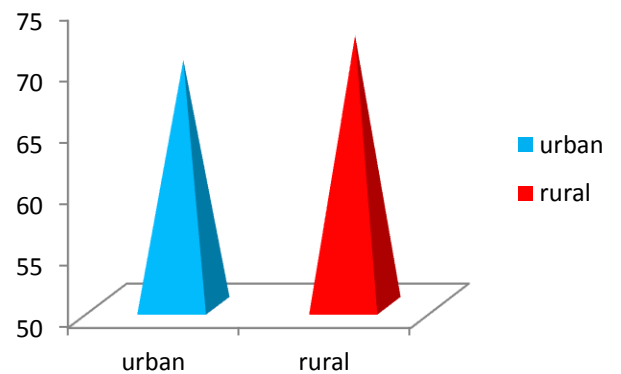


Figure (4.3) Comparison of Occupational Stress by school

Table (4.7) Mean and Standard deviation of occupational stress by position

Variable	Position	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Occupational Stress	P.T	71	73.0	14.07	35	109
	J.T	91	72.1	11.30	38	102
	S.T	92	66.7	11.46	44	93
	Total	254	71.0	12.5	35	109

P.T- Primary Teachers, J.T-Junior Teachers, S.T- Senior Teachers

In accordance with Table (4.7), the junior teacher had the highest mean score and the least standard deviation in occupational stress. It can be assumed that the junior teachers were more stress in occupational stress than that of primary and senior teachers.

To be exact statistically, One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was worked out so that it would observe clearly the significant differences in occupational stress.

Table (4.8) Result of ANOVA (Games-Howell) in Occupational Stress by Teachers' Position

(I)Teacher's Position	(J)Teacher's Position	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig
Primary Teachers	Junior Teachers	-6.719	2.0475	.004
	Senior Teachers	-5.389	2.0535	.026
Junior Teachers	Primary Teachers	6.7195	2.0475	.004
	Senior Teachers	1.0330	1.6829	.709
Senior Teachers	Primary Teachers	5.3891	2.0535	.026
	Junior Teachers	1.3304	1.6829	.709

According to Table (4.8), there was significant difference in primary and junior teachers. Primary and junior teachers were significantly difference in occupational stress. Primary teachers were more stress in occupational stress than that of Junior and Senior teachers ($p=.004<.05$ and $p=.026<.05$). And also junior teachers were more stress in occupational stress than that of Primary teachers ($p=.004<.05$). Therefore, Primary and Junior teachers were more stress in occupational stress than that of senior teachers. There was significantly difference in .05 levels.

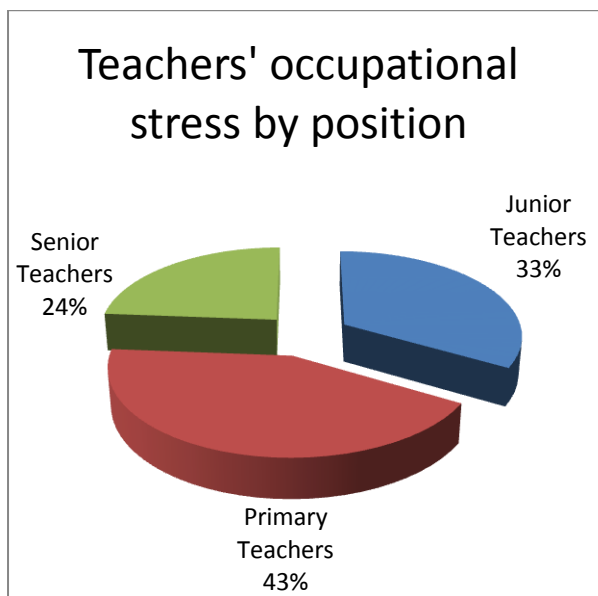


Figure (4.4) Comparison of Occupational Stress by Teacher's Position

And then, the followings are comparisons of teaching experiences and levels of teacher education according to their demographic factors.

Table (4.9) Comparisons on teaching experiences of Senior Teachers, Junior Teachers and Primary Teachers

	0-5 yrs.	6-10 yrs.	11-15 yrs.	16-20 yrs.	Over 20 yrs.
S.T	10%	13%	16%	33%	28%
J.T	10%	16%	32%	30%	12%
P.T	45%	27%	17%	7%	4%

Figure (4.5) Comparisons on teaching experiences of Senior Teachers, Junior Teachers and Primary Teachers

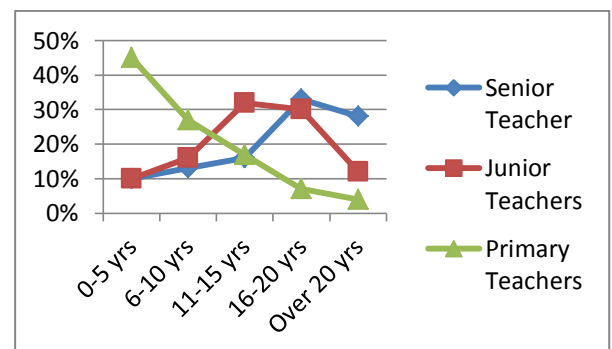
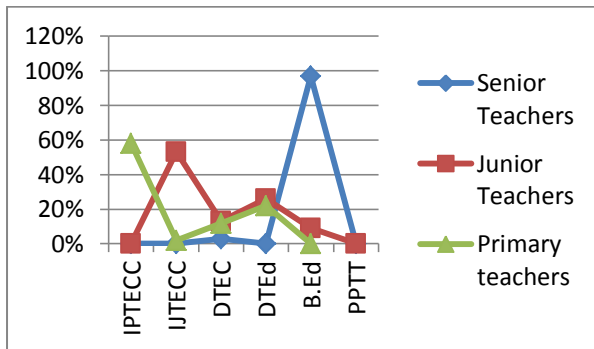


Table (4.10) Comparisons on Teacher Education of Senior Teachers, Junior Teachers and Primary Teachers

	IPTECC	IJTECC	DTEC	DTEd	B.Ed	PPTT
S.T	0%	0%	3%	0%	97%	0%
J.T	0%	53%	13%	26%	9%	0%
P.T	58%	2%	12%	22%	0%	0%

Figure (4.6) Comparisons on Teacher Education of Senior Teachers, Junior Teachers and Primary Teachers



- IPTECC – In-service Primary Teacher Education Correspondence Course
- IJTECC – In-service Junior Teacher Education Correspondence Course
- DTEC – Diploma in Teacher Education Competency
- DTEd – Diploma in Teacher Education
- B.Ed – Bachelor in Education
- PPTT – Pre-service Primary Teacher Training

5. Discussion and Recommendation

In this chapter, summary of findings, discussion and recommendation will present.

5.1 Summary of Findings and Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to investigate Teachers' Occupational Stress. This research was conducted by drawing the sample of teachers in all seven townships from Kayah State during 2018. The questionnaire included 30 items was adapted and applied on 254 Basic

Education Teachers and answered as a Likert 5-point scale.

Firstly, the *t* test of SPSS indicated that there was not significantly difference in gender, marital status and school. It can be assumed that they all were same in occupational stress by gender, marital status and school.

Then, ANOVA results revealed significant difference in position. The results showed that there was significantly difference in occupational stress in primary teachers than junior and senior teachers. It can be assumed that primary teachers have least salaries and positions than junior and senior teachers in Basic Education sector. And then, most of the primary teachers in Basic Education have less in teaching services and experiences and have not adequate in teacher education because most of them have short-term training in teacher education according to primary teacher requirements in Basic Education Sector. Thus, primary teachers faced more occupational stress than junior and senior teachers.

Between junior and senior teachers, junior teachers have slightly significant difference in occupational stress than senior teachers. In Basic Education Sector, junior teachers have lower salary and position than senior teachers. And junior teachers require B.Ed degree to get promotion to become senior teachers. In fact those junior

teachers have merely occupational stress than senior teachers. Moreover, the research revealed that teacher occupational stress is inversely proportional to teaching experiences and respective teacher education. Besides above mentioned, it was found that numbers of male teachers, especially male teachers are less in Basic Education at Kayah State.

Teachers are the resource person of education system. These resource people should have job satisfactory but not have any occupational stress. We may suggest that education department should give respective long-term teacher education program to these primary teachers properly. The education department should provide sufficient technical and material supports for changing norms and criteria of education system.

Moreover, all teaching staff positions in Basic Education sector (primary, junior and senior teachers) should have the same salary scale and their salary increments and promotions may be considered according to their competencies, services etc.

5.2 Recommendation of the Study

The result of the study will help Basic Education teachers and administrative leaders in this research area (Kayah State), then the ones in other areas under the various education departments, including both private and state, in

investigating the occupational stress of teachers and to fulfill their needs and requirements along the right pathway in accordance with the currently changing education age in Myanmar.

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