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MENTAL HEALTH AND TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS

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ABSTRACT:

The construct mental health is gaining increasing attention in the literature. Several research studies have indicated that higher levels of mental health are associated with a range of positive work place behaviours which are beneficial to the organizations. Very few studies have been carried out to examine the mental health of teachers. The objective of the present investigation is to empirically examine the relationship between mental health and teacher effectiveness. The present research study adopted a survey research design methodology using descriptive research perspective. Psychometrically sound instruments were used to measure mental health and teacher effectiveness on a sample of secondary school teachers and the primary data for the study was generated. Data analysis revealed that there is a significant positive relation between mental health and teacher effectiveness, the meaning and implications of these findings are discussed.



KEYWORDS: organizations, mental health, teacher effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION :

The concept of teacher effectiveness has been approached and explained by different scholars in different perspectives. Some definitions of teacher effectiveness focus on student learning or the capacity of the teacher to influence student learning (Kirchner, 2009). Some definitions focus on the teacher's ability to implement curriculum, instruction and assessment practices in order to improve student achievement (Becenti, 2009). Research on teacher effectiveness has been a topic of interest to educational researchers since early nineties. Much of the early research on teacher effectiveness has been carried out to examine the extent to which teacher effectiveness influences student achievement. With the multidimensionality of teacher effectiveness being recognized the different factors that influence teacher effectiveness were being explored. The different factors that influence teacher effectiveness were being investigated. The present study examines the influence of mental health on teacher effectiveness.

For working effectively in the school a teacher needs feedback about his/her performance. Constructive feedback received from students, colleagues and school authorities facilitates a teacher in better self-evaluation of his/her abilities. Teachers with high mental health have no hesitation in taking feedback from others and then working upon it to continuously improve their performances. Teachers with good mental health are optimistic, adaptable, collaborative, confident, authoritative, open,

approachable and enthusiastic (Mortiboys, 2005). They have better communication skills, better abilities for conflict resolution (Ming, 2003) and problem solving, better impulse and self-control and higher self-esteem. With higher level of motivation they are more assertive and more responsible and cope better with stress (Salami, 2010). Despite the existence of several studies demonstrating the usefulness of mental health in the literature very few studies have examined the importance of mental health in the teaching learning environment. Further scant research evidence exists that have examined the influence of mental health on teacher effectiveness. The present study attempts to examine the influence of mental health of teachers on their teacher effectiveness

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is a global state of well being. It includes freedom from distressing symptoms and positive feelings of well-being (Veit & Ware, 1983). Employee health and well-being has recently gained increased attention in educational research. Several researchers have suggested that schools should adopt healthy workplace practices that focus not only on teaching learning processes but also contribute to enhance the mental health of its teachers (Grawitch, Gottschalk, & Munz, 2006; Grawitch, Trares, & Kohler, 2007; Russell, 2008; Wright & Cropanzano, 2004). It is observed in the literature that happy worker is a productive worker. Research has demonstrated that mental health is related to a variety of organizational outcomes, such as enhanced job performance, job satisfaction, work involvement, increased profitability and competitiveness of the organization, and reduced employee turnover (Grawitch, Gottschalk, & Munz, 2006; Keyes, Hysom, & Lupo, 2000; Russell, 2008; Spector, 1997; Warr, 2005; Wright & Bonnet, 2007).

Much of the research on mental health has been carried out in the North American and European context. Very little research has been carried out in the Indian context. Hence the present study attempts to investigate the relationship between mental health and teacher effectiveness among teachers working in India.

Claxton (1999) observed that learning itself is an intrinsically emotional activity. Mental health of teachers play an important role in the teaching learning process. Teachers with high Mental Health are likely to bring out students with good Mental Health. The results of the studies done on Mental Health on teachers suggest that Mental Health is a significant predictor of several work place behaviours including their job satisfaction, organizational commitment and students academic achievement.

Further, little research has been conducted to examine the mental health of teachers; there is a need for rigorous research to be conducted on mental health of teachers. Scant research studies exist in the literature which has examined the influence of mental health and teacher effectiveness. The present study gains importance in this context and examines how the mental health of teachers has a bearing on their teacher effectiveness.

METHOD

Research Design

The present research study is designed on a quantitative research framework which utilized a descriptive research perspective. This study is a non-experimental research study in nature and adopted a survey research methodology in which psychometrically sound instruments- were used to collect primary data from the teachers working in different schools.

Sample

The sample for the present study comprised of 345 secondary school teachers selected from 18 government schools. Their age range was from 28 to 52 years.

Measures

Mental Health Inventory: Mental Health Inventory developed by Veit and Ware (1983) was used in the study. This scale consists of 38 items, each answered on a five or six choice response format ranging from complete confirmation to complete rejection of the applicability of the item to the respondents life over the past one month (e.g. 1 = all of the time to 6 = None of the time). The response format in the inventory varies from item to item. High scores on the inventory indicate better mental health. The possible scores on this scale range from 38 to 226.

Teacher Effectiveness Scale :Teacher effectiveness scale developed by Puri and Gakhar (2010) was used. This scale consists of 68 items measuring six aspects of teaching effectiveness. The areas of teaching effectiveness as measured by the test are (1) academic and professional knowledge, (2) preparation and presentation of lesson plan, class room management, (3) attitude towards students, parents, colleagues and head of the institution,(4) use of motivation, reward and punishment and all round development of students, (5) result, feedback and accountability and (6) personal qualities. This scale has a five point response format ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. High scores on this scale indicate high teacher effectiveness. This scale has reliability and validity established in the literature. For the purpose of the present study the total teacher effectiveness score obtained from the responses of 68 items were considered for the analysis

PROCEDURE

Both the questionnaires were administered after establishing rapport with the sampled teachers; they were briefly explained about the manner of responding to the items on the two questionnaires. Teachers were encouraged to give frank and honest responses to the items in both the questionnaires.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and teacher effectiveness the correlation coefficient between mental health and teacher effectiveness were computed and is presented in table 1.

Table 1
Correlation Coefficients between Mental Health and Teacher Effectiveness

Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Sig.
Mental Health	0.689	.000
Teacher Effectiveness		

From table 1 it can be observed that the correlation coefficient computed between mental health and teacher effectiveness is positive and highly significant (p=0.000). This indicates that there is significant positive relationship between mental health and teacher effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

The results of the present study suggest that mental health of teachers is positively related to their effectiveness. Teachers with high mental health have higher teacher effectiveness. This suggests the importance and significance of mental health for improving or increasing the teacher effectiveness. Research studies done on mental health on teachers in educational settings suggest that higher levels of mental health are associated with a range of positive work outcomes, such as better workplace performance and better academic achievement for students. Teachers work in strenuous work conditions, and to be good in the school, and to face challenges in the school they need to have good mental health. Teachers with good mental health and well-being will be able to cope with the stress, burnout and regulate their own behaviour, which might help to increase workplace engagement, and increase their job satisfaction (Ramana, 2013). The present study observed that Mental Health of teachers is positively related to teacher effectiveness. This makes Mental Health an important construct

in educational research. There is an urgent need for Mental Health training of teachers. Grawitch, Gottschalk and Munz (2006) suggested and recommended five healthy workplace practises that schools should use in order to maximize teachers mental health. Schools may consider these healthy work place practices for teachers, which would result in better mental health and well-being among teachers and increase their teacher effectiveness. Basic training in the four abilities that comprise emotional intelligence would enable teachers to better understand and cope with emotional effort they are required to exert in the classrooms. Educational administrators or Human resource managers of the school may also assess the Mental Health of teachers and may include it as one of the criterion during selection process of teachers. Longitudinal research studies may be conducted on teachers to understand the effect mental health brings about in increasing their teacher effectiveness

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