

Mental health among elementary teachers in relation to locus of control and socio demographic variables

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Abstract

When there were no books to learn and teachers to teach education still existed. That was an education through experiences. Men took millions of years to learn about the fire and then agriculture, which brought a great revolution in his life by giving him stability instead of wandering from place to place in search of food. Since then he is learning but this never ending process became more indispensable to the man's over all development with the invent of books and introduction of schools-students and teachers. Overall development includes physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of the child. Gandhi ji rightly stated, "Education is the preparation for complete living, adjustment to environment, perfection of one's nature, character building and harmonious development of personality".

There is no denying the fact that Human Resource is the best resource among all the available resources of the world. It is the man who exploits all other resources and it is the elementary school teacher who makes the best resource of a human being. But when a man on whose head falls the onus of producing the cream of the society, himself is deprived of the job-satisfaction and is leading a low profile life full of stress and strain, then how can one think that this universe can become a healthy place for a healthy society.

Keywords: mental health, elementary teachers

Introduction

Mental health is generally confused with absence of mental illness. But mental Health is not merely being free from Mental Illness. All of us always long for Mental Health. Mental Health affects all our activities whether at home, school or any work place. It may be understood by the way we get along with our life. It is a sort of equilibrium between what we have and what we intend to have.

As noted by the world Federation for Mental Health, "The term mental health represents a variety of human aspiration; rehabilitation of the mentally disturbed, prevention of mental disorder, reduction of tension in a stressful world, and attainment of a state of well- being in which the individual functions at a level consistent with his / her mental potential.

The concept of optimum mental health refers not to an absolute or ideal state but to the best possible state in so far as circumstances are alterable. Mental health is regarded as a condition of the individual, relative to the capacities and social environmental context of the person. Mental health is global term which refers to that condition of an individual which results from the normal organization and functioning of his mind. Mental health can also be called the process of human self-realization, self-satisfaction and fully successful existence. Mental health of a person among other things is mainly concerned with his total sense of growth and development; adjustment and peace; success and happiness and effective membership of a group of community."

National Association of Mental Health of America (1964) has described a mentally healthy person as "one who feels comfortable about himself, feels right about other people, and is able to meet the demands of life".

W.H.O. (1981) stated, "The scope of Mental Health programmes has been enlarged to include not only psychiatry

and neurology but also the psychosocial, biological and other aspects of health and development in general."

Mental health at the school level has a great deal to do with teaching and learning, with emotional blocks to learning, and with how teacher and student interact with each other. Shoben suggests "Mental health is maintained and developed by the nature of experiences that students and teachers have together. Direct instruction concerning mental health is secondary to the value of living in an emotionally healthful environment. School experiences may promote or retard growth towards maturity. This is true, in the formal recitation period, in more informal group work, and in the relaxed atmosphere of the playground. As children participate in various physical activities, they can learn to understand themselves and practice skills of relationships with others."

Objectives of the study

1. To find out the relationship between locus of control and mental health of elementary teachers.
2. To compare mental health of elementary teachers having internal and external locus of control.
3. To compare mental health of male and female elementary teachers.
4. To compare mental health of urban and rural elementary teachers.
5. To compare mental health of married and unmarried elementary teachers.

Hypotheses of the study

1. No significant relationship exists between Locus of Control and Mental Health among Elementary teacher.
2. Elementary teachers having internal and external locus of control do not differ significantly on Mental Health.

3. Male and Female Elementary Teachers do not differ significantly on Mental Health.
4. Urban and rural Elementary Teachers do not differ significantly on Mental Health.
5. Married and Unmarried Elementary Teachers do not differ significantly on Mental Health.

Research methodology

In the present research, considering all the above-discussed facts, the investigator selected the descriptive research method which is intended to acquire relevant and specific information regarding the present status of phenomena and to decide the sufficiency of the position of comparing it with well-known standards. The major objective of the study was to find out the mental health among elementary teachers in relation to their locus of control and some socio demographic variables, so survey type descriptive research method was justified and hence used.

Sample

Initially a sample of 300 elementary teachers was selected but due to sample mortality the investigator was left with a sample of 274 elementary teachers. To obtain sample for the present study Haryana was divided into four zones. From each zone one district was selected randomly. A list of schools in each district was obtained from District Education Office. From these four districts the schools too were selected randomly from the list so obtained following lottery system taking 10 schools from each district which comprised 5 rural

and 5 urban schools from the concerned districts. All available elementary teachers from a particular school were included in the sample.

Tools used

1. Mental Health Inventory by Jagdish and Srivastava (1981)
2. Locus of Control Scale by Rotter (1966)

Statistical techniques used

Mean, S.D., t-test and coefficient of correlation were used for analysis of the data.

Table 1: Relationship of locus of control and mental health of elementary teachers.

Locus of Control and Mental Health	Pearson Correlation	-.158**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009
	N	274

The result ($r=-.158, p=.009$) shows that there is a significant negative correlation between Locus of Control and Mental Health. Therefore, formulated null hypothesis which states that “No significant relationship exists between Locus of Control and Mental Health among Elementary teachers” stands rejected. It can be reframed that locus of control and mental health are negatively correlated with each other. Further, it may be concluded that if the scores on locus of control are higher, then the scores on mental health may be lower indicating that elementary teachers having external locus of control may have poor mental health and vice-versa.

Table 2: Comparison of elementary teachers having internal and external locus of control on Mental Health

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mental Health	Internal LOC	123	145.42	10.358	.934	2.633	.009
	External LOC	151	142.02	10.867	.884		

The t-test result ($t=2.633, p=.009$) shows a significant difference between the scores on Mental Health of two groups of elementary teachers having Internal (Mean=145.42, SD=10.358) and External (Mean=142.02, SD=10.867) Locus of Control. Therefore, formulated null hypothesis which states that, “Elementary teachers having internal and external locus of control do not differ significantly on Mental Health” stands rejected. It can be reframed that elementary teachers

having internal and external locus of control differ significantly on Mental Health. Further, the table depicts that mean scores of elementary teachers having internal locus of control are higher than those of teachers having external locus of control indicating that teachers with internal locus of control are having better mental health as compared to their counterparts.

Table 3: Comparison of male and female elementary teachers on Mental Health

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mental Health	Male	161	147.19	10.065	.793	7.295	.000
	Female	113	138.36	9.549	.898		

The t-test result ($t=7.295, p=.000$) shows a significant difference between the scores on mental health of two groups of male and female elementary teachers. Therefore, formulated null hypothesis which states that, “Male and Female Elementary Teachers do not differ significantly on Mental Health” stands rejected. It can be reframed that male

and female elementary teachers differ significantly on Mental Health. Further, it is evident from the table that scores of male elementary teachers (Mean=147.19, SD=10.065) are higher than those of female teachers (Mean=138.36, SD=9.549) indicating that male teachers are having better mental health as compared to their female counterparts.

Table 4: Comparison of urban and rural elementary teachers on Mental Health.

	Location	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mental Health	Urban	115	142.92	11.202	1.045	.818	.414
	Rural	159	144.00	10.435	.828		

The t-test result ($t=.818, p=.414$) shows that two groups of elementary teachers working in urban and rural areas do not differ significantly on mental health. So, formulated null hypothesis stating that, “Urban and rural Elementary Teachers do not differ significantly on Mental Health”, stands accepted. Though there is a difference between the scores of elementary

teachers working in Urban (Mean=142.92, SD=11.202) and Rural (Mean=144.00, SD=10.435) areas but this difference is not significant. Hence, it may be concluded that elementary teachers working in urban and rural areas do not differ significantly on mental health.

Table 5: Comparison of married and unmarried elementary teachers on Mental Health.

	Marital Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mental Health	Married	238	145.06	9.504	.616	6.403	.000
	Unmarried	36	133.56	13.144	2.191		

The t-test result ($t=6.403, p=.000$) shows a significant difference between the scores of married and unmarried elementary teachers on mental health. Therefore, formulated null hypothesis stating, “Married and Unmarried Elementary Teachers do not differ significantly on Mental Health” stands rejected. It can be reframed that married and unmarried elementary teachers differ significantly on Mental Health. Further, it is evident from the table that scores of married elementary teachers (Mean=145.06, SD=9.504) are greater than those of unmarried teachers (Mean=133.56, SD=13.144). A perusal of mean scores of two groups makes it clear that married elementary teachers have better mental health as compared to unmarried teachers. Therefore, it may be concluded that married elementary teachers have been found to possess better mental health than unmarried teachers.

Findings

1. It was found that there is a significant negative correlation between Locus of Control and Mental Health. It can be interpreted that if the scores on locus of control are higher then the scores on mental health may be lower indicating that elementary teachers having external locus of control may have poor mental health and vice-versa.
2. It was found that there is a significant difference between the scores on Mental Health of two groups of elementary teachers having Internal and External Locus of Control. Mean scores of elementary teachers having internal locus of control are higher than those of teachers having external locus of control indicating that teachers with internal locus of control are having better mental health as compared to their counterparts.
3. Male and Female Elementary Teachers differ significantly on Mental Health. Further, it was found that mean scores of male elementary teachers are higher than female teachers indicating that male teachers are having better mental health as compared to their female counterparts.
4. It was found that elementary teachers working in urban and rural areas do not differ significantly on Mental Health.
5. It was found that married and unmarried elementary teachers differ significantly on Mental Health. Further, it was found that mean scores of married elementary teachers are greater than those of unmarried teachers indicating that married elementary teachers have better mental health as compared to unmarried teachers.

Discussion of results

The present study revealed that male elementary teachers are having better mental health as compared to female teachers. This finding is in consonance with the finding of Basu (2009)

who in his study on influence of gender and marital status on mental health of college teachers revealed that male teachers exhibited significantly better mental health than their female counterparts Dewan *et al.* (2009) [2] found that gender produces significant effect on mental health. Female teachers as compared to male teachers were found to show poor mental health. However the finding that married elementary teachers have been found to be scoring better on mental health and its dimensions except group oriented attitude is in contradiction with the finding of Basu (2009) who found that marital status has no significant effect on mental health of college teachers.

Pandhil and Rajendra (2010) [14] summed up their study by delineated that there was significant difference found in mental health of teachers working in rural and urban high school but in this study no significant difference was found between mental health of elementary teachers working in rural and urban area.

Educational implications of the study

- Present Investigation indicates that Elementary teachers having external locus of control were found to possess low scores on Mental Health. Efforts should be made by parents and teachers to develop internal locus of control among their Wards/Students. If a person does not accept that he is responsible for his shortcomings, failures, misbehaviour or underachievement, he will never be able to put extra efforts and hard work to improve his performance or behaviour. If everything is left to chance, luck and fate, one may miss the opportunities in life. One has to take charge of one’s life and work hard with dedication and consistency as God also helps those who help themselves.
- Internal locus of control, as the study indicates, also leads to mental well-being Individuals with external locus of control become immobilized and more helpless when confronted with difficult situations or where there knowledge or skill are required. At such a time they often show withdrawal, dependence, anger and frustration reactions which are mild forms of mental ill health.
- Further autonomy to take decisions and feeling responsible for all decisions and actions can also be developed by helping individuals, particularly women teachers (who, in the present study, were found to be less Autonomous than male teachers) to have internal locus of control so that they do not assume that they have little control over their environment, success and failures. If they continue to have external locus of control, then they will have little chance to modify behavior in an attempt to explore the possibilities.

- Efforts should be made in the school to see that the teachers have the opportunity to satisfy their needs in terms of autonomy and self-esteem in order to avoid the feeling of stress. They should be allowed to have a higher degree of flexibility in teaching so that the teachers can develop their potential which may remain inchoate in the absence of a meaningful exposure.
- The findings of the study should also be acknowledged by policymakers on the assumption that favorable workplace climate is important to achieve the aim of qualitative education. Thus, the ministry of education, as the centralized office, and its operational units on the local level should encourage participation of teachers in seminars and programs leading to reduce occupational stress and improving mental health.

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